

**Red Harbor: Class, Violence, and Community in
Grays Harbor, Washington**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of class struggle and class formation in Grays Harbor, Washington, between the 1890s and 1933. Grays Harbor was the most prolific lumber-producing and lumber-shipping region in the world during the first three decades of the twentieth century. It was also a center of unionism and radicalism, a place where trade unionists, socialists, and revolutionary syndicalists formed large and lasting institutions. Despite the size and strength of local worker's organizations, divisions of race, ethnicity, gender, and ideology limited their effectiveness and opened them up to the employer attacks. Employers used strikebreakers, violence, labor spies, police, the courts, and blacklists to combat the trade union campaigns of the 1900s and the mass strikes led by revolutionary organizations during the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s.

By 1912 the largest and most dynamic workers' organization on the Harbor was the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). The IWW led mass strikes in the region in 1912, 1917, and 1923. IWW halls in Grays Harbor also functioned as centers of culture and community, particularly for Finnish Americans, the largest ethnic group within the Grays Harbor IWW. Contrary to most of the historiography on the Pacific Northwest, the lumber industry, and the IWW, this study shows that the Grays Harbor IWW was a mass movement with a large base of support in the community. This community support was a major reason why the IWW was able to fend off the attacks of employers and the state during the 1910s and 1920s, and maintain a large membership into the 1930s.

A quantitative analysis of IWW members during the 1920s and 1930s reveals that it was composed of large numbers of skilled workers, members of the middle class, married men, single and married women, and children. As late as the 1930s the Wobblies

still counted over six hundred members and supporters in Grays Harbor, hosted elaborate cultural festivities, and lent support to the numerous lumber strikes that occurred during this period. This thesis concludes with an examination of the IWW and Communist Party as the groups struggled for members and influence during the 1930s.

Keywords: Industrial Workers of the World; Grays Harbor; unions; employers; Finnish Americans; Communist Party

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2009 I made one of my regular trips back to the Harbor. This trip, however, was to be different. Driving into town along Highway 8, I gazed south across the Chehalis River toward the large sawmill owned by the Weyerhaeuser Corporation, which had just declared its intention to shut down all of its operations in Grays Harbor and neighboring Pacific County. For more than a century that mill site and neighboring riverside lands had been occupied by large industrial enterprises: lumber and shingle mills, docks, offices, and grocery. Tens of thousands of men and women had worked in these operations, their labor providing the region with its most valuable resource and their lively working class traditions making Grays Harbor, particularly Aberdeen, a notable getaway for anyone looking to experience working-class culture at its rough, gritty best. Lumber operations began shutting down in large numbers during the 1980s. They collapsed under the weight of environmental regulations while jobs disappeared as the result of downsizing, off-shoring, and changes made in lumber mill technology. Still, as late as 2005, one of the largest employers in Grays Harbor County was a Weyerhaeuser pulp mill, and all told, in 2007, more than eight hundred men and women were employed by that corporation in Grays Harbor and nearby Pacific, Mason, and Wahkiakum Counties.¹ Weyerhaeuser made public its intentions to move in a more environmentally friendly direction, establishing scholarships for University of Washington students to

¹ “Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Columbia-Pacific Region,” Prepared by the Columbia-Pacific Resource Conservation and Economic Development District, June 2007. Two hundred and forty-five union and salaried employees worked at the Cosmopolis pulp mill. The closure of that mill coincided with the shuttering of the Weyerhaeuser large log sawmill, which employed ninety-seven workers. See “Weyerhaeuser Announces Mill Closures in Southwest Washington State,” <http://investor.weyerhaeuser.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=92287&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=771092&highlight=>, Accessed 4 November 2009.

study green technology and environmental history, while tossing their workers out on the unemployment line.² And that was that. As I write today, the mighty Grays Harbor lumber region, once hailed as the “Lumber Capital of the World,” stands close to having no wood products industry to speak of.

Essential to any trip back to the Harbor are the gatherings at my maternal grandmother Nina’s home in Aberdeen. Four generations of family members gather there weekly to meet, eat, chat, and discuss our various goings-on. One cannot help but run across lumber workers at these get-togethers. Every man who crosses the doorway has worked, in some capacity, in logging, lumber, or wood products, a statement that for the past five generations of Harborites could be said of most every family. One of my uncles, a regular at Nina’s, was one of the 221 Aberdeen workers laid off by Weyerhaeuser in spring 2009; my father, a longtime boiler mechanic at the Weyerhaeuser pulp mill in nearby Cosmopolis, lost his job when that plant closed three years earlier. Discussions inevitably turned towards matters of class, though the participants would not necessarily categorize their experiences and remarks that way. My recently laid-off uncle, who had attended the “Goodbye celebration” put on by Weyerhaeuser, seemed perturbed by the presence of foremen and managers at the party. “I couldn’t quite figure out what *they* were doing there,” he said, with more than a little bit of contempt in his voice. My father, whose pragmatic understandings of capitalist economics deeply influenced my intellectual development, gave some variation of his oft-said mantra: to businesses workers are just a piece of the machine; if the boss can find a cheaper machine, then a person will be out of a job. The unusually callous, frank declarations of

² Along with its ample scholarship foundation, Weyerhaeuser has established itself at the forefront of environmental advocacy through its Weyerhaeuser Environmental Books series published by the University of Washington.

war by the Weyerhaeuser Corporation on an entire region's working class channeled the everyday muted hostilities of working-class discontent into ones of pointed class hatred, producing discussions of "us" and "them." The usual pleasantries, discussions of the weather and professional sports, were cut down, replaced by talk of wealth, bosses, and unemployment. Words like "revolution" and "assassination" were spoken as though they were speaking of trips to the casino or Thanksgiving dinners. At moments it appeared that workers on the Harbor still understood what their forebears had expressed so eloquently: the working class and employing class have nothing in common.

But these moments of resistance soon faded and the grim reality of a century-long lumber and wood products boom in its final death throes was apparent for all to see. Throughout Grays Harbor, homeless men and women competed for the best street corners, shelters overflowed, and food banks complained of major shortfalls, while a state prison moved in to provide the only stable growth industry, allowing people on the Olympic Peninsula to take jobs as prison guards. A half-dozen or so men from the Cosmopolis pulp mill had succumbed to alcoholism, heart disease, or suicide, the latest victims of a class war that seems even more one-sided when the working class can't find jobs. "Official" unemployment lingered at about fifteen percent in this once great industrial area. Those who could labored in the area's low-paying service industries or at a "good" job overseeing other working people in jails and prisons. Where once mighty lumber and shingle mills stood there were now box stores, mini malls, empty lots, and mothballed factories.

In spite of the very real, very public shortcomings of industrial capitalism and bourgeois democracy, all of which have been displayed during the past several years,

analyses providing holistic critiques of society's fundamental divisions remain marginalized from mainstream discourse. For all the talk of global financial crisis, unemployment, war and occupation, discussions of class and capitalism remain out of vogue, diligently censored from the commercial press. Media outlets tend to portray contemporary crises as temporary social sores, curable by the know-how of highly trained elites, government officials and business leaders drawn from the highest ranks of the oligarchy. Meanwhile, a growing anti-capitalist movement, comprised of anarchists, Marxists, social democrats, and militant trade unionists has been conspicuous on the streets and in workplaces, while an occasionally tough-talking labor movement has reminded us that retreat is not the only movement of which labor is capable.³ In some places, these men and women have made business as usual difficult, forcing capital to resort to widespread labor spying and government crackdowns on radical organizations, shattering any illusion that the capitalist state rules by consent alone.⁴

However, the focus of the study that follows is not on the relationships of class as viewed in the early twenty-first century but in the first four decades of the twentieth. I began this thesis by thinking about class as an objective set of social relations, one

³ There are numerous examples of growing radical challenges to the status quo within the US labor movement. Among the best work to emerge from the left was the monthly periodical *Labor Notes* and the various books written by its contributors. See especially Jane Slaughter, ed., *A Troublemaker's Handbook: How to Fight Back and Win Where You Work*, Vol. 2 (Detroit: Labor Notes, 2005); Kim Moody, *US Labor in Trouble and Transition: The Failure of Reform from Above, The Promise of Revival from Below* (London: Verso, 2007). For specific acts of working-class militancy, see Mike Davis, "Labor War in the Mojave," *Nation*, 29 (March 2010): 11-18; Roger Bybee, "Sit-down at Republic: Will It Give Labor New Legs?" *Dissent* 56:3 (Summer 2009): 9-12; Jane Slaughter, "Wisconsin Changes Everything," *Labor Notes* 385 (April 2011): 1, 14.

⁴ On state rule by consent and coercion, see David Graeber, *Fragments of An Anarchist Anthropology* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004). Grays Harbor and nearby Olympia, Washington, were graced by the presence of labor spies deployed by the US Army and various local police agencies. The spies were investigating members of the Industrial Workers of the World, Students for a Democratic Society, and Port Militarization Resistance, a group dedicated to stopping the use of the Port of Olympia and Port of Grays Harbor to ship arms overseas. The Army spy, John Towery, was "outed" in July 2009 by activists based in Olympia. See *New York Times*, 1 August 2009.

defined by a person's position in relation to the means of production. But through personal experience as a member of the working class and through the study of labor history I knew that studying class solely in terms of one's relationship to the means of production did not go very far toward understanding what historian Bryan Palmer called the working-class experience, the day-to-day lived experiences of working people.⁵ It was even less useful as a way to understand the ways in which workers function as agents capable of bringing about historical change through their own actions. After studying the Harbor's class relations during the early twentieth century, it became even clearer that, to local workers, class was more of a set of lived experiences than a simple social relationship. As E. P. Thompson argued, class consciousness is the way in which people handle their class experiences in cultural terms, how they are "embodied in traditions, value-systems, ideas, and institutional forms."⁶ Indeed, in Grays Harbor class consciousness was displayed in a vast array of working-class social activity, as workers created insurgent, expansive institutions to express their interests, placed petitions before city councils, or shot at or beat up their boss. It too was visible in workers' cultural activities: their hall celebrations, Labor Day and strike parades, socialist newspapers, solidarity rallies, and free speech fights. This study also is in agreement with historian Bryan Palmer's statement, "Class . . . is inseparable from class struggle," and thus I view class as an active social force, with workers and employers struggling in plain sight and behind closed doors to advance their interests.⁷ Moreover, I do not view class struggle as some exceptional occurrence, located only in the rare moments of mass insurgency that

⁵ Bryan Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992).

⁶ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 10.

⁷ Palmer, *A Culture of Conflict*, xvi.

must be explored in their most minute detail. Instead, I see class conflict as an everyday lived experience, embodied, certainly in the strikes and demonstrations of working-class radicals, but no less clearly in the daily struggles of workers expressed eloquently in angry editorials written to labor newspapers, or by simply quitting their job and “moving on.”⁸

Then, as now, class determined much about individuals’ lives. If one’s relationship to the means of production does not dictate that he or she will join a radical political group or the chamber of commerce, it, as much as any other factor, influences where people will live, how they will vacation, if they vacation at all, what they eat, what schooling they will receive, and how they will die. Class was also a key ingredient in the formation of people’s politics, as they mobilized alongside their fellow workers or fellow employers to elect pro-labor politicians, lobby for friendly reforms, and assert themselves as key players in their communities. However, a century ago, a whole host of revolutionary possibilities were not only on the table but were the primary animating forces behind the actions of thousands of workers who took to the streets annually. Openly revolutionary workers stood atop podiums and on picket lines, offering different, collectivist solutions to the varied oppressions and injuries of class. Thousands of working-class militants and radicals understood full well that theirs was neither a cooperative or equal relationship with the boss, a fact underscored by articulate statements and direct actions alike. Though a life of brutal conditions, long hours of labor, bouts of poverty, and an early death were the fruits of capitalism, theirs was a world not just of despair, but also of possibilities.

⁸ The seminal study of everyday forms of working-class consciousness and rebellion is E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*.

Thus as the nonunion crew of the lumber schooner *Fearless* sailed out to sea on 2 June 1906, it was met by a small, unlit boat carrying a group of unionists. A member of the launch's crew demanded that the cook onboard the *Fearless* show himself. Captain Liljequist of the *Fearless* responded by threatening that "he would shoot, and shoot to kill," before noticing that the small boat contained a dozen men, all "armed to the teeth."⁹ After a few more choice words a single shot was fired, followed by an eruption of gunfire from both sides estimated to be at least one hundred shots.¹⁰ When the *Fearless* was examined it was riddled with holes.¹¹ After the gunfire subsided, the small boat retreated to shore under the cover of darkness, and the crew of the *Fearless*, happy to have been spared their lives, abandoned their voyage and returned to shore.¹² The *Fearless* crew had made the mistake of trying to ship lumber despite the pending threat of a strike by members of the Sailors Union of the Pacific (SUP). Worse yet, their voyage began in Aberdeen, Washington, one of the Pacific Coast maritime workers' strongholds and home of SUP agent William Gohl, whose ferocious militancy had gained him fame and notoriety throughout the West.¹³

⁹ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 9 June 1906.

¹⁰ "Affidavit of Wm. Gohl," 5 November 1906, State of Washington vs. William Gohl, No. 6499, Superior Court of the State of Washington, for Chehalis County (1906), Southwest Washington Archives, Olympia, Washington (Hereafter SWA); *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 9 June 1906

¹¹ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 9 June 1906.

¹² *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 5, 9 June 1906.

¹³ For more information on Gohl, particularly misleading and sensationalistic examinations of his life, see Pamela Dean Aho, "The Ghoul of Grays Harbor," in *On the Harbor: From Black Friday to Nirvana*, ed. John C. Hughes and Ryan Teague Beckwith (Aberdeen, WA: The Daily World, 2001), 18-31; and "Billy was the Ghoul of Grays Harbor," *The Daily World*, 29 June 1989, 1-7; Latrissa Neiworth, "Gohl(y) Violence Colors Aberdeen's Past," *Ocean Breeze*, 10 February 1976, S-7; Murray Morgan, *The Last Wilderness* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1955), 122-152; Frank J. Zoretich, "Plank Streets and Shady Dealings," *Pacific Slope* (February 1978): 12-13; William J. Betts, "Launched 100 Murders," *Golden West* 6:2 (January 1970): 19-21, 56-58; Jan Holden, "Billy Gohl: The Ghoul of Grays Harbor," *Old West* (Fall 1995): 26-30; Hollis B. Fultz, *Famous Northwest Manhunts* (Elma, WA: Fulco Publishing, 1955), 27-52; Ed Van Syckle, *They Tried to Cut it All: Grays Harbor, Turbulent Years of Greed and Greatness* (Seattle: Pacific Search Press, 1980), 241-247; Anne Cotton, "History of Aberdeen: 1775-1982," in *Aberdeen Comprehensive Development Plan, Phase I, Profile of Aberdeen* (Aberdeen, WA: Grays Harbor Regional Planning Commission, 1969), 1-66; Dennis Pence, *The Ghoul of Grays Harbor*

These unionized and scab sailors were exceptional only in the dramatic flair of their actions and the degree of press coverage this incident received. Neither their deeds nor the hostility they felt towards one another were unusual. Between 1898 and 1933, the period covered by this thesis, a militant struggle between employers and workers was visible at all levels of Grays Harbor society. A second illustration of this social conflict came at the 1906 united Aberdeen-Hoquiam Labor Day parade on the float built and displayed by the International Shingle Weavers' Union of America (ISWUA). Labor Day floats were usually large, ornate displays, symbols of the craft and pride in skill of the union in question. But the weavers' 1906 float stood out for its overtly political themes. The float consisted of a miniature "bullpen," the name given to heavily guarded structures built alongside factories to house scabs during strikes. The weavers' bullpen bore a "neat and accurate likeness" to that used by Robert and Joseph Lytle, owners of the Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle Company, who had imported scabs to take the weavers' jobs during a strike concluded only weeks before the parade.¹⁴ For bosses and their scabs the bullpen represented a safe haven necessary to protect them from the weavers, who guaranteed retributive violence against strikebreakers for their misdeeds. To the weavers, the bullpen, and hence the float, represented something quite different. It served as a potent symbol of the contest between shingle manufacturers and workers for control over the workplace, a contest that, in this instance, was played out in the streets, a spectacle for the entire community to behold.¹⁵

(Aberdeen, WA: Authorhouse, 2004); Stewart H. Holbrook, *Holy Old Mackinaw: The Natural History of the American Lumberjack*, Comstock ed. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971), 193-194; Terri Nelson, "The Ballad of Billy Gohl," Billy Gohl Documentation, SWA.

¹⁴ *Shingle Weaver* (Ballard, WA), October 1906.

¹⁵ On struggles between shingle weavers and employers, see Chapters 3, 5, 14, and 15.

Seventeen years later, another parade “marched through the main streets of the business section” of Aberdeen, presenting even more dramatic demonstration of working-class anger at the region’s lumbermen and the regime they oversaw. That day, in an overt challenge to employers’ control over the community, more than one thousand men, women, and children paraded across town carrying a giant banner reading “Fellow Worker William McKay. Murdered by Capitalistic Gunmen of the Bay City Mill Company Thursday, May 3; We Never Forget” and distributing flyers declaring “Bay City Gunman Murders Unarmed Picket in Cold Blood.”¹⁶ The marching workers’ destination was Fern Hill Cemetery, where they gathered to bury Fellow Worker William McKay, a logger and member of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), who had been shot in the back of the head by a lumber company gunman a few days prior. McKay’s murder came flush in the heart of battle, as thousands of Grays Harbor men and women had joined their fellow workers in many parts of the world in a general strike to free class war prisoners. The strike and funeral march that followed were vivid demonstrations of working-class power in the community. Striking Wobblies had closed down logging camps, docks, and lumber mills, including the notorious Grays Harbor Commercial Company in Cosmopolis, the lone mill in the region never to have succumbed to a strike. In appreciation for McKay’s years of service to the working class, the *Industrial Worker* ran a memorial reading, in part, that “He died, as he often expressed to the writer, ‘I would rather die fighting the master class than be killed slaving for them.’ May his fighting spirit animate others.”¹⁷

¹⁶ *Industrial Worker* (Seattle, WA), 16 May 1923.

¹⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 16 May 1923.

In November 1932, while Grays Harbor was deep in the thick of the Great Depression, its lumber industry operating at five percent of capacity and state agents horrified by poverty and unemployment that were the worst in Washington State, Communist Party (CP) member Lydia Laukkanen forced her way into the proceedings of the Aberdeen City Council to demand public assistance for the city's considerable destitute population. Radicals had intruded on the councils' proceedings for years previous to this demonstration, but Laukkanen, with the support of a "large group" of workers, drawn mostly from the local Unemployed Councils, demanded that the municipal government provide two meals per day, clean and neat sleeping quarters, and the use of the Salvation Army chapel as an assembly room for unemployed workers during stormy weather.¹⁸ Along with Comrade Jesse Woodward, she harangued the public officials, demanding that they live up to their obligations to the city's vast destitute population. When, with more than a hint of employing-class condescension in their voices, the city council rejoined the Communists, referring the matter back to county officials for consideration, the young Communist shot back, "You councilmen wouldn't eat that slop."¹⁹

This thesis is about confrontations, those day-to-day struggles between boss and worker that sometimes boil over into mass strikes, leftist electoral challenges, rallies, and riots. In Grays Harbor, as throughout the industrialized world, these confrontations took many forms.²⁰ They were sometimes muted, sometimes expressed in defiant screams.

¹⁸ *Grays Harbor Post* (Aberdeen, WA), 5 November 1932.

¹⁹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 5 November 1932.

²⁰ The term "Grays Harbor" can be misleading. Today, it refers almost exclusively to Grays Harbor County, a more than 1,900 square mile parcel of land lying at the southwest corner of Washington State's Olympic Peninsula. Until 1915, however, the county was referred to as Chehalis County, named for a local Indian tribe and major river, but easily confused with the city of Chehalis, Washington, which lies adjacent to the infamous city of Centralia in nearby Lewis, County. "The Harbor cities" or "Harbor towns" refers to

Most often they could be contained within sociocultural formations like the Socialist Party, trade unions, and Labor Day parades. But sometimes they erupted into mass actions such as demonstrations, riots, and strikes. When these dangerous, public actions became strained under the pressure of repression and boss terror, working-class struggle slipped from public view. Struggle, however, did not disappear. Sabotage, quickie strikes, and retributive violence all demonstrated the continued existence of a working class with few socially acceptable forms of protest available, using those “weapons of the weak” wielded by a harried working class.

Class confrontations stand at the center of this thesis. Certainly, this is not the first study of American workers to emphasize conflict over harmony. In fact, David Montgomery, Bryan Palmer, Elizabeth Jameson, and others have emphasized class conflict in their studies of the rich histories of working-class direct and political action throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²¹ What distinguishes this study is that it is not focused solely on the “big bangs” of labor history -- the strikes, riots, and leftist

the three major urban areas -- Aberdeen, Hoquiam, and Cosmopolis -- that line the body of water also called Grays Harbor. The Chehalis (Grays Harbor) County seat is in Montesano, ten miles east of Aberdeen. It is the center of government and the site where scores of labor activists have been interned, tried, and sentenced for their crimes, some real, some manufactured. Ten miles to the east of Montesano lies Elma, another small town dealt with only in passing in this thesis, but nonetheless full of history, particularly as it affected its rural agricultural population. Six miles northeast of Elma takes a visitor to McCleary, one of the several company towns built around the lumber industry. On or near the Pacific Coast lie a number of smaller towns, where Harbor workers earned money as fishermen, clam diggers and cannery workers, and in the lumber industry. These towns included Aloha, Moclips, Copalis, Ocosta, and Westport.

²¹ David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America: Studies in the History of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Bryan Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict: Skilled Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Hamilton, Ontario, 1860-1914* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979); Elizabeth Jameson, *All that Glitters: Class, Conflict, and Community in Cripple Creek* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998). See also Bruce Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); James R. Green, *Grass-Roots Socialism: Radical Movements in the Southwest, 1895-1943* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978); Howard Zinn, Dana Frank, and Robin D.G. Kelley, *Three Strikes: Miners, Musicians, Salesgirls, and the Fighting Spirit of Labor's Last Century* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001); Staughton Lynd, ed., *We Are All Leaders: The Alternative Unionism of the Early 1930s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996).

parties -- and towards the forms of worker protest that most often escape the headlines, that hidden history that so often gets ignored, or compartmentalized as aberrant, meaningless, or anti-social.

“Red Harbor” is a study of class and culture in the community of Grays Harbor, Washington. It was written in the tradition of Alan Dawley, Elizabeth Jameson, Herbert Gutman, and others who studied class formation at the local level, arguing, in Dawley’s words, that community studies provide apt lenses “to trace . . . the twisting paths that led from the factory to the cultural values, political opinions, and the organizational activities” of workers and employers.²² It contends that since most workers’ experiences occur in their local communities and are circumscribed by local conditions, labor history can often best be understood by observing the local terrain of industrial and community struggle. Thus, the conflicts analyzed in this thesis all occurred in the setting of a single locality, that of Grays Harbor, Washington. It is through the lens of the community that I will explore the central themes of this thesis: the significance of class in people’s lives, how violence shaped the lives of working people and the programs of workers’ organizations, and the various ways workers and employers mobilized in the pursuit of their conflicting class interests. The Harbor was a hotbed of class conflict, and thus any study of it must begin with an exploration of the gross class divisions between worker and employer, and the multitude of conflicts waged between these classes. Like most aspects of these historical actors’ lives, the conflicts they waged occurred mostly at the

²² Earlier studies of working-class communities includes Jameson, *All that Glitters*; Alan Dawley, *Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976); Herbert G. Gutman, *Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), 234-259; Randi Storch, *Red Chicago: American Communism and Its Grassroots, 1928-1935* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Elizabeth Faue, *Community of Suffering and Struggle: Women, Men, and the Labor Movement in Minneapolis, 1915-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991). Cited in Dawley, *Class and Community*, 7.

local level and were fought by local residents who sought to bring about local changes such as increased wages or safer working conditions. Additionally, the community itself became contested terrain, as workers and employers both staked their claim to community spaces such as city streets, neighborhoods, buildings, and elected offices.

In spite of the fact that this thesis examines a variety of labor struggles, the IWW lies at its center, occupying the majority of the space in six chapters and significant roles in three of the others. This decision was not made lightly, nor does it rest merely upon my preference for anarcho-syndicalism over reformist socialism, “pure and simple” trade unionism, or parliamentary politics. Instead, any study of the Grays Harbor working class as it matured during the first decades of the twentieth century must place the IWW at or near its center. This rests, in part, on the fact that in Grays Harbor, a region with 35,590 residents in 1910 and 44,572 a decade later, thousands of workers joined the IWW between 1907 and 1935.²³ The local IWW established itself as a major presence in Grays Harbor, one that enjoyed significant support from other community organizations and established permanent institutions such as halls, union locals, and newspapers in Grays Harbor.

This thesis thus reframes the history of the Wobblies, placing them at the center of community conflict and working-class organization for more than two decades. Again, the benefits of a local study are clear in this case. As Robin D.G. Kelly, Randi Storch, and others have conclusively demonstrated, the substance of American communism is best understood at the local level, where individual activists’ activities can be examined and put into a local context, the context in which most party activity took

²³ Population figures for the county can be found in State of Washington, Department of State, Bureau of Statistics and Immigration, *The Advantages and Opportunities of the State of Washington for Homebuilders, Investors and Travelers* (Olympia, Public Printer, 1920), 70.

place.²⁴ Like Communists, most Wobblies functioned at the local level, the town, mill, or camp where they lived and worked, and thus examining the One Big Union with One Big Study based in Chicago is problematic. Studies divorced from the local contexts where most activists operated tell us very little about the rank and file, especially about these radical workers' lives stretched out over a number of years. Still, the IWW was only one of several working-class organizations that successfully mobilized their communities in struggles against their employers. Thus, the next nine chapters will focus on the community-based struggles between working-class organizations such as trade unions, socialists, and Wobblies, and employers that occurred during the first twenty years of the twentieth century.

As E. P. Thompson pointed out, class is a relationship, one that happens when people, "as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs."²⁵ As this thesis will demonstrate, the repeated conflicts between Grays Harbor workers and employers were vivid expressions of class. And indeed, by the onset of the post-World War I Red Scare, after twenty years of sustained class struggle, Harbor employers had been "made" in the Marxist sense. They vigorously and single-mindedly pursued their class interests through employers' organizations, fraternities, vigilante organizations, and through their use of labor spies, strikebreakers, and a complicit state apparatus. Local employers shifted and expanded their operations based on threats posed by their workers and workers' organizations, and it is thus necessary to see the growth and mobilization of the employing class

²⁴ Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Storch, *Red Chicago*.

²⁵ E. P. Thompson, *The Making*, 9.

dialectically. In Chapter 3, in particular, we see the emergence of a unified and assertive employers' group as employers took control of Harbor workplaces and streets through coordinated direct action. By the late 1910s, with precious few exceptions, the Harbor employing class had established its strategy and tactics for dealing with both the assertive, militant trade unions and the radicals of the IWW. Strikes during the 1920s and 1930s continued to be dealt with using roughly the same strategies developed between 1906 and 1912. This is not to say that employers stopped evolving or that their tactics remained totally static, but for the period 1923-1933, the thesis shifts to a more interesting set of conflicts: the internal division on the revolutionary left, as the IWW and Communists battled for influence among the Grays Harbor working class. For decades scholars of American radicalism have contended that the CP was much larger and more significant than the IWW during the 1920s and 1930s. But this thesis will demonstrate that the transition between syndicalism and communism, at least in Grays Harbor, was not as complete as earlier scholars have argued.²⁶ Indeed, Wobblies and Communists engaged in a lively competition during the 1920s and 1930s over which group would be more influential in the region. As chapters 14 and 15 will demonstrate, Wobblies, as well as Communists, were significant radical organizations on the Harbor well into the 1930s.

Another topic that has gone mostly unexplored by previous historians is the fact that in spite of the persistent, concerted attack on Wobbly by local employers and their allies, these revolutionary syndicalists persevered, at least in some communities and

²⁶ A number of IWW historians have fallen into this trap. See, for instance, Patrick Renshaw, *The Wobblies: The Story of Syndicalism in the United States*, Anchor Books Edition (New York: Anchor Books, 1968); Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (New York: Quadrangle, 1973). Dubofsky's well-known work was originally published in 1969. Quotations and page number come from the 1973 Quadrangle edition to the book.

regions, into the 1930s.²⁷ By exploring the IWW's bases of community support, it is possible to see how and why the Wobblies retained a significant presence in the urban areas of Grays Harbor for a decade longer than earlier scholars have concluded. Many studies of the Wobblies focus on the union's smallness and sporadic activity as reasons to either write the Wobblies out of US history, deny their importance, or malign anarcho-syndicalism as an unusual ideology, the product of "bad sores" resulting from long hours, low pay, and bad conditions.²⁸ And, while membership numbers alone cannot tell us all we need to know about the IWW's significance, in Grays Harbor, those numbers were significant, as thousands of men, women, and children flocked into the OBU in Grays Harbor during the first four decades of the twentieth century. Furthermore, no union can match the IWW's record at representing the working class as a whole. While studies have contrasted the Wobblies' rhetorical commitment to egalitarian principles to their marginalization of women in "supportive and subordinate roles," there were notable successes among Wobblies in Grays Harbor in organizing across gender, as well as ethnic and racial, lines.²⁹ In Grays Harbor, as in several regions across the nation, the IWW succeeded at organizing precisely those groups that other unions ignored or failed to reach: immigrant mill workers, loggers, domestic servants, construction workers, and on and on. They, too, found eager recruits in the region's shingle mills and along the docks,

²⁷ An exception to this rule is J. Peter Campbell, "The Cult of Spontaneity: Finnish-Canadian Bushworkers and the Industrial Workers of the World in Northern Ontario, 1919-1934," *Labour/Le Travail* 41 (Spring 1998): 117-146.

²⁸ See, for instance, Paul F. Brissenden, *The IWW: A Study of American Syndicalism* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1920); Joseph Robert Conlin, *Bread and Roses Too* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1969); Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*.

²⁹ Colleen O'Neill, "Domesticity Deployed: Gender, Race and the Construction of Class Struggle in the Bisbee Deportation," *Labor History* 34:2/3 (Spring/Summer 1993): 261; Francis Shor has argued that, "the IWW downplayed the critical role that women performed in sustaining any social movement." See Shor, "'Virile Syndicalism' in Comparative Perspective: A Gender Analysis of the IWW in the United States and Australia," *International Labor and Working Class History* 56 (1999): 65-77.

where AFL unions such as the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), ISWUA, and SUP, were, by the early 1910s, unable to achieve either of the goals valued by workers attracted to the IWW: to use the union as a fighting vehicle against the boss, and to advocate and pursue a socialist society. The Wobblies thus organized not only the migratory workers of popular lore, but the mill hand, the longshoremen, the shingle weavers and the maids, the housewives and the fishermen, among whom a community-based syndicalist movement was forged.

Wobblies were also the gatekeepers to the world of the radical worker beyond the shop floor. From 1910 onward the main centers of leftist Grays Harbor working-class culture were the IWW halls, picnics, and the pool rooms, ethnic halls, and bunkhouses where they met both formally and informally. What is often lost in the examinations that equate syndicalism with IWW-ism is the rich cultural component molded out of the Wobblies' class experiences, ones that spilled out of the shop floor and into the neighborhood, connecting community with workplace in an intricate web of radical activism. Unfortunately, North American labor historians have ignored the working-class public sphere crafted by syndicalists in a number of localities, including the cities of the Harbor. In Grays Harbor, where workers' "mood of syndicalism" was as potent as anywhere, shop floor activism never advanced without a strong cultural component, one that connected radical workers to the community, allied them with other movements, and gained them significant, if impermanent, support from other segments of the population.³⁰ Between 1907 and 1924, Grays Harbor IWWs hosted thousands of meetings, speeches, dances, and other cultural activities. Local workers knitted and sewed goods to be sold

³⁰ The term "Mood of syndicalism" is derived from historian Bruce Nelson's book *Workers on the Waterfront*.

for class war prisoner relief, produced their own literature and visual art, and generated much of the culture adopted by the Wobblies in the Pacific Northwest. But during the mid-1920s, the Wobblies equaled their successes of 1916-1919 by adopting widely popular workplace and community platforms, and using direct action to accomplish their ends. Through their anti-saloon, educational, and defense programs, the Wobblies remained at the fore of community activism during the 1920s. Thus unlike earlier studies of the IWW, “Red Harbor” does not end in 1919 or 1924, the two most common death dates for the Wobblies, when their role in the labor movement was said to be extinguished due to repression, internal schism, and competition from Communists.³¹ Instead, I push the chronology forward to the mid-1930s, to the precipice of the great maritime and lumber strikes of that era of that era, and I explore the roles played by both Communists and Wobblies in organizing during the lead-up to those great strikes.

Throughout this thesis I have taken pains to record the day-to-day forms of class conflict, but at the same time I have emphasized those explicitly violent class confrontations. I do not view these concepts as lying in conflict, but as two sides of the same coin. Here I define violence as physical violence including illegal forms of violence, workplace violence such as so-called industrial accidents, and the ostensibly “legitimate” violence committed by the state. There exists a close relationship between

³¹ Most of the scholarship on the IWW that emerged during the 1960s and 1970s was focused almost exclusively on the IWW’s history before 1920. For instance, see Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*; Conlin, *Bread and Roses*; Renshaw, *The Wobblies*; Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 4, *The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917* (1965; reprint, New York: International Publishers, 1997). There do exist some significant exceptions to this rule, including Fred Thompson and Jon Bekken, *The IWW: Its First 100 Years* (Cincinnati: Industrial Workers of the World, 2006); Greg Hall, *Harvest Wobblies: The Industrial Workers of the World and Agricultural Laborers in the American West, 1905-1930* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2002); Peter Cole, *Wobblies on the Waterfront: Interracial Unionism in Progressive-Era Philadelphia* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Donald J. McClurg, “The Colorado Coal Strike of 1927 -- Tactical Leadership of the IWW,” *Labor History* 4:1 (Winter 1963): 68-92.

one's social class and one's experiences with violence. The class position a person occupies will weigh heavily on whether or not they die from a violent crime, lack of medical care, or suffer mistreatment at the hands of the criminal justice system, and literally scores of other causes. In this analysis I differ with historian Thomas G. Andrews, who dismissed the importance of class in his study of community and violence in Ludlow, Colorado, entitled *Killing for Coal*. He argued that "relationships that connected different groups of people -- particularly capitalists, consumers, and coal-mining families -- with the natural world" were "richer and more intriguing" than relationships between workers and capitalist.³² By replacing class conflict with a conflict between humans and the environment, Andrews ignored the connections between class and violence. First, it was miners and not their employers who were the victims of "environmental violence." It was thus class that determined who would die in on the job in the mines of Ludlow, much as it was class that determined who died in the forests, mills, and docks of Grays Harbor. Second, the men and women who died at workplaces entered those workplaces in part because they lived in a capitalist society, one that forced people to work in exchange for subsistence, even if that work is conducted in unsafe conditions. Third, the so-called "industrial accidents" that caused so much death and pain in working-class families' lives were not caused by environmental "acts of God," such as an apple falling and hitting someone on the head or a tornado falling upon some hapless victim. Instead, the types of workplace violence studied in Andrews' book and in "Red Harbor" were caused by employers' property: machines, natural resources, and work spaces. Thus, while Andrews asserts that workplace violence can best be

³² Thomas G. Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 15.

understood as occurring between humans and their environment, at the heart of “Red Harbor” is an understanding that social class plays a primary role in shaping one’s experience with violence. This includes such ostensibly “environmental” forms of violence as a logger being killed by a falling tree or a miner dying in an underground explosion.

While members of the employing class commit numerous acts of violence against working people, employers do not hold a monopoly on class violence. On the contrary, workers have a long history of seizing what Marx called employers’ “blood and fire” tactics and utilizing them to challenge the capitalist system more effectively.³³ However, in order to better understand class violence directed by workers against their employers, we must first reconceptualize it. The first notion that we must cast aside is that there is something inherently wrong with violence. The noted historian Eric Hobsbawm has persuasively argued that, in order to understand the violent actions of workers, we must not view these acts through a bourgeois lens. Workers have interests distinct from those of their bosses, interests expressed through distinct ideologies and actions. Thus, disgruntlement, not to mention sabotage and violence, often comes as the result of workers pursuing their own interests. Hobsbawm wrote:

if we were to take the point of view of moderate miners on strike. . . . the worst offence would be scabbing, and there would be no substantial moral difference between peaceful picketing, the pressure of public opinion and physically stopping scabs going down the pit. Beating up a scab or two would be relatively venial and might be inevitable, but an uncontrolled riot of the Germinal type might be regrettable, and sabotaging the pumps or the safety arrangements would be generally condemned.³⁴

³³ Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume I*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 875.

³⁴ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Workers: Worlds of Labour* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 11. On the use of violence by workers against their employers, see Louis Adamic, *Dynamite! A Century of Class Violence in America, 1830-1930*, Rebel Press Edition (London: Rebel Press, 1984); Philip Taft, “Violence in American

While workers and bosses both on occasion utilize violence during class struggles, members of these classes commit violent acts for different reasons. Employing-class violence is, by-and-large, the product of that class's efforts to maintain the status quo, to perpetuate an unequal system of social relations. Thus, capitalists employ violence primarily in order to maintain their rule or reproduce the system with "leaner" production techniques. Indeed, the speed-up and stretch-out so common to capitalist workplaces have made work more stressful and dangerous, while the highly efficient techniques of twentieth century capitalist production pushed millions of working people onto the unemployment lines, a phenomenon that Marx argued was a natural feature of capitalism.³⁵ Contrast that with working-class militants, who, in the heart of a struggle to attain a living wage, reduce hours on the job, or create a democratic workplace, beat up a scab, land a haymaker on a foreman's jaw, or toss a block of wood into a piece of machinery. Not only are workers' violent acts comparatively rare, they are most often individual, relatively minor acts designed to do little more than release some of the pressures inherent to working-class life or exact retribution against an employer whose abuses of power went unchecked for too long. In other words, while studying business history and finding examples of violence by workers against employers might be likened to finding a needle in a haystack, to study labor history and discover employing class violence against workers is akin to studying the prom and finding examples of dancing.

Labor Disputes," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 364 (March 1966): 127-140.

³⁵ For an analysis of what Marx called the "reserve army of labor," see Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974), 382-401.

At the center of “Red Harbor” are lumber workers and the conflicts they waged against their employers. That said, I have strived to refrain from writing yet another history of “lumber and labor,” a feat performed repeatedly by scholars and journalists representing several political ideologies, nearly all of whom were wed to a methodology focusing on regional or national forms of labor’s institutions.³⁶ Instead, this is a study of local rank-and-file activists. As such, this study takes direct aim at the men and women who did the difficult, dangerous jobs of workplace and community organizing. However, this work is distinguished from those who, following David Montgomery’s insights, highlight the work of a “militant minority” of workers, those who “endeavored to weld their workmates and neighbors into a self-aware and purposeful working class.”³⁷ As explained below, there existed no vast chasm between the beliefs, motivations, and tactics of a “minority” or vanguard and the much larger group of activists who struck at the slightest provocation and turned out with regularity to radical cultural, social, and political events. In so doing, this study seeks to highlight the importance of the Wobblies’ vision that “We Are All Leaders,” not “Some of Us Are Leaders.”

Key to this analysis have been insights drawn from members of the broad anarchist movement, who have spent generations pointing out the latent, often unrealized, potential for rank-and-file activists to act with little to no coercive, top-down control.

³⁶ Charlotte Todes, *Lumber and Labor* (New York: International Publishers, 1931); Jerry Lembcke and William M. Tattam (New York: International Publishers, 1984); John Hughes and Ryan Teague Beckwith, ed., *On the Harbor: From Black Friday to Nirvana* (Aberdeen: The Daily World, 2001); Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 4, 191-194, 220-225; Robert L. Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods: The IWW in the Pacific Northwest* (Eugene: University of Oregon Press, 1967), 40-43, 57-59; Philip J. Dreyfus, “The IWW and the Limits of Inter-Ethnic Organizing: Reds, Whites, and Greeks in Grays Harbor, Washington, 1912,” *Labor History* 38 (Fall 1997), 450-471; Charles Pierce LeWarne, “The Aberdeen, Washington Free Speech Fight of 1911-1912,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 66 (January 1975), 1-15; Vernon Jensen, *Lumber and Labor* (New York: J. J. Little and Ives Company, 1945; New York: Arno Press, 1971).

³⁷ David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 2.

When allowed to mold their own unions into a shape that best fit local circumstances, these grassroots unions inspired workers to take ownership of the movement itself, an act that, according to anarchist Rudolf Rocker, inspired a “tenacious belligerence” among self-activated workers.³⁸

Wobblies play a central role in this thesis. It was clear by reading IWW members’ words and studying their actions that their program for revolutionary social change began internally, as IWWs adopted and rigorously enforced a decentralized, democratic structure in which leaders had little control over, or knowledge of, branch activities. But the anarchism of the Wobblies was not confined to their decentralized structure and tactics; it was rather a fundamental element of IWW ideology. The IWW was a syndicalist organization, and as Lucien van der Walt and Michael Schmidt argued, syndicalism was “the progeny of anarchism,” and thus served as a vehicle for emancipation from both capitalism and the state.³⁹ Some IWW studies have emphasized the anarchist influences on the Wobblies, while historian Mark Leier went so far as to call the IWW “the most important American expression of anarchism.”⁴⁰ Indeed, the organization was both anticapitalist and antistatist, viewing all states -- even so-called workers’ states -- as inherently bureaucratic, hierarchical, and oppressive.⁴¹

³⁸ Rudolf Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, new ed. (London: Pluto Press, 1989), 92.

³⁹ Lucien van der Walt and Michael Schmidt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (Oakland: AK Press, 2009), 153.

⁴⁰ Salvadore Salerno, *Red November, Black November: Culture and Community in the Industrial Workers of the World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989); and “No God, No Master: Italian Anarchists and the Industrial Workers of the World,” in *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism: Politics, Labor, and Culture*, ed. Philip J. Cannistraro and Gerald Meyer (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 171-188; Salerno, ed., *Direct Action and Sabotage: Three Classic IWW Pamphlets from the IWW* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Press, 1997); Schmidt and van der Walt, *Black Flame*, 16-17, 159-160; Leier, *Where the Fraser River Flows*. Cited in Leier, *Bakunin: The Creative Passion* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2006), 298.

⁴¹ This is not to argue that all Wobblies were anarchists or that most of the IWW’s struggles were directed towards overthrowing the state, only that the IWW’s program included a number of anarchist principles.

The equation of syndicalism with anarchism is by no means a consensus; in fact, scholars have expressed widely divergent views of what constitutes a syndicalist organization. More than one historian has identified syndicalism with terrorism, while Patrick Renshaw sought to bestow IWWs with respectability that they surely did not seek by declaring their organization as a forerunner of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).⁴² More recently, a number of historians have argued that the Wobblies were the best example of American workers' "mood of syndicalism," one manifested primarily on the shop floor by workers with an innate distrust for parliamentary "socialism" and a desire for workers to gain control over production. Popularized by sociologist Howard Kimeldorf, this perspective connects the anarcho-syndicalism of the IWW with the so-called "business syndicalism" of trade unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor (AFL). Syndicalists themselves vehemently disagree with all of these assessments, rejecting identification with the CIO, terrorism, and with the AFL whose "business syndicalism" bore only a superficial similarity to the anarcho-syndicalism of the Wobblies. By conflating syndicalism with trade unionism, these scholars, including Kimeldorf, David Brundage, and Bruce Nelson, have focused on certain similarities, such as both groups' utilization of direct action over parliamentary politics and hostility towards professional politicians, rather than the far greater distinguishing features: the Wobblies' revolutionary opposition to capitalism and the state, their classically anarcho-syndicalist vision of unions as the primary agents of revolutionary action, and the influence and leadership by unskilled immigrant laborers

⁴² Thames Williamson, *Problems in American Democracy* (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1922), 119; Samuel P. Orth, *The Armies of Labor – The Chronicle of the Organised Wage-Earners* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919), 188-219; Renshaw, *The Wobblies*, 214-215.

over the IWW.⁴³ As the pages that follow will attest, there existed a sea of difference between even the most radical AFL craft unions and the IWW, distinctions that hindered the growth of the former organizations and sent waves of labor activists into the One Big Union of all workers.⁴⁴

To syndicalists, unions are both the vehicles for revolutionary change and the form of social organization upon which the new society will be built. As historian Wayne Thorpe concluded, syndicalists were “the anarchist current within the workers’ movement.”⁴⁵ Rudolph Rocker argued that for syndicalists, unions serve three main purposes. First, unions are the fighting organizations of workers in their daily struggles with their employers, vehicles by which workers can secure material improvements. Second, unions must serve educational functions, preparing workers for their future task: controlling industry and distributing goods on an equitable basis. Third, syndicalist unions are designed to function as the social cells for the future society, carrying out production and distribution after the revolution without the exploitation of the capitalist or the oppression of the state. Thus, the 1908 Preamble to the IWW Constitution reads in part, “The army of production must be organized, not only for every-day struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on the production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.”⁴⁶ Throughout this thesis I identify the IWW as a syndicalist organization, one striving for the immediate gains that will improve workers’ basic

⁴³ Howard Kimeldorf, *Battling for American Labor: Wobblies, Craft Workers, and the Making of the Union Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront*; David Brundage, *The Making of Western Labor Radicalism: Denver’s Organized Workers, 1878-1905* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

⁴⁴ See Chapters 5-7.

⁴⁵ Cited in Schmidt and van der Walt, *Black Flame*, 153.

⁴⁶ “Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World,” in *Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology*, ed. Joyce L. Kornbluh, New and Expanded Edition (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 1998), 12-13.

existence, and yet one dedicated to throwing off the yoke of capitalism and the state through a general strike. Thus, while much of the IWW sections of the thesis are dedicated to the “fighting” of the union and its allies, I likewise analyze the social and cultural activities of the Wobblies, those designed to sustain the movement and prepare its members for their climactic battle with capital.

This thesis focuses on class, violence, and community in Grays Harbor, Washington. But what, if anything, can “Red Harbor” tell us about other communities in Washington State, the American West, and all of North America? The histories and cultures of two places are never identical and thus a study of the Grays Harbor region cannot provide readers with a blow-by-blow schema transferrable to other places; nor will the labor history of “Red Harbor” necessarily resemble that which appears in Norman Clark’s *Mill Town*, or John McClelland’s *Wobbly War*, despite the fact that Everett and Centralia both lay relatively close to Grays Harbor and paralleled its industrial development.⁴⁷ But while the details may differ considerably, early Grays Harbor history does provide insights into the experiences of people as they experienced industrialization, immigration, radicalization, and the most overt forms of class conflict. “Red Harbor” thus provides a window into North American communities as they became increasingly polarized around class, and as that polarization was channeled into starkly different political platforms by the employing class and working class.

Furthermore, Grays Harbor was significant in its own right as an industrial behemoth and a major center of the Pacific Northwest radical and labor movements. Far

⁴⁷ Norman Clark, *Mill Town: A Social History of Everett, Washington, from Its Earliest Beginnings on the Shores of Puget Sound to the Tragic and Infamous Event Known as the Everett Massacre* (Seattle: University of Washington Press: 1970, Fifth Printing, 1990); John McClelland, *Wobbly War: The Centralia Story* (Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society, 1987).

from simply another “mill town,” one of the dozens of lumber communities that dotted Washington and Oregon, the Harbor was the center of the Pacific Northwest lumber industry. In terms of importance to the industrial economy and centrality to the North American labor and radical movements Grays Harbor bears its closest resemblance with the resource-extracting towns of the Rocky Mountains: Butte, Montana, Cripple Creek and Ludlow, Colorado, and Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, all of which have become the subjects of their own cottage industry of historical studies.⁴⁸ Like these mining towns, the Harbor was a significant industrial site, one that consistently rated as the top lumber-producing and lumber-shipping regions of the world. Moreover, Grays Harbor was heavily unionized, home to dozens of trade unions, and according to the President of the Washington State Federation of Labor, the Harbor boasted “more organized men in this section, according to the population, than any other place in the state.”⁴⁹ The Harbor likewise proved itself as a beacon of radicalism, a place capable of sparking regional mass strikes, as occurred in 1912, 1917, 1923, and 1935, and like its counterparts in the Mountain West, was the site of its own “labor wars,” brutal conflicts between lumber workers and lumber barons.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ See Mary Murphy, *Mining Cultures: Men, Women, and Leisure in Butte, 1914-1941* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Jerry W. Calvert, *The Gibraltar: Socialism and Labor in Butte, Montana, 1895-1920* (Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1988); David M. Emmons, *The Butte Irish: Class and Ethnicity in An American Mining Town, 1875-1925* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Jameson, *All that Glitters*; Andrews, *Killing for Coal*; Mark Wyman, *Hard Rock Epic: Western Miners and the Industrial Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Priscilla Long, *Where the Sun Never Shines: A History of America’s Bloody Coal Industry* (New York: Paragon House, 1989); George S. McGovern and Leonard F. Guttridge, *The Great Coalfield War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972).

⁴⁹ On the tremendous number of local unions in Grays Harbor, see Chapters 4 and 5. *Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Washington State Federation of Labor*, 12.

⁵⁰ The fact that Grays Harbor avoided its own “massacre” of the type experiences by other Pacific Northwest towns has apparently been the most important distinguishing feature between the Harbor and its more famous counterparts of Everett and Centralia. Indeed, the towns where the “Everett Massacre” and “Centralia Massacre” occurred have been covered in numerous scholarly and popular historical accounts, while Grays Harbor, with its much larger IWW movement, has yet to receive a full treatment by an academic historian. The term “labor wars” has been used by historians and journalists to detail the major

A single ethnic group, Finnish Americans, occupies an important role in this thesis. Finns were the largest, most militant, and most radical section of the Grays Harbor working class; they shared the latter two characteristics with their fellow Finnish immigrant workers for the US as a whole. Thus, any study lacking a careful analysis of their role within the Pacific Northwest labor movement, particularly among lumber and maritime workers, would be woefully inadequate. In seeking to weave the history of this extraordinarily radical group of workers into a study of working-class conflict and community at-large, I have strived to interact with the small but vibrant field of Finnish-American Studies. Beginning in the 1970s a small group of scholars and activist historians wrote prolifically about that group's working-class institutions, struggles, and cultural traditions. Unfortunately, most of these studies focused on parliamentary leftists such as Finnish members of the Socialist and Communist Parties.⁵¹ In addition, few studies of Finnish-American radicalism have strayed outside the American Midwest, which has left the rich history of Finnish radicalism in the Pacific Northwest relatively undocumented.⁵² "Red Harbor" reframes the subject of Finnish working-class radicalism, both ideologically and geographically, directing its lens at a community in the Pacific Northwest and on Finnish-American syndicalists. Finns formed the nucleus of Grays Harbor socialism, syndicalism, and communism between 1904 and 1940,

violent confrontations between labor and capital during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See J. Anthony Lukas, *Big Trouble: A Murder in a Small Western Town Sets off A Struggle for the Soul of America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997); Sidney Lens, *Labor Wars: From the Molly Maguires to the Sit Downs* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973).

⁵¹ See Michael Karni and Douglas J. Ollila, Jr., *For the Common Good: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America* (Superior, WI: Tyomies Society, 1977); Karni, Matti E. Kaups, and Douglas J. Ollila, *The Finnish Experience in the Western Great Lakes Region: New Perspectives* (Turku: Institute for Migration Studies, 1975).

⁵² Some exceptions to this rule are Paul George Hummasti, *Finnish Radicals in Astoria, Oregon: A Study in Immigrant Socialism, 1904-1940* (New York: Arno Press, 1979); Peter T. Alter's article "The Creation of A Multi-Ethnic Peoplehood: The Wilkeson, Washington Experience," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 15:3 (Spring 1996): 3-21; Goings, "Hall Syndicalism: Radical Finns and Wobbly Culture in Grays Harbor, Washington," *Journal of Finnish Studies* 14:1 (Summer 2010): 18-28.

contributing their halls, members, finances, and cultural practices to the wider movement.⁵³ This thesis thus takes seriously the contributions made by these immigrant radicals to the conflicts and social movements that animated Harbor history during the early twentieth century.

Much as this study begins years before the formation of the IWW, it also extends well into the 1930s, when, with a few exceptions, the Wobblies had ceased to be a major force on the Harbor. The final two chapters comprise a section dealing with relations between the IWW and members of the communist movement, as the insurgent “Reds” challenged the Wobs for the mantle of revolutionary supremacy in the region. This is the first major study of Pacific Northwest Communists to benefit from the rich archival holdings of the Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Recent History (RtsKhIDNI), made available on microfilm at the Tamiment Library at New York University.⁵⁴ This collection is unprecedented in the detail provided about party activists at the local, plant, block, and neighborhood level, including a fair amount of confidential material not hinted at in the Party press. It also revealed a great interest among CP leaders and rank-and-file activists in the Grays Harbor region. In some ways, the tremendous attention paid by the CP to the Harbor’s workers was surprising. The

⁵³ For the involvement of Finnish Americans in the Grays Harbor left during the late 1930s, see John C. Hughes and Robert Saltvig, “Who Killed Laura Law?” in *On the Harbor: From Black Friday to Nirvana*, ed. John C. Hughes and Ryan Teague Beckwith, 100-123.

⁵⁴ Throughout the thesis I refer to the CPUSA’s collection held at the Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Recent History, Tamiment Library, New York University, New York, NY (hereafter RtsKhIDNI). Earlier studies of the CP in this region include Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*; Paul William Parks, “Labor Relations in the Grays Harbor Lumber Industry” (M.A. thesis, University of Washington, 1948); Charles Larrowe, *Harry Bridges: The Rise and Fall of Radical Labor in the United States* (New York: Lawrence Hill, 1972); Jonathan Dembo, *Unions and Politics in Washington State, 1885-1935* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982); Adam J. Hodges, “Thinking Globally, Acting Locally: The Portland Soviet and the Emergence of American Communism, 1918-1920,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 98:3 (Summer 2007): 115-129. Probably the finest collection of writings on the history of Communism in Washington State can be found on the website of the Harry Bridges Labor Center at the University of Washington. See “Communism in Washington State: History and Memory,” <http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/cpproject/index.shtml>, Accessed 11 November 2009.

Party has long been identified with populous urban areas, mostly in the East and Midwest, far away from the wooded regions of the Pacific Northwest. Furthermore, by the early 1930s Grays Harbor had lost much of its significance as a manufacturing base.⁵⁵ But this region, with its traditions of radical labor and community activism, was nonetheless a major focus for members of the CP due, in part, to their recognition that Harbor workers had deeply held traditions of militancy and radicalism. Party sources reveal CP branches in Aberdeen and Hoquiam, and numerous communist auxiliaries based in the shop floor and community, as the division between workplace and community became increasingly clouded. Like the Wobblies before them, Communists led strikes in the isolated logging camps tucked back among the giant evergreens, in the many urban lumber mills, and at the shingle mills scattered throughout the Harbor. These sources largely support the conclusions made by radical social historians of the CP, who argued that Party activists based their program around local conditions directed towards improving the material existences of working people, rather than being a vanguard for a Soviet takeover of the US.

Whether one supports the analytical framework employed in this thesis, my work does have a strong foundation in primary research. I consulted dozens of manuscript collections, census and city directories, newspapers, death records, and oral histories. Unfortunately, Grays Harbor trade unions, the IWW, CP, and Finnish radicals have no standard manuscript collections. Instead, much of what I was able to locate was spread out over scores of collections at several research institutions, especially the University of Washington, Wayne State University, the Tamiment Library, Finlandia University, and

⁵⁵ William G. Robbins, "The Social Context of Forestry: The Pacific Northwest in the Twentieth Century," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 16:4 (October 1985): 417-418.

the Washington State Archives and Southwest Washington State Archives in Olympia. These sources are of very uneven quality and quantity, and as with most research projects, the gaps have been filled in by supplementary findings in newspapers, census data, and secondary sources. The local press proved to be of the most assistance. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, Aberdeen, Hoquiam, and surrounding towns were home to literally dozens of small newspapers, representing Republican, Democratic, socialist, syndicalist, Communist, and trade union perspectives.⁵⁶ Serial collections stretching out over many years remain for several of the newspapers, including the *Aberdeen Daily World*, *Daily Washingtonian*, *Grays Harbor Post*, and *Aberdeen Herald*.⁵⁷ Census, death records, and city directory lists helped me identify who it was I was writing about, leaving gaping holes in their life stories, but at least identifying significant details about the people's age, sex, occupation, ethnicity, race, and neighborhood. Through this data I was able to reconstruct neighborhoods, workplaces, unions, and radical groups, the contents of the membership remained hidden just beneath the surface of earlier studies.

“Red Harbor” is organized both topically and chronologically. Chapter 2 provides an analysis of the major employers in Grays Harbor. It begins by shattering the myth of lumbermen as a highly individualistic group of entrepreneurs by demonstrating instead that employers cooperated at many levels in a conscious effort to establish themselves as an unchallenged oligarchy. Chapter 3 delves more deeply into the history

⁵⁶ Ed Van Syckle, *The River Pioneers: The Early Days on Grays Harbor* (Seattle: Pacific Search Press, 1982).

⁵⁷ Since its first publication in 1908, the *Aberdeen World* has been printed under the title *Aberdeen World*, *Daily World*, and *Aberdeen Daily World*. The newspaper was called the *Aberdeen Daily World* for the majority of the period covered in this thesis. For the sake of consistency, I will refer to it only as the *Aberdeen Daily World* throughout this work. See, Hughes and Beckwith, *On the Harbor*, 2-3.

of Grays Harbor lumber manufacturers and boss loggers, examining that group's strategies to combat unions and radical organizations through employers' associations, labor spies, and violent direct action against labor activists. Chapter 4 and 5 focus on the Grays Harbor trade union movement, one of the largest local movements in the country, though one recurrently hamstrung by its members' devotion to dominant racial and gender hierarchies, unwillingness to organize those outside their narrow craft constituency, and inability to mobilize alongside the emerging groups of working-class militants, even as those groups burst to the surface all around them. Chapter 6 shifts from a focus on the mainstream trade union movement to examine the early history of the immigrant left in the region, particularly the Finnish socialists who steered the early radical labor movement on the Harbor. Chapter 7 picks up during the early 1910s with the establishment of the Grays Harbor branches of the IWW, providing a substantive analysis of the relationship between the Wobblies and their communities. Chapter 8 provides a history of the Grays Harbor IWW between the 1912 and 1917 lumber strikes, the two largest industry conflicts of the 1910s in the Pacific Northwest lumber industry. Chapters 9-11 were written as a conscious assault on the myth of the IWW's decline and demise in the aftermath of World War I. Borrowing heavily from anarcho-syndicalist theory, these chapters contend that the decentralized, democratic structure of the IWW was one of its greatest strengths, allowing the organization to function coherently even as its high-level officials experienced the heights of state repression and boss terror. Chapter 12 is a study of the relationship between the IWW and class violence. It concludes both that IWWs used violence against their employers during labor struggles, and that Wobblies were some of the most dedicated opponents of employing-class

violence during the early twentieth century. Finally, Chapters 13-15 examine at the persistence of the Wobblies during the 1920s and 1930s, the constituency of the IWW during these years, as well as their relationship with an energetic CP. These final three chapters also explore the continued of rank-and-file militancy of lumber workers in Grays Harbor, demonstrating that there was no lull in working class consciousness during the “lean” 1920s, and that the men and women of Grays Harbor were not passive and contented before the passage of landmark labor legislation during the 1930s.

CHAPTER II

COOPERATIVE CAPITALISTS IN THE GRAYS HARBOR LUMBER INDUSTRY

On 1 April 1895, journalists and photographers were on hand in Aberdeen to record the newly finished tracks of the Northern Pacific Railroad. The rail line had taken a circuitous route to the town. In 1894, after refusing the Northern Pacific's exorbitant price of \$35,000 to extend the line into their city, several "public spirited" Aberdeen residents pledged to do the work themselves. Three wealthy Aberdonians, including lumberman J. M. Weatherwax, purchased five thousand pieces of rail salvaged from the British barkentine *Abercorn*, which had run ashore in Grays Harbor in June of 1888. Joining Weatherwax were lumber mill owners A. J. West and Henry Wilson, who donated railroad ties to the project, while town founder and major land owner Samuel Benn offered lots to potential laborers in exchange for ten days work or a twenty-dollar donation to the project.¹ After many months of dedicated labor on the line Aberdeen finally had its prized rail connection to the east. To celebrate what many locals saw as a major step toward Aberdeen's becoming a "Great City," Jean B. Stewart, sometimes called the "mother of Aberdeen," and wife of lumber capitalist James Stewart, penned a poem that could have been the anthem for her entire class:

'Tis well, while thus we can unite
As brothers in a common cause,
'Til at the top our name we write,
Nor Time nor Fate shall bid us pause.²

Sixteen years after Aberdeen linked up with the Northern Pacific, in November 1911, its original boosters joined five hundred like-minded citizens at the Aberdeen Elks' club to plan their course of action to repel the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW),

¹ Van Syckle, *The River Pioneers*, 209-210.

² *Aberdeen Herald*, 27 December 1894; 4 January 1895.

whose recent “invasion” of the Harbor towns had raised the specter of anarchy in the region. Mere hours after the meeting where its participants had vowed to “render . . . any assistance within our power in their efforts to preserve order and uphold the laws,” members of the newly formed Citizens’ Committee armed themselves and surrounded a group of IWWs as they waited to enter the Empire Theatre, the site of a rally planned for that evening.³ What followed next was a bloody rout. With their hands gripped tightly around ax handles, hundreds of newly deputized police, drawn from the ranks of the local bourgeoisie, fell upon the unsuspecting Wobblies, letting loose furious blows upon the rebel workers’ heads and bodies as they passed. For the next two months, the merchants and manufacturers who comprised the Citizens’ Committee coordinated street patrols, guarded the town entrances, searched trains entering Aberdeen, and visited nearby towns and farms to ask their residents to evict the radicals from the county’s rural periphery. These same respectable gentlemen, the “well organized gang of thieves” as IWW “Stumpy” Payne called them, attacked soapboxers and onlookers with clubs, deported dozens of radicals from town, and sprayed a high-power water hose at women, children, and infants.⁴ A cartoon featured on the front page of the IWW’s *Industrial Worker* showed a massive, burly thug with his hand wrapped around a miniscule man labeled “IWW,” while a giant hand labeled “Lumber Trust,” “Aberdeen,” and “The Master’s Hand” urged the thug on from behind. Only slightly missing its mark, this cartoon

³ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 24 November 1911.

⁴ *Industrial Worker* (Spokane, WA), 21 January 1911; Charles Pierce LeWarne, “The Aberdeen, Washington, Free Speech Fight,” 4-5; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 25, 26 November 1911; *Daily Washingtonian* (Hoquiam, WA), 25 November 1911.

implied that the Aberdeen “Lumber Trust” was in control of the thugs. In fact, the local employers and the “citizens mob,” as the IWW called it, were one and the same.⁵

During the two decades that separated the extension of the Northern Pacific into Aberdeen and deportation of the Wobblies out of town, the cooperative networks of employers that made these events possible were the single most conspicuous element of the energetic capitalist class who ran local -- and to an increasing degree, state-wide -- affairs.⁶ Indeed, practically every aspect of local merchants and manufacturers’ commercial lives was made possible through cooperative arrangements among those at the top of the Harbor’s social hierarchy. These men gathered in the halls of the Elks’ club and chambers of commerce to discuss freight and log prices, coordinate mill closures, and fraternize with men whose interests and experiences mirrored their own. This mutual class feeling did not stop at the boundaries of glad-handing at the lodge or fighting for lower freight rates, but extended into the realm of labor relations, where its impact on wage laborers and their families was greatest.

⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 11 April 1912. Members of the Citizens’ Committee who participated in the violent assaults on Wobblies included: George J. Wolfe, W. J. Patterson, W. B. Mack, and owners of the Kaufman Brothers store in Aberdeen. See *Industrial Worker*, 21 December; 18 April 1911.

⁶ On the power exerted by lumbermen in the Washington State Legislature, see *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 14 November 1904; Robert E. Ficken, *Lumber and Politics: The Career of Mark E. Reed* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980). A number of Grays Harbor employers also served as members of the Washington State Legislature, including Robert Polson of Hoquiam, A. P. Stockwell of Aberdeen, and M. C. Harris, owner of the Grays Harbor Land Company. One illustration of the close relationships between employers’ associations on the Harbor and the Washington State Legislature can be seen in the case of L. H. Brewer, Hoquiam attorney and an active participant in the development of the Hoquiam Commercial Club and in the advancement of the Southwest Washington Development Association. Brewer was elected to the Legislature in 1903 and served as a member of the Washington State Republican Central Committee for twenty-five years. See Herbert Hunt and F. C. Kaylor, *Washington, West of the Cascades: Historical and Descriptive; the Explorers, the Indians, the Pioneers, the Modern* (Seattle: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1917), 130-131, 393-395, 476. Notably, George H. Emerson, who was often called “the Father of Hoquiam,” and who ran the Northwestern Lumber mill, was offered the Republican nomination for Governor of the State of Washington. Emerson, who never ran for public office, declined the offer. See “Little Stories of Hoquiam A Half Century Ago,” Hoquiam History Collection, Hoquiam Public Library, Hoquiam, Washington. Harbor employers had an even tighter grip on local political offices. Large employers who were elected Mayor of Aberdeen, included land speculators E. B. Benn and James A. Hood, and lumbermen John M. Weatherwax and A. J. West. See Hunt and Kaylor, *Washington: West of the Cascades*.

It was in their struggles with workers when employers clung most tenaciously to their image as self-made men whose success was owed to their individual talents and determination. Thus, they demanded the open shop, on the grounds that it enabled workers to exercise the same independent spirit that animated their own actions. Yet when wage laborers entered into contracts, as their employers insisted, “as individuals,” they entered an uneven playing field where their employer had not only the judges, police, and financial resources on their side, but also the assistance of their fellow capitalists who joined with one another to lower wages, shut down plants, and break unions.⁷ Indeed, for every courageous act of individualism made by lumber manufacturers, from relocating to an area previously uncharted by industry to bucking the system by refusing to abide by lumber price controls, there were scores of meetings of chambers of commerce, commercial clubs, Elks clubs, and the Hoo Hoos, which in lumber country, were all collective projects by and for capital.⁸

Despite the massive body of evidence testifying to lumber manufacturers’ collectivist practices, scholars of the Pacific Northwest lumber industry have spent nearly a century variously extolling and condemning the extreme individualism of the vaunted lumberman. Indeed, from boosters and propagandists to popular historians and seasoned academics, scholars writing from points of the political spectrum have been in agreement with Vernon H. Jensen, who argued, “The lumber industry, notable for the individualism of its members, has not been well-organized in terms of either labor or capital.”⁹

⁷ *Shingle Weaver*, May 1905.

⁸ On the frequency of employer associations’ meetings, see *Aberdeen Herald*, 13 April 1905; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 22 July 1908; *Grays Harbor Post*, 4 March 1905; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 24 September 1904; 28 February 1905; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 13 October 1911. On the class composition of the Elks and Hoo Hoos, see pages 50-52.

⁹ Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 30. For similar analyses, see Charles E. Twining, *Phil Weyerhaeuser, Lumberman* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), 100; Michael Williams, *Americans and Their*

Analyses of this type have varied from scholars' examinations of their subjects' "cutthroat competition" to their individualistic methods of labor relations.¹⁰ What has been constant, however, is the scholarly emphasis on the individual lumberman and his pursuit of individual goals, rather than those of lumbermen acting as a class. By adopting this methodology, scholars of the lumber industry have followed the perspectives of lumber manufacturers themselves, leading even the analysis of so sober a historian as Norman Clark to write of lumbermen that "as a corollary to such principles of individual privacy, these men held to an equally fierce individualism."¹¹ This line of reasoning has led historians to mischaracterize the thought and action of lumber manufacturers.¹² It is an argument based on a few examples of individual behavior, rather than focusing on the more prevalent illustrations of employer class cooperation. In their *Washington: A Centennial History*, historians Robert E. Ficken and Charles P. LeWarne, summarized this century of scholarly focus, declaring, "Through it all, lumbering remained a highly individualistic enterprise, in which competitors had divergent interests and only in the rarest of circumstances came together in honest pursuit of common objectives."¹³

In this chapter and the next, I seek to correct these misleading conceptions by focusing on the lumbermen and boss loggers who lived and employed labor in Aberdeen,

Forests: A Historical Geography (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, First Paperback Edition, 1992), 20; William G. Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise: Coos Bay, Oregon* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 110; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 128

¹⁰ On "cutthroat competition," see Cloide R. Howd, *Industrial Relations in the West Coast Lumber Industry*, Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, No. 349 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1924), 27. On "cut-throat struggle," see Todes, *Lumber and Labor*, 31. See also Ficken, *Lumber and Politics*.

¹¹ Clark, *Mill Town*, 64

¹² For examples of scholars of the lumber industry who uncritically accepted employers' view points, see Ficken, *Lumber and Politics*; Thomas R. Cox, *Mills and Markets: A History of the Pacific Coast Lumber Industry to 1900* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974); Andrew M. Prouty, "More Deadly Than War!" *Pacific Coast Logging, 1827-1981* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985).

¹³ Robert E. Ficken and Charles P. LeWarne, *Washington: A Centennial History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989), 47.

Hoquiam, and Cosmopolis during the early twentieth century. Like all employers, these men's attitudes and actions were shaped by interactions with workers, unions, and radical organizations. By examining the dialectical relationship between workers and owners, classes with oppositional interests, it is possible to see the process through which Harbor employers became a class for itself. While these "Harbor cities" were not "typical" Pacific Northwest towns -- indeed it would be difficult to find any such place that fit this classification -- they do provide us a model for a case study of the processes affecting all of the North American West. Conclusions reached here will shape further generalization to the scores of "mill towns" that dotted the western halves of Washington and Oregon: Everett, Bellingham, Raymond, South Bend, Port Angeles, Coos Bay, and Marshfield. It was, after all, these cooperative arrangements that enabled Grays Harbor lumbermen to rule over their vast timber empire in a manner envied around the Pacific Northwest. They were the most prolific manufacturers and shippers of lumber in the nation, were as austere and brutal in their methods of labor relations as any of their peers, and indeed went to any length necessary to preserve their dominance over community affairs.¹⁴

One of the best-known works on early Grays Harbor history is Ed Van Syckle's *The River Pioneers*, an eloquent glimpse into the lives of the region's early settlers. Included in the book are several short vignettes of men such as Ed Campbell, a rancher, post master, and Hoquiam town founder; and James A. Karr, a teacher, Chehalis County auditor, and legislator. A talented social historian, Van Syckle paints a multi-layered

¹⁴ The Grays Harbor region consistently ranked as the most prolific lumber-shipping region in the world. See Fred Lockley, "Grays Harbor: The Largest Lumber-Shipping Port in the World," *Pacific Monthly* 17:6 (June 1907): 721; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 21 December 1904; 20 January; 1 September; 6 October 1906; *Grays Harbor Post*, 20 April; 25 May; 14 September 1907; 5 September 1908; 2 September 1911; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 27 June; 29 August 1908; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 4 February 1910. On the brutal methods of repressing unions and strikes, see below, Chapters 3 and 7.

portrait of “pioneer” family life, dealing with equal adeptness with the initial clearing of land and the daily domestic labors of women like Harriet Campbell and Amanda Fry. What emerged were thick descriptions of the social fabric that held together the tiny communities as they emerged out of riverside forests. Unfortunately, this is not a complete picture of Grays Harbor.¹⁵

If the iconic images of Harbor history displayed in works like *The River Pioneers* do not fit with reality, then the popular history and legend of individualistic lumber manufacturers sit on even shakier foundations. Indeed, in nearly every major event to touch the Harbor during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, what defines the character of lumbermen was less the hardy pioneer individualism of popular mythology than the devoted cooperation of local merchants and manufacturers. From early on, through their use of boards of trade to lure investment and settlers to the towns, their monopoly over the levers of local government, and their membership in fraternal and commercial associations, we can see the early formation of an oligarchy in the cities of Aberdeen, Hoquiam, and Cosmopolis.¹⁶

From the 1880s onward, it was clear that the early history of Grays Harbor, including its cities’ drive for incorporation, was to be largely a project by and for capital. George H. Emerson, an agent for lumberman A. M. Simpson of San Francisco, traveled into the Harbor country first in the summer of 1880 and purchased three hundred acres in what is today Hoquiam from Johnny James, one of the area’s first white residents. After a sturdy effort, laborers finally completed the North Western Lumber Company mill in

¹⁵ Van Syckle, *The River Pioneers*, 250-262.

¹⁶ Information about local lumbermen’s control over local elected and appointed political offices can be found in Lewarne, “The Aberdeen, Washington, Free Speech Fight,” 8-9; Hughes and Beckwith, *On the Harbor*, 72-75. See also note 6 above.

1882. In 1884 the mill was incorporated and by 1897 it was turning out about 100,000 board feet per day. Like all western capitalists, Emerson and his colleagues understood the central importance of the railroad to their project to develop Hoquiam and exploit the region's vast resources. In the 1880s and 1890s cities in Washington State fought bitterly for the extension of rail lines into their settlements and cities. The rail lines promised both a quick way to transport workers and supplies into the growing settlements and a way to connect the rich Grays Harbor forest products with the markets to the east.¹⁷

On 4 June 1889, several prominent Hoquiam residents, including Emerson, John F. Soule, secretary and stockholder in the North Western Mill Company, and boss logger W. D. Mack, met and set up Hoquiam's first government. A key to the move for incorporation was the need to unite an enthusiastic group of municipal boosters capable of attracting immigrants to work in the mills and woods, and more importantly, to convince officials of the Northern Pacific Railroad to extend their lines into the city.¹⁸ Along with Otis Moore, editor of the *Washingtonian*, these Hoquiam "city fathers," conducted several widely publicized trips to metropolitan areas in hopes of inducing the type of land speculation and rising land prices that would result from news of the imminent arrival of a rail line into Hoquiam.¹⁹ Their efforts yielded great results. In

¹⁷ "How A Western City Grows: Hoquiam, Washington," Hoquiam History Records, Hoquiam Public Library Archives, Hoquiam, WA; *South-western Washington, Its Topography, Climate, Resources, Productions ... and Pen Sketches of their Representative Business Men* (Olympia: Pacific Publishing Company, 1890), 185-198; "Hoquiam Attractions," City of Hoquiam website accessed on May 2008 (<http://cityofhoquiam.com/attractions.php>); *Daily Washingtonian*, January 25, 1927, p. 6; George Emerson, "Lumbering on Grays Harbor," *Grays Harbor Post*, 5 October 1907; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, December 15, 1904; Fred Lockley, "Gray's [sic] Harbor: The Largest Lumber-Shipping Port in the World," *Pacific Monthly* 17:6 (June 1907): 720-729; *Hoquiam Washingtonian*, 27 May 1897; Van Syckle, *The River Pioneers*, 206-212; and *They Tried*; Robert Weinstein, *Grays Harbor, 1885-1913* (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 18-25.

¹⁸ Officials in Hoquiam's municipal government immediately turned to lobbying railroad owners in hopes of luring the Northern Pacific to their city. See *Hoquiam Washingtonian*, 28 May; 18, 25 June 1891.

¹⁹ Otis Moore, editor of the *Hoquiam Washingtonian* and an enthused municipal booster, dedicated much of the space in his newspaper to luring families to Hoquiam through boasts about the city's amenities, as well

1889 alone, the population of Hoquiam rose dramatically from 400 to 1,500.²⁰ In 1890, building in the city tripled and property values advanced by more than 1,000 percent. That same year, on 21 May 1890, Hoquiam was incorporated as a city. In 1927, an official with the Hoquiam Chamber of Commerce summarized the relationship between capital and the establishment of Hoquiam as a city, writing “The development of Hoquiam has been possible thru [sic] the energy and foresight of its industrial leaders. The site of the city was chosen for its locations as a point of least resistance in the receiving of logs and the shipping of lumber. The industries flourished and the town had to grow.”²¹

Just to the east of Hoquiam lies Aberdeen, Hoquiam’s “twin city.” Not receiving its first settlers until the 1850s, and incorporated in 1884, the town nonetheless developed at a breakneck pace. By the first decade of the twentieth century, it had become “Grays Harbor’s jewel.”²² Aberdeen, which began as little more than 740 acres of uncleared forest land where the Wishkah and Chehalis rivers meet, contained 3,747 residents, six sawmills, two shingle mills, two shipyards at the turn of the century. Each day the lumber mills turned out 450,000 board feet. During 1900 alone approximately 250 million logs were converted into lumber at the mills.²³ The town was incorporated on 12 May 1884 with Aberdeen lumbermen, the earliest of whom were A. J. West, Peter

as its potential as a railroad hub “as soon as the Northern Pacific R. R. completes the extension of its line to Hoquiam. Convincing the Northern Pacific to build tracks to Hoquiam became something of an obsession of Moore’s during the early 1890s. See *Hoquiam Washingtonian*, 1, 8 January; 28 May; 18, 25 June; 23 July 1891. The Northern Pacific, however, did not reach Hoquiam until 1899. See Weinstein, *Grays Harbor, 1885-1913*, 18-19.

²⁰ Weinstein, *Grays Harbor: 1885-1913*, 18.

²¹ Van Syckle, *River Pioneers*, 250-262; *Daily Washingtonian*, 25 January 1927. Hoquiam’s first city council consisted of John Richardson, George W. France, O. M. Murphy, and Peter Autzen. J. T. Burns served as Hoquiam’s first mayor.

²² Weinstein, *Grays Harbor*, 22.

²³ Weinstein, *Grays Harbor*, 25; *New International Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, 2nd Ed., s.v. “Aberdeen” (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1914), 32.

Emory, Gilbert F. Mack, A. D. Wood, Fred A. Hart, J. M. Weatherwax, and Charles R. Wilson, each playing a major role in municipal administration.²⁴ These men, along with employers such as George D. Allen, secretary of the Aberdeen Water Company, and town founder Samuel Benn, formed the Aberdeen Board of Trade in 1889, which in the words of one historian, “advertised their great pride in the growing metropolis.”²⁵ The board advertised for settlers and investment, adopting the slogans “The Duluth of Washington” and “the San Francisco of the Northwest” to lure prospects into the damp, gray, forested lands.²⁶

As with her sister city to the west, the chief illustration of early employer cooperation was in the extension of the Northern Pacific rail line into Aberdeen. To this end mill owners heavily though unsuccessfully lobbied the railroad company before finally financing the extension into Aberdeen themselves. On 1 June 1895 these men turned the track over to the Northern Pacific.²⁷ The great promise represented by a rail line to the east, a deep sea port to the west, and surrounded by untapped natural resources that most agreed lay “in the middle of the greatest forest of big timber on the face of the earth” brought new and hitherto undreamed-of development to Aberdeen.²⁸ By 1906 the city had thirty-two manufacturing firms, including eleven saw mills and three shingle

²⁴ Van Syckle, *The River Pioneers*, 368; and *They Tried*, 23-24. Early mayors of the city of Aberdeen included J. M. Weatherwax, C. B. Weatherwax, A. J. West, and A. P. Stockwell, all of who had already established large lumber manufacturing firms on the harbor by the time of incorporation.

²⁵ Weinstein, *Grays Harbor, 1885-1913*, 23; *Aberdeen Herald*, 23 December 1890. In December 1890 the officers of the Board of Trade were: George D. Allen, President; D. E. Dunbar, Vice President; and Fred A. Hart, Secretary.

²⁶ *Aberdeen Herald*, 30 October 1890; “Aberdeen! On Grays Harbor: The Duluth of Washington,” Aberdeen: Before 1920, Aberdeen Timberland Library Special Collections, Aberdeen, Washington (Hereafter ATL). Local boosters tried several variations on the comparison with Duluth, referring to Aberdeen in the *Aberdeen Herald*, 23 October 1890, to “The ‘Duluth’ of the North Pacific Coast.”

²⁷ Weinstein, *Grays Harbor, 1885-1913*, 24.

²⁸ Cited in Stewart Holbrook, *A Narrative of Schafer Bros. Logging Company's Half Century In the Timber* (Seattle: Dogwood Press, 1945), 30. For similar quotations, see “A Typical Lumbering City: Aberdeen, Washington,” *The Coast* 6:1 (July 1903): 6.

mills, and along with Hoquiam and Cosmopolis, comprised the largest lumber port in the world.²⁹

Three miles southeast of Aberdeen lay the company town of Cosmopolis. Hardly the “world city” its name suggests, the little town of six hundred residents in 1908 was owned by the managers of the Pope and Talbot company who purchased the mill from W. H. Perry of the Perry Lumber and Mill Company of Los Angeles in July 1888, renaming it the Grays Harbor Commercial Company seven years later.³⁰ Like many American company towns, Cosmopolis was ruled through a mixture of paternalism and coercion. The company provided modern housing, schools, restaurants, general stores, and even a newspaper. Workers who lived in company housing paid four dollars per month for a private room, \$2.50 for a place in the bunkhouse, and food at the mess house consisting of beef, pork, potatoes, pie, rice, pudding, and vegetables.³¹ Publicizing the activities of the Commercial Company was the *Grays Harbor Post*, a local labor newspaper that condemned the plant for spending one thousand dollars on a “ball” to celebrate its new mess house, while “the men who eat there will get \$1 for ten hours work.”³²

The company did not earn its reputation as the most “bedamned and belabored outfit” in the Pacific Northwest, however, for its low rents and fine cuisine.³³ Criticism came from Harbor businessmen and journalists, conservative and radical unionists, as

²⁹ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 18 August 1905; *Grays Harbor Post*, 4 July 1906; 5 February 1910; *Fourth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor of the State of Washington, 1903-1904* (Olympia, WA: Blankenship Satterlee-Company, 1904), 213; Lockley, “Gray’s [sic] Harbor: The Largest Lumber-Shipping Port in the World.”

³⁰ Weinstein, *Grays Harbor, 1885-1913*, 20; Van Syckle, *They Tried*, 45-47. The price tag on the Cosmopolis mill, which under Perry’s ownership was called the Cosmopolis Mill & Trading Company, was \$135,000. After Pope and Talbot’s purchase of the mill it was renamed the Grays Harbor Mill Company, finally renamed the Grays Harbor Commercial Company in 1895.

³¹ J. A. Robertson, “Cosmopolis in 1908,” *Grays Harbor Post*, 24 July 1909; *Grays Harbor Post*, 14 January 1905.

³² *Grays Harbor Post*, 6 May 1905.

³³ Van Syckle, *They Tried to Cut it All*, 45.

well as state and local authorities. All of these groups condemned the company and its town, which was widely known as the “Western Penitentiary” and a “scab-hatchery.”³⁴ Its myriad abuses ranged from its manner of securing labor, to its despicable record of workplace safety, feudal control over everything within the town, and its managers’ approaches to labor relations.

The GHCC brought laborers to Cosmopolis through the medium of an employment agent, or “job shark,” in Seattle, Tacoma, or Portland. These “sharks” sold jobs to prospective employees who were then shipped by rail to Cosmopolis. One laborer, who first worked at the Commercial Company in 1917 at age fourteen, recalled his experiences securing a job:

I was fourteen years old and had not worked out except in a small bean cannery. Labor laws restricting the employment of children around machinery were generally ignored. My mother, needing some income from my labor, took me to an employment office in the Skid Road section of Portland and signed me up for work with the Grays Harbor Commercial Company of Cosmopolis; the agency advanced me my railway ticket. The fee for my receiving this job was a modest one dollar, but the hidden factors which were probably spelled out in the fine print of the contract I signed made me a bound laborer until I could get out of debt to the company. Signed up at the time with me was a foreigner who spoke little English and read none. We were to go together and report to the office of the Cosmopolis mill.³⁵

Most estimates suggested that three thousand to four thousand workmen were imported into Cosmopolis in this manner each year, with days in which a dozen or more men

³⁴ *Shingle Weaver*, 21 April 1917; *Weinstein, Grays Harbor, 1885-1913*, 19; Van Syckle, *They Tried; “Cosmopolis in 1908,”* City of Cosmopolis Papers, Special Collections, ATL. The GHCC frequently appeared on the “unfair” lists printed in labor union organs, including the Sailors’ Union of the Pacific *Coast Seamen’s Journal*, the *American Federationist* printed by the AFL, the ISWUA’s *Shingle Weaver*, and the local *Grays Harbor Post*. See *Coast Seamen’s Journal* (San Francisco), 30 May 1906; *Grays Harbor Post*, 14 October 1905; *Shingle Weaver*, February 1903.

³⁵ Egbert S. Oliver, “Sawmilling on Grays Harbor: A Personal Reminiscence,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 69:1 (January 1978): 1-18.

coming to town occurring frequently.³⁶ After their arrival, most men were shocked at the working and living conditions. Those who did not leave town immediately left soon thereafter, and “the average stay of each man is less than 30 days,” according to the *Grays Harbor Post*.³⁷ This was a classic example of the “job shark” system so despised by working people, which kept “one man coming to a job, one man on the job, and one man leaving the job.”³⁸

One of the workers’ chief concerns was the Commercial Company’s complete disregard for what little safety standards were extant in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁹ Lumber manufacturers across North America killed their workers with relative impunity during this era, most often through what are conveniently labeled “industrial accidents,” but also through the far less “accidental” acts of refusing to provide adequate medical treatment to injured workers, refusing to change out or guard faulty equipment, and paying spies and thugs to conspire against or murder labor agitators whose work would have taken aim at unsafe conditions as well as wages.⁴⁰ G. W. Thomas, who lost a limb at the Commercial Company in 1906, swore out an affidavit against the company describing the chaos that ensued when injured employees sought medical treatment:

³⁶ J. A. Robertson, “Cosmopolis in 1908.” In “Cosmopolis in 1908,” Robertson, a printer living in Aberdeen, estimated that 4,380 men had been shipped to Cosmopolis in 1907.

³⁷ *Grays Harbor Post*, 13, 27 August 1904.

³⁸ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 4, 178.

³⁹ A detailed list of labor laws for the State of Washington can be found in Washington State Bureau of Labor, *Labor Laws of the State of Washington* (Olympia: Public Printer, 1907).

⁴⁰ Historian Alan Derickson listed the number of American workers killed in industrial accidents between 1930 and 1970 as 1,578,176. See Alan Derickson, “Down Solid: The Origins and Development of the Black Lung Insurgency,” *Journal of Public Health Policy* 4:1 (March 1983): 26. On the use of labor spies and thugs to conspire against and physically assault workers, see Norwood, *Strikebreaking and Intimidation*; Adamic, *Dynamite!*; Richard O. Boyer and Herbert M. Morais, *Labor’s Untold Story: The Adventure Story of the Battles, Betrayals, and Victories of American Working Men and Women*, 3rd ed. (New York: United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America, 1979).

I was formerly an employe of the Grays Harbor Commercial Co. at Cosmopolis, Wash. On the 29th day of July 1906, between the hours of 7 and 8 p.m. I happened to pass by the corner of F and First streets on my way from the doctor's office to church; I was then suffering from the loss of a limb and injury received in the mill of the said Company. A number of persons who had received injuries had collected on said corner. By actual count there were nineteen (19) injured and crippled persons collected on the said corner; that every one of these persons had received his injuries at the mill of said Company.⁴¹

The hospital Thomas referenced was, like nearly all services in Cosmopolis, owned by the Commercial Company. The hospital staff was hopelessly overtaxed by the number of “injured and crippled” workers, such as the “fourteen boys at one time on the streets at Cosmopolis, all crippled in the box factory.”⁴²

The Commercial Company dominated Cosmopolis, economically, politically, and culturally, determining, in the words of one critic, “everything from its school affairs to the extortionate water system. The manager of the company controls the vote of the town.”⁴³ “Mr. C. F. White is the mayor, the council, the marshal, the school board, and the teachers,” chimed a *Grays Harbor Post* editorial warning an educator against taking a position at a Cosmopolis school.⁴⁴ The Commercial Company's management was referred to as a “monarchy” by local barber C. B. Shipman.⁴⁵ Even Washington State Republicans, among whom mill manager White was a prominent member, publicly attacked the abuses that made Cosmopolis notorious, while the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce noted that the “general policy of the Grays Harbor Commerical Company of Cosmopolis is detrimental to the growth, development and best interests of the Grays

⁴¹ Cited in the *Grays Harbor Post*, 3 November 1906.

⁴² *Grays Harbor Post*, 3 November 1906. Reports of injured workers and other abuses committed at the GHCC were covered practically every week in the *Grays Harbor Post*, which made it a near crusade to expose the criminal acts of the Company and its managers. See, for instance, *Grays Harbor Post*, 17, 31 August; 5 October 1907; 24 July, 7 August; 2 October 1909.

⁴³ *Grays Harbor Post*, 10 November 1906.

⁴⁴ *Grays Harbor Post*, 13 August 1904. On Chester F. White, see “Death Summons C. F. White, One of Pacific Coast's Great Lumbermen,” *West Coast Lumbermen* (1 May 1917): 26.

⁴⁵ *Grays Harbor Post*, 13, 20 June 1908.

Harbor country.”⁴⁶ Others were even more critical, including shingle weavers’ union official J. G. Brown, who labored for three months Cosmopolis mill, experiences that led him to ask rhetorically, “Is this hell? No, it is worse.”⁴⁷ Upon closer examination, most of the attacks leveled on the GHCC concerned its use of child labor, the importation of “the shiftless and the criminal of the larger cities of the state,” and the opposition to the various wrongs collectively known as the “Cosmopolis Way” within their company’s fiefdom.⁴⁸ Underlying the company’s exploitative rule were mill manager E. C. White and his protégé and successor Neil Cooney’s allegiances to open shop principles. When asked during his testimony before the 1914 US Commission on Industrial Relations what was his attitude towards organized labor, manager Cooney boasted, “We don’t think it is practical, and we don’t believe we can operate our plant with organized labor, and therefore we have made up our minds not to have organized labor.”⁴⁹

By 1900, each of the three Harbor cities had been incorporated, connected to rail lines, and had one or more large sawmills busily humming, churning out one of the largest lumber cuts in the nation. In the three cities, wealth carried with it power, but unlike Cosmopolis, with its “monarchy,” an oligarchy had to be forged in Aberdeen and Hoquiam by an energetic capitalist class eager to gain and retain control over their communities and workplaces. Employing-class solidarity did not spring up automatically, conditioned solely by members’ shared relationship with the means of production. Instead, it was reinforced -- and in some senses made -- by merchants and

⁴⁶ Cited in *Grays Harbor Post*, 25 May 1907. For criticism from Republican Party members, see *Grays Harbor Post*, 15 September 1906.

⁴⁷ *Shingle Weaver*, March 1904.

⁴⁸ *Grays Harbor Post*, 21 April 1906; *Grays Harbor Post*, 20 May 1909; *Grays Harbor Post*, 16 July 1904.

⁴⁹ Van Syckle, *They Tried to Cut it All*, n.p. The title “The Warden” appeared in a caption to a photograph in this book with no page number. United States Commission on Industrial Relations, *Industrial Relations, Final Report and Testimony*, submitted to Congress by the Commission on Industrial Relations, created by the Act of August 23, 1912 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1916), 4278.

manufacturers' connections of kinship, fraternity, and community. To be sure, power and wealth in Grays Harbor, as elsewhere in the capitalist world, were not the products of democracy or meritocracy, but were created by inheritance, intermarriage, and cooperative arrangements between wealthy Harbor families. Many of the business men who waged the open shop offensives, formed the citizens' committees, hired the labor spies, and drove production to its utmost levels, were themselves the second-generation of Aberdeen and Hoquiam elites, owing their status to little other than their privileged birth.⁵⁰ This group included E. B. Benn, real estate magnate and Aberdeen mayor from 1909-1911; C.M. Weatherwax, town mayor and head of the Aberdeen Lumber and Shingle Company; Watson A. West, secretary, treasurer, and manager of his father's A. J. West Lumber Company at the age of twenty-two; and the children of George H. Emerson.⁵¹ Following his education at Stanford University, Ralph Emerson returned to the Harbor, where his father George Emerson bestowed him with the presidency and ownership of the Aloha Lumber Company, which operated the company town of Aloha, Washington, as well as its production facilities and surrounding timberlands.⁵² Young men like Ralph Emerson joined their fathers at the helm of Grays Harbor power centers, atop the Aberdeen and Hoquiam municipal governments, chambers of commerce, and as

⁵⁰ On the key role played by labor spies in assisting, and occasionally running, municipal government offices, see Chapters 3, 7, and 9-12.

⁵¹ Van Syckle, *They Tried to Cut it All*, 30, 47; Weinstein *Grays Harbor, 1885-1913*, 23-24; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 14 January 1909; 14 January; 2, 14 February 1909; 9, 10 March 1910; *R. L. Polk & Co.'s Grays Harbor Cities and Chehalis County Directory*, 1908, 69. *Grays Harbor Post*, 3, 10 September 1906. Benn was also an active member in the citizens' committees that had William Gohl removed from the harbor in 1910 and organized vigilante operations to fight the IWW during the 1911-1912 free speech fight and strike. *Pacific Lumber Trade Journal*, (January 1907): 61. In this edition of the *Pacific Lumber Trade Journal* the young West was declared, "Born in Michigan and Raised in a Saw Mill." James H. DeVeuve to Everett G. Griggs, 11 September 1918, Record Group 165, Box 4, File 721a, War Department General Staff Records, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle, WA (Hereafter NRA).

⁵² Hunt and Kaylor, *Washington, West of the Cascades*, 63-65.

owners of numerous corporations. As one historian correctly asserted, “On Grays Harbor, lumber, wealth, and power were synonymous.”⁵³

Others owed their material success to the American tradition of “marrying up,” wedding into a family that had already established its wealth and prestige. This was the “bootstraps” path of self-proclaimed self-made men like William J. Patterson, a teller at the Hayes and Hayes Bank in Aberdeen, who, after marrying Frances B. Hayes, widow of bank manager Harry A. Hayes, became the wealthiest man in Aberdeen.⁵⁴ Articulating his pride in the egalitarianism of American capitalism, C. M. Weatherwax, whose wealth and prestige was inherited from his father, mill owner and ship captain John M. Weatherwax, argued, “It is becoming increasingly evident that the destiny of the sawmill interest of the Northwest is to be a survival of the fittest and only by exercising the greatest economies of operation and the utmost efficiency can any unit of the industry hope to survive.”⁵⁵

Family ties mattered greatly as class interest coincided with kin, but on a day-to-day basis, few things so conditioned employers’ nascent coordination of capital as their participation in fraternal clubs.⁵⁶ Fraternal associations welded together a community of mutually interested employers who met, dined, attended speeches, played ball, drank, smoked, and golfed together on a daily basis. In these groups, employers met their need for masculine bonding and companionship in an all-male world separate from both the domestic sphere and the rough-and-tumble world of class conflict in which they tread on

⁵³ Lewarne, “The Aberdeen, Washington Free Speech Fight,” 8. See also Hughes and Beckwith, *On the Harbor*, 10.

⁵⁴ *Grays Harbor Post*, 16 June 1906; Hughes and Beckwith, *On the Harbor*, 77.

⁵⁵ Cited in Todes, *Lumber and Labor*, 34-35.

⁵⁶ On the class and gender dimensions of fraternities in the US, see Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

the job and in the community. Local employers were vigorous joiners. Most belonged to more than one fraternal order, while John Lindstrom, Aberdeen mayor from 1905 to 1906 and head of the Lindstrom Shipbuilding Company, who belonged to the Masons, Woodsmen, Redmen, Foresters, Hoo Hoos, and Elks, was hardly unusual.⁵⁷ Frank H. Lamb, founding member of the Grays Harbor Logger's Association and president of the Wynoochee timber Company, even published a book entitled *Rotary: A Businessman's Interpretation*, in which he argued that, "Business is both the Alpha and Omega of Rotary, and any activity that does not concern business or which does not help business men to translate Rotary's ideals into service should have no place in a Rotary program."⁵⁸

In the Harbor cities, fraternal bonds did not bridge class chasms or dampen class conflict, the function ascribed to them by scholars of other communities.⁵⁹ Instead, boundaries of class frequently determined one's fraternal associations. Few fraternal bodies embodied the virility, elitism, and sense of community leadership better than the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks (BPOE) and Concatenated Order of Hoo-Hoo, both of which were comprised of merchants and manufacturers. Membership in the Aberdeen and Hoquiam branches of the BPOE was both dependent on and key to one's social

⁵⁷ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 30 June 1908; Van Syckle, *They Tried*, 225-226. The best proof of employers' fraternal activities came in their obituaries, when all were publicly displayed. For example, mill owner A. W. Middleton belonged to at least six fraternities, as did lumberman E. C. Miller belonged to at least six clubs. *Aberdeen Daily World*, 12 November 1939; 21 May 1965. A second valuable source for information about employers' fraternal activities is Hunt and Kaylor, *Washington: West of the Cascades*, which includes short biographies of many of the wealthiest Washingtonians. That most of these biographies included their subjects' fraternal affiliations is testament to the importance of the clubs in these men's lives. For example, *Washington, West of the Cascades*, stated that lumberman C. M. Weatherwax belonged to seven clubs, while utilities owner E. C. Finch of Aberdeen belonged to three fraternities.

⁵⁸ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 26 March 1904; Articles of Incorporation of the Grays Harbor Loggers' Association, 29 February 1904, Grays Harbor County Auditor, Articles of Incorporation, Box 4, No. 272, SWA; Frank H. Lamb, *Rotary: A Businessman's Interpretation* (Hoquiam, WA: The Rotary Club of Hoquiam, 1927), 79. See also, Lamb, *Fifty Years in Hoquiam: Memoirs of Frank H. Lamb* (n.p., 1948). Hunt and Kaylor, *Washington: West of the Cascades*, 151.

⁵⁹ Jameson, *All that Glitters*. In contrast, in his study of the Orange Order in Toronto, Gregory S. Kealey argued that fraternity was "overwhelmingly working-class in composition." Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism, 1867-1892* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 107.

standing. Founded in 1900 and 1907 respectively, Aberdeen and Hoquiam Elks included most of the major lumberman and boss loggers of the two cities, including Mack, Patterson, Lamb, Emerson, and Lytle.⁶⁰ The list of Aberdeen's founding Elks provides a veritable who's who of Grays Harbor social life. Admitting as much, the conservative *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin* boasted that the Elks were comprised of "the most prominent commercial and professional men in this section of the state and the lodge has enjoyed remarkable freedom from undesirable characters."⁶¹ Secluded within their \$20,000 clubhouse, dubbed "one of the finest in the country," and "admired by all visitors," by the *Daily Bulletin*, the home of the Elks exuded wealth and prestige. Members could partake in billiards, play cards, eat a fine meal, or walk along the velvet red carpets to retire in the steam baths, within the hallowed halls of the club, all of which was "finished in weathered oak and all furniture was made to order by Carpen of Chicago."⁶² During strikes the Elks' club housed bosses' meetings and strategy sessions.⁶³

Mostly overlapping in membership with the BPOE was that of the Concatenated Order of Hoo Hoos, a secret order specifically for lumbermen. All male and highly secretive, the Hoo Hoos, like many associations that stressed male bonding, insisted that it was founded as an outlet for "the playful proclivities of lumbermen and those associated with the industry."⁶⁴ New recruits in the fraternity were labeled "kittens" by

⁶⁰ "Temple Dedicated to Fidelity, Justice, Brotherly Love & Charity," *Fireside Chatter*, November 1982, Hoquiam Elks Archives, Hoquiam; *Fireside Chatter: Centennial Edition, 1907- 2007*, Hoquiam Elks Records, Hoquiam, WA; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 24 September 1904.

⁶¹ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 24 September 1904.

⁶² *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 24 September 1904.

⁶³ *Aberdeen Herald*, 20 July 1905; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 24 July 1905; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 1 June 1909; 25 November 1911.

⁶⁴ Farrar Newberry, "The Concatenated Order of Hoo Hoo," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 22:4 (Winter 1963): 305.

more senior “snarks.”⁶⁵ Because of the Harbor’s importance as a lumber center, Aberdeen and Hoquiam manufacturers were thrust into prominence in the club, a fact that enabled locals to host meetings, participate in rituals, and forge business relationships with men near and far.⁶⁶ But the clubs also served as vivid expressions of employing-class unity, places where businessmen could come together and vocalize complaints about their lazy or radical workmen, complaints that, as often as not, they found they shared with one another. Thus, in 1905, Aberdeen manufacturers met at the Elks to coordinate their mill shutdowns. Six years later during the IWW free speech fight in Aberdeen the Citizens’ Committee was formed at the Aberdeen Elks Club, with membership in the committee and Elks overlapping to a great degree.⁶⁷

Adding to employers’ sense of control over local affairs was their spatial separation of their homes away from -- and usually on top of -- workers’ homes and jobs. Situated high above working-class districts of town, mill owners’ houses functioned as a panopticon, at once enabling their inhabitants to observe their mills from above, keeping careful watch over the steam pouring out of the stacks, and yet also serving as a reminder to the wage laborers below that their activities were being observed. This effect was

⁶⁵ “Harmony Conspicuous in Twenty-First Anniversary of Hoo-Hoo Order,” *Pacific Lumber Trade Journal* 18:9 (January 1913): 47. Nearly all of the language used internally by the Hoo Hoos was taken from the Lewis Carroll poem “The Hunting of the Snark.” Newberry, “The Concatenated Order,” 303.

⁶⁶ *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 August 1908; 29 May 1909; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 17, 25 April 1913.

⁶⁷ There existed a great deal of overlap in memberships between local chambers of commerce and the vigilante Citizens’ Committee. Thus, IWW “Stumpy” Payne had good reason to refer to the committee as “ax handle merchants.” For a list of Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce members, see *Aberdeen Daily World*, 30 November 1911. A short list of the “brutes who are responsible” for the violent direct actions taken against members of the IWW during the Aberdeen free speech fight was included in the *Industrial Worker*, 21 December 1911. Some of those who appeared on both lists included Aberdeen merchants J. J. and S. G. Kaufman, lumberman W. B. Mack, editor of the *Aberdeen Daily World* W. A. Rupp, editor of the *Grays Harbor Washingtonian* Albert Johnson, Aberdeen mayor J. W. Parks, liquor dealer and city councilman John O’Hare, and banker W. J. Patterson. The close relationship between the Elks’ club and the Citizens’ Committee was demonstrated by the Committee’s use of the Elks’ clubhouse for their meetings. See *Industrial Worker*, 30 November 1911; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 24 November 1911. “Stumpy” Payne’s quotation cited in *Industrial Worker*, 11 January 1912.

most clear in the company town of Cosmopolis, which was designed more like a feudal manor than an industrial city. Atop Cosmopolis Hill, according to an admiring biographical piece written on Commercial Company's manager, "like a king in his castle looking down on his subjects, lived Neil Cooney." There could be little doubt about who was managing whom, as Cooney "stood in the living room gazing out of the spacious window down on the huge lumber operation over which he ruled with absolute power," while his workers slept in small company homes or bunkhouses.⁶⁸ In Aberdeen, mill managers like C. M. Weatherwax, Ed Hulbert, and William Donovan each sported their own well-known "Big House," "magnificent mansion," or "imposing residence."⁶⁹ Located in the Broadway Hill area, these large homes kept the working class "sailortown," "the Line," and Red Light District at arm's length.⁷⁰ The violence, crime, and depression of capitalist society rarely violated these social boundaries, as bosses usually lived long lives in the lap of luxury before finally dying, like generals, in their beds.⁷¹ When Mary Mack, wife of Slade manager W. B. Mack, was confronted by an assailant at her home on North H Street, who was believed to be an assassin acting out of retribution for her husband's opposition to unions, her story elicited horror and sympathy

⁶⁸ Thorpe Babcock, "Cooney: Ship's Carpenter to Millionaire," *Aberdeen Daily World*, 17 December 1970.

⁶⁹ *Polk's Grays Harbor Cities Directory*, 1907, 147; *Polk's Grays Harbor Cities Directory*, 1911, 96. Cited in Van Syckle, *They Tried to Cut it All*, 287. The Wilson family referred to their massive home as the "Big House." See, Emily M. Wilson, *From Boats to Board Feet: The Wilson Family of the Pacific Coast* (Seattle: Wilson Brothers Family Foundation, 2007), 173. On Paterson's mansion, see Ben K. Weatherwax, "Hometown Scrapbook," 27 October 1953. The *Aberdeen Daily World*, 1 June 1909 referred to the "Imposing residence of Edward Hulbert, president of the United States Mill company."

⁷⁰ "The Line" referred to, in Robert Weinstein's words, "the narrow dirt street" that "housed a long row of tawdry saloons, brothels, sailors' outfitting stores, cheap tailors shops, squalid boarding houses, shipping offices, and the local headquarters of the Sailors Union of the Pacific." Weinstein, *Grays Harbor, 1885-1913*, 25.

⁷¹ Charles Yale Harrison, *Generals Die in Bed: A Story from the Trenches* (New York: W. Morrow & Co., 1930).

from the Harbor's ruling clique.⁷² Even more obvious a violation of social boundaries occurred in 1909 when Sailors' Union of the Pacific (SUP) agent William Gohl and his wife Betsy moved into a home on Broadway, the most select area of Aberdeen and one located above the mills, saloons, and rooming houses where working families like the Gohls were expected to remain. So great was this violation of separate spheres that when William was sentenced to life in prison on murder charges, Betsy declared, "Billy, they convicted you to get rid of us on Broadway Hill."⁷³

Most of the major manufacturers on the Harbor had ample experience in trade associations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁷⁴ These industry groups included the Pacific Coast Lumber Manufacturers' Association, Southwest Washington Lumbermen's Association, Interstate Red Cedar Shingle Association, the Grays Harbor Loggers' Association, Grays Harbor Lumber Manufacturers' Association, and the Log Shippers' Association. These organizations were designed to fix prices, regulate production and sales, and according to the articles of incorporation for the Grays Harbor Loggers' Association, were established "for the purpose of establishing and maintaining better and more familiar business relationship between loggers in Chehalis County and consumers of logs."⁷⁵ And "familiar business relationships" were exactly what Harbor

⁷² *Polk's Grays Harbor Cities Directory*, 1911, 58, 160; Franklin Harper, ed., *Who's Who on the Pacific Coast: A Biographical Compilation of Notable Living Contemporaries West of the Rocky Mountains* (Los Angeles: Harper Publishing Company, 1913), 375.

⁷³ *Grays Harbor Washingtonian*, 13 May 1910.

⁷⁴ There is a sizeable literature on lumber manufacturers' trade associations. See, of instance, Cox, *Mills and Markets*, 257-283; John H. Cox, "Trade Associations in the Lumber Industry of the Pacific Northwest," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 41:4 (October 1950): 285-311.

⁷⁵ Articles of Incorporation for the Grays Harbor Loggers' Association; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 26 March 1904; Red Cedar: *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 16 January 1904; Grays Harbor Lumber Manufacturers' Association: *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 14 May 1906. Quote is taken from *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 26 March 1904. For evidence of employers' reasons for starting these associations, see Cox, "Trade Associations," in which the author asserts, "Price fixing was the heart of trade-association activities." Cox, "Trade Associations," 291. See also, *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 14 June 1905; Lewarne, "The Aberdeen, Washington, Free Speech Fight," 9; W. W. Sheppard to Mr. Louis Titus, 15 December 1923, Edwin

employers formed. Collectively, these men operated several mill companies, logging camps, savings and loans, and railroad companies.⁷⁶ They began to form “Business Men’s Protective” clubs and chambers of commerce as early as 1891, which, in their own words, were replicas of “trade unions,” in that they sought to “work together for the accomplishment of any purpose.”⁷⁷ The mill owners and boss loggers also coordinated their mill shut downs. These annual and semi-annual suspensions of production tossed thousands of lumber workers out of work from anywhere from a week to sixty days.⁷⁸ Collectively, the associations, in tandem with ties of fraternity, kinship, and community, imbued a sense of collective interest among these disparate individuals. But, as local employers, whose collective class interests were previously demonstrated only at superficial levels -- in trade associations, fraternities, and commercial clubs -- confronted a class with interests distinct from, and hostile to their own, they shifted priorities, becoming a potent union-busting force.

Gardner Ames Papers, Accession Number 3820, Box 120, Folder 15, University of Washington Special Collections, Seattle, WA (Hereafter UW). The Pacific Coast Lumber Manufacturers’ Association maintained an “association price list” to bring order to “a wildly fluctuating market.” See *Annual Reports of President and Secretary of the Pacific Coast Lumber Manufacturers’ Association at the Annual Meeting at Seattle, Wash., 8 December 1903* (Seattle: Office of Secretary, Lumber Exchange, 1903), 3-7.

⁷⁶ Articles of Incorporation for the Grays Harbor Loggers’ Association; Articles of Incorporation of the American Mill Company, 17 December 1898, Grays Harbor Auditor, Articles of Incorporation, Box 2, No. 142, SWA; Articles of Incorporation of the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce, 4 February 1910, Grays Harbor Auditor, Articles of Incorporation, Box 7, No. 580, SWA; Articles of Incorporation of the Log Shippers Association, 16 September 1899; Grays Harbor Auditor, Articles of Incorporation, Box 2, No. 158; Articles of Incorporation for the Twin Harbors Lumber Information Bureau, 3 August 1909, Grays Harbor Auditor, Articles of Incorporation, Box 6, No. 526, SWA; Articles of Incorporation of Grays Harbor and Puget Sound Railway Company, 3 November 1906, Box 5, No. 360, SWA; Articles of Incorporation of the Aberdeen Savings and Loan Association, 30 November 1907, Grays Harbor Auditor, Articles of Incorporation, Box 5, no. 423, SWA. Notably, George Emerson of the Northwestern Lumber Company in Hoquiam served as president of the Lumberman’s Manufacturing Association of the Northwest in 1895. See *Hoquiam Washingtonian*, 7 March 1895.

⁷⁷ *Aberdeen Herald*, 11 October 1894; 7 March; 6 June 1895.

⁷⁸ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 9 May 1906; *Grays Harbor Post*, 2 December 1905; *Grays Harbor Washingtonian*, 4 July 1906. These shut downs were organized collectively by the boss loggers of Grays Harbor who operated through organizations such as the Grays Harbor Loggers’ association. This group planned a regional closure of logging camps in May 1905. See *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 9 May 1904.

At the head of Harbor employers' aggressive campaign for workplace, community, and civic control were several men who understood full well that their class interests were most secure when they cooperated with one another. What distinguished these men from others in their class was not simply their antipathy towards unions, for opposition and hostility towards unions was never in short supply among lumber manufacturers.⁷⁹ Instead, these men were separated from their fellow employers by several characteristics, including their early and persistent assault on workers' living standards and their capacity for recruiting others to join in their militant crusade against organized labor. These men joined the most clubs, delivered the most speeches, held the most leadership positions, recruited the most fellow employers into their flock, and were top boosters for their varied causes.⁸⁰ They were also the most rabidly anti-union employers. They collectively comprised what historian Rosemary Feurer has called "the militant minority of employers," those "who urged fellow managers and owners to act collectively to control the labor market and to eliminate radical influences among workers."⁸¹ Over the course of several battles fought against unions and radicals, the ideology of these militants came to influence the majority of the local merchant and manufacturing classes. Several Harbor businessmen qualified as members of this "militant minority," and Grays Harbor's virulently anti-union employers occupied every powerful position in the region from congressman to city council, from President of the

⁷⁹ The anti-unionism of employers in the lumber industry has been discussed in numerous earlier works. See, for example, Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 128-130; Todes, *Lumber and Labor*; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 219-227; Dreyfus, "The IWW and the Limits."

⁸⁰ In fact, these men were frequently the founders of employers' associations on the harbor, including the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce, founded in late 1902, by, among others, William B. Mack, William J. Patterson, Samuel and E. B. Benn, John Lindstrom, A. W. Middleton, C. B. Weatherwax, Harry A. Hayes, A. J. Anderson. See *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 12 March 1903.

⁸¹ Rosemary Feurer, *Radical Unionism in the Midwest, 1900-1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 1.

West Coast Lumbermen's Association to Vicegerent Snark of western Washington for the Hoo-Hoos.⁸² At the core of this group, however, were a few leading lights who sought to change the ways business was done on the Harbor. During the early years of big business on the Harbor, when anti-unionism was in its nascent stages, no one stood as tall, acted as decisively, or played as large a role in welding together his fellow employers as three men: William B. Mack and William J. Patterson of Aberdeen, and Robert F. Lytle of Hoquiam. During the years 1906-1912, as the local expression of anti-union activity took shape, no other Harbor employers, and indeed few in the Pacific Northwest, commanded so much attention for their campaigns to break unions and impose the open shop on their workers.

The unquestioned leader of anti-unionism on Grays Harbor during the early twentieth century was William B. Mack. Born on 21 July 1862, in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, into a farm family headed by parents Jeremiah and Mary Mack, W. B., as he was known, skillfully cultivated political and business ties, serving as ticket agent for the Northern Pacific railroad as it was extended into Aberdeen, and gaining election to city and county office during the 1890s.⁸³ Much of his career was spent as manager of the large West and Slade Mill Company, later the S. E. Slade Lumber Company, in Aberdeen, a position that made him "probably the highest salaried manager on the harbor."⁸⁴ Besides managing the largest mill in Aberdeen, with its more than three hundred employees, and the Slade-Wells Logging Company, which in 1908 employed

⁸² W. B. Mack served as "Vicegerent Snark of western Washington" for the Hoo Hoos in 1909. *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 May 1909; "A. L. Paine Accepts Presidency," *West Coast Lumberman* (February 1917): 21.

⁸³ *Aberdeen Herald*, 3 January; 7 November 1895.

⁸⁴ *Grays Harbor Post*, 27 February 1904; Harper, *Who's Who*, 375; Thomas William Herringshaw, *American Blue-book of Biography: Prominent Americans of 1912- An Accurate Biographical Record of Prominent Citizens of All Walks of Life* (Chicago: American Publishers' Association, 1913), 423; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 10 June 1933.

nearly four hundred loggers, Mack served as Vice President of the Union Bank and Trust Company, manager of the Humptulips Logging Company, President of the Pacific Coast Wood Pulp and Paper Company, on the board of directors of the National Mill Company in Hoquiam, and was a major stockholder in the West and Slade Mill Company and Grays Harbor Stevedore Company.⁸⁵ He was also a prominent coordinator for regional and state-wide lumber interests. He served as a vice president and trustee of the Pacific Coast Lumber Manufacturers' Association, and as secretary of the Pacific Lumber Agency. Mack was also one of the founders and easily the most active member of the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce.⁸⁶ An avid joiner, Mack belonged to the Elks, Hoos, Masons, and United Workmen.⁸⁷

At the Slade mill and docks, Mack insisted on an open shop, repeatedly stating that he would shut down operations before recognizing a union or bargaining with workers.⁸⁸ The Slade mill, easily the largest in Aberdeen, was also the most strike-prone. Lying at the juncture of the Chehalis and Wishkah rivers, deep in the heart of the east Aberdeen "Finn Town," and heavily labored by Finnish Americans, this mill faced strikes five times between 1904 and 1912.⁸⁹ "In case we are forced to close the mills in

⁸⁵ "In the matter of the Increase of the Capital Stock of the West & Slade Mill Company," 19 September 1902, Grays Harbor Auditor, Articles of Incorporation, Box 3, No. 220, SWA. On Slade Wells logging camp size, see *Grays Harbor Post*, 25 July 1908. On size of S. E. Slade Lumber Company mill, see *Pacific Lumber Trade Journal*, (January 1907): 62; *Grays Harbor Post* 21 September 1907; *Daily Washingtonian*, 12 November 1911.

⁸⁶ For an early biography on the up-and-coming Mack, see *Aberdeen Herald*, 11 October 1894. See also *Grays Harbor Post*, 27 February 1909; *Grays Harbor Post*, 12 March 1903; 4 March 1905; 11 February 1911. Mack was such an enthusiastic booster that he organized a committee within the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce to visit local hotels to induce visitors to relocate to Aberdeen with their families. *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 28 February 1905; Articles of Incorporation of the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce.

⁸⁷ Herringshaw, *American Blue-book of Biography*, 423.

⁸⁸ *Grays Harbor Post*, 25 May 1912; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 19 July 1905; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 6 June 1909; 18 May 1910.

⁸⁹ *Aberdeen Herald*, 20, 24 July 1905; 15 May 1910; *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 May; 3 July 1909; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 18 May 1910; Chapter 7. One of these strikes was the 1906 maritime workers' strike. See Chapter 3 for an analysis of that conflict.

Aberdeen, the plants will stay idle throughout the summer,” threatened Mack after three hundred Slade employees joined an IWW strike in March 1912. Mack, however, did not want to avoid organizing campaigns or to pacify workers through paternalistic programs or incentive schemes, but instead sought to force Slade employees to submit to his will. Described by one booster as “the man . . . with the energy that never ends,” Mack stood on the front lines of the class war.⁹⁰ He literally traded shots with militant labor leaders, clubbed rebel workers during the 1912 “War of Grays Harbor,” and spewed racist slander at his Finnish employees.⁹¹

During the first years of the twentieth century a common joke on the Harbor was that William J. Patterson, head of the Hayes and Hayes Bank in Aberdeen, was so wealthy that B.P.O.E. (Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks) actually stood for “Billy Patterson Owns Everything.”⁹² An exaggeration, nonetheless William J. Patterson, cashier of the Hayes and Hayes Bank in Aberdeen between 1906 and 1927, was one of the richest and most powerful men in the State of Washington during the early 1900s.⁹³ Like Mack, a resident of the hyper-masculine wing of the male public sphere, Patterson was an avid gamesman and gambler, a future military officer, and a frequenter of all-male clubs like the Elks and Grays Harbor Country Club.⁹⁴ Known widely among fellow employers as “Mr. Aberdeen,” Patterson was president of the Grays Harbor Railway and Light Company, the United States Trust Company of Aberdeen, Aberdeen

⁹⁰ *Grays Harbor Post*, 5 February 1910.

⁹¹ *Aberdeen Herald*, 24 July 1905; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 18, 24 July 1905; 13, 15 June 1906; *Grays Harbor Post*, 16 June 1906.

⁹² This joke, as well as a brief biographical sketch of Patterson, can be found in Hughes and Beckwith, *On the Harbor*, 77.

⁹³ Van Syckle, *River Pioneers*, 293; Hughes and Beckwith, ed., *On the Harbor*, 76-77. Patterson was prone to ostentatious shows of wealth. One such example was his pet seal, which he kept during the late nineteenth century. Ben K. Weatherwax, “Hometown Scrapbook,” 27 October 1953.

⁹⁴ W. J. Patterson was, in fact, the founder of the Grays Harbor Country Club. Van Syckle, *The River Pioneers*, 293.

Savings and Loan Association, the US National Bank of Aberdeen, and the State Bank of Centralia.⁹⁵ He was also an avid booster of Harbor commercial interests, a fact that elevated him to the top tier of every commercial association on the Harbor and in southwest Washington generally. Sensing the need to move beyond simply trade development and protection, Patterson keyed the shift of Harbor business to its position in active opposition to trade unions. In 1909 he assembled and presided over the first citizens' committee in Grays Harbor history.⁹⁶ The committee hired labor spies to break up the militant sailors' union, raising approximately ten thousand dollars through voluntary contributions to finance their efforts.⁹⁷ In subsequent years he acted as a mobilizing force as Harbor business interests became more energetic and unified. He founded and served several terms as president and trustee of the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce as it expanded from a marginal entity to more than three hundred members, led the Southwest Washington Development Association as it was molded from an idea to become "a movement for state-wide development which will mark an epoch in the material progress of the commonwealth," and in 1911-1912 served as head of the citizens' committees that beat, shot, arrested, and deported Wobblies, socialists, and picketers on

⁹⁵ Articles of Incorporation for the Aberdeen Savings and Loan Association; *Public Service* (H. J. Gonden, 1915), 158; Hunt and Kaylor, *Washington, West of the Cascades*, 69-70; *Grays Harbor Post*, 17 June 1911. "Mr. Aberdeen" comes from Weatherwax, "Hometown Scrapbook."

⁹⁶ Patterson, along with editor J. W. Clarke and land speculator E. B. Benn, were frequently included on these so-called citizens' committees. See *Grays Harbor Post*, 30 March 1912.

⁹⁷ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 14 January; 14 February 1909; 10 August 1911. The estimate of the sum raised by the Citizens' Committee varies considerably. The most reliable estimate comes from the 10 August 1911 issue of the *Aberdeen Daily World*, which printed testimony from the 9 August 1911 Aberdeen city council meeting, in which Councilman McCaw was alleged to have said "He understood that about \$6,000 or \$7,000 had been contributed by citizens, and the city had paid about \$700." Local historian Pamela Dean Aho has estimated that the Citizens' Committee raised a "\$10,000 war chest." Aho, "The Ghoul of Grays Harbor," 22.

the streets of Aberdeen and Hoquiam. He stood at the center of gravity for the entire Grays Harbor employing class.⁹⁸

Both Mack and Patterson were relatively young and energetic men in the early years of the twentieth century as they rose to the peak of Grays Harbor power. They attacked labor unions and boosted their community with a vigor befitting their station. Across town in Hoquiam, much of the commercial activity remained vested in an old guard of early mill owners and managers, most notably George Emerson, Frank H. Lamb, Alexander and Robert Polson, and the Lytle Brothers, Joseph and Robert. Born in 1854 in Ogdensburg, New York, as the son of a farmer, Robert Lytle attended the University of Wisconsin before moving to Washington State where he and his brother Joseph established grocery businesses in Fairhaven and Hoquiam. The Lytles belonged to the first generation of Hoquiam employers, men who arrived on the Harbor during the 1880s, and who for more than a decade presided over municipal and workplace affairs with little or no labor or radical challenges.⁹⁹ In 1902, they built their massive Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle mill, declared by “experts to be the finest in the state.”¹⁰⁰ That same year, Lytle’s mill was threatened with its first union, a local of the International Shingle Weavers’ Union of America (ISWUA). Robert, the mill’s manager and point man on labor relations, had ample experience with unions and strikes. In January 1906,

⁹⁸ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 5 February 1909. In January 1912, Warren Hull of Hoquiam became the three hundredth member of the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce. *Grays Harbor Post*, 20 January 1912. Cited in *Aberdeen Herald*, 3 May 1910. The Southwest Washington Development Association was organized on March 24, 1910. Patterson served as a member of the Aberdeen delegation to the founding convention, where he was elected vice president. See *Grays Harbor Post*, 26 March 1910.

⁹⁹ The Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle Company was among the most prolific shingle producing mills in the world. See *Grays Harbor Post*, 13 May 1911. The level of exploitation Lytle leveled on his workers was apparent when in 1914 he purchased “a \$165,000 Christmas present for Mrs. Lytle,” in the form of a mansion in Portland, Oregon. See *Daily Washingtonian*, 20 December 1914.

¹⁰⁰ William Farrand Prosser, *A History of the Puget Sound Country: Its Resources, Its Commerce and Its People*, Volume II (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1903), 429.

following a sixty day shutdown, the Lytles refused to allow ISWUA official J. G. Brown his old spot at the mill because of management's contention that he was an "agitator" and one of "those horrid socialists." Declaring that this action constituted a lockout, Hoquiam's ISWUA walked off their jobs at Lytle's mill, issued resolutions condemning the Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle mill, and had the plant placed on the Hoquiam Labor and Trades Council's unfair list. After only four days, the Lytles agreed to rehire Brown, to which the local labor council responded by declaring their "hopes that this will teach such corporations that a man has a right to speak as he believes, vote as he speaks, and claim a voice in the making of laws and in the choosing of rules."¹⁰¹

The militant stance taken on behalf of Brown was not the first conflict fought between Hoquiam shingle weavers and manufacturers.¹⁰² Worse yet from management's point of view, the strikers won their demands each time they walked off the job. Despite his professed adherence to the cult of individualism, preferring to "deal with the men as individuals," Lytle clearly lacked the ability to single-handedly tame a union of the ISWUA's stature, with its more than two thousand members, large war chest, and the backing of a state-wide labor federation.¹⁰³ Indeed, in the early months of 1906, shortly after yet another defeat at the hands of Hoquiam weavers, Robert Lytle was elected first vice president of the Shingle Mills Bureau, thus positioning himself at the head of a large

¹⁰¹ *Shingle Weaver*, March 1906; *Grays Harbor Post*, 3, 17 February 1906. This strike closely followed one waged by piecework packers and knot sawyers at the Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle mill. In October 1905, these laborers struck to protest the poor quality of lumber being used by the mill. The Hoquiam branch of the ISWUA demanded either an increased wage scale to compensate for the discrepancy or a blanket \$3.50 daily wage. See State of Washington, *Fifth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Factory Inspection, 1905-1906* (Olympia: C. W. Gorham Public Printer, 1906), 194; *Hoquiam Sawyer*, 13 October 1905.

¹⁰² *Grays Harbor Post*, 3, 17 February 1906; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 5 February 1906. According to the *Fifth Biennial Report, 1905-1906*, Hoquiam Local 21 engaged in three strikes between 1 January 1905 and 1 August 1906.

¹⁰³ *Grays Harbor Washingtonian*, 2 August 1906.

group of shingle manufacturers who would aid his future struggles with labor.¹⁰⁴ By 1912 Lytle had already served as president of the Pacific Lumber Agency, one of the largest lumber selling agencies in the country; a chief executive in the Grays Harbor Stevedore Company; and Vice President of the SMB.¹⁰⁵

The single biggest problem facing anti-union employers like Lytle and Mack was not that they failed to cooperate or coordinate their activities, but that they lacked the power to dismantle the local unions built to protect the interests of workers in sensitive manufacturing and transportation sectors. Indeed, the Grays Harbor labor movement grew unabated between 1898 and 1906 from a time when “the labor cause was dead” to become the most highly unionized regional workforce in Washington State.¹⁰⁶ Organized workers were affiliated with local and state labor councils, as well as the AFL. They held regular parades, dances, festivals, sporting events, picnics, and mass meetings featuring union and socialist speakers.¹⁰⁷ The *Grays Harbor Post*, founded in 1904 and edited by conservative carpenters’ union official J. W. Clarke, also boosted the more militant union branches, particularly the longshoremen, sailors, and shingle weavers. These three unions -- the ILA, SUP, and ISWUA -- each enforced the closed shop along shore, on the ships, and at the majority of large shingle plants on the Harbor during the early years of the twentieth century. An illustrative case of the relationship between lumbermen and unionists on the Harbor occurred in March 1905 when the Hoquiam branch of the

¹⁰⁴ *Hoquiam Washingtonian*, 1 February 1906.

¹⁰⁵ *Pacific Lumber Trade Journal*, (September 1910): 21; Cox, Trade Associations,” 288; *Hoquiam Washingtonian*, 1 February 1906.

¹⁰⁶ *Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Washington State Federation of Labor*, 1905 (Everett, WA), 12, 27. Grays Harbor unions began to receive significant attention from the mainstream press in 1901. See *Aberdeen Herald*, 18 July; 5 September; 24 October 1901; 12, 19 May; 25 August 1902.

¹⁰⁷ On 30 November 1911, a coalition of “unorganized labor, union labor, the socialists, and the IWW” held a meeting at the Aberdeen Finnish hall to protest the trial of the McNamara brothers, including a “stirring address” from Washington State Federation of Labor Secretary Charles Perry Taylor. *Grays Harbor Post*, 2 December 1911; *Grays Harbor Washingtonian*, 11 July 1911; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 24 May 1911.

ISWUA voted to stop paying the compulsory fifty cents per month hospital fee that was taken out of their checks.¹⁰⁸ Preferring to handle their own insurance fund, the weavers ordered the mills to stop collecting the insurance fee after 1 March 1905. Only a single mill, George Emerson's old North Western Lumber Company, refused to allow the weavers the right to create their own hospital fund, because its managements did "not believe in unions" and "will treat with the men only as individuals."¹⁰⁹ For management's refusal, the mill faced a strike by all its shingle weavers and was tarnished in the mainstream and labor press as "short sighted" and guilty of committing a "monthly hold up" of workers' money.¹¹⁰ Within a few days, North Western mill managers capitulated, agreeing to recognize the union and meet their demands, an outcome celebrated by Hoquiam ISWUA official J. G. Brown, "We anticipated something of a fight here, but won just as e-a-s-y."¹¹¹ With strike victories such as this a common occurrence among Harbor weavers between 1902 and 1906 mill owners quickly learned of the need for closer cooperation.

Against this rising tide of unionism, only the massive mill operation in Cosmopolis consistently repelled the organizing efforts of local activists, earning Cosmopolis the title of "the scabbiest town on the coast."¹¹² Commercial Company manager C. F. White got his first opportunity to enforce the open shop in early 1902 when, after a furious organizing campaign, all Grays Harbor shingle weavers affiliated with the ISWUA. Unwilling to deal with unions, White and his lieutenants laid out a

¹⁰⁸ On this strike see State of Washington, *Fifth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Factory Inspection*, 1905-1906 (Olympia: C. W. Gorham Public Printer, 1906), 177; *Hoquiam Sawyer*, 15 April 1905; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 11 April 1905; *Grays Harbor Post*, 15, 29 April 1905; *Shingle Weaver*, April, May, June 1905.

¹⁰⁹ *Shingle Weaver*, May 1905.

¹¹⁰ *Grays Harbor Post*, 3, 17 February 1906; *Shingle Weaver*, May 1905.

¹¹¹ *Shingle Weaver*, June 1905.

¹¹² *Grays Harbor Post*, 5 October 1907.

strategy to re-take and maintain an open shop at their shingle mill. After a seven-month struggle, the newly formed Grays Harbor Shingle Weavers' Union No. 9618 brought all of the shingle mills in Aberdeen, Hoquiam, and Cosmopolis, except for the Commercial Company, to heel.¹¹³ Manager White's open shop offensive included the rapid training of mill hands in the weavers' craft, the deployment of police to guard the scabs on the job and at home, and the blacklisting of all unionists as manager White's top lieutenant Neil Cooney declared the company's policy was "to have nothing to do with union men at our mill."¹¹⁴ And so it went for the next three decades. Thus while Aberdeen and Hoquiam capitalists took their swipes at the total control White and Cooney exerted over their company town, they could hardly be blamed for envying Cooney when he declared unequivocally that "we agreed to be open shop."¹¹⁵ Emulating the Commercial Company's control became the primary goal of White and Cooney's fellow employers over the next thirty years.

¹¹³ *Shingle Weaver*, November 1905.

¹¹⁴ *Grays Harbor Post*, 7 April 1906.

¹¹⁵ Testimony of Neil Cooney, United States Commission on Industrial Relations, *Industrial Relations, Final Report and Testimony*, submitted to Congress by the Commission on Industrial Relations, created by the Act of 23 August 1912 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1916), 4278.

CHAPTER III

“AS ONE MAN”:

GRAYS HARBOR’S MILITANT MAJORITY OF EMPLOYERS

The bosses act as one man. There is no question of whose business is attacked. Nobody sulks in his tent. “All for one, one for all,” is their motto, stolen from us. They have a better title to it.¹

--Jay Fox, “Thugs Rule in Aberdeen”

Harbor lumbermen were rabid anti-unionists. They publicly and repeatedly declared their commitment to open shop principles, formed clubs to turn those principles into action, and waged war on those who threatened their control over workplace and community. Yet, despite their intention to eliminate unions from the Harbor, men like W. B. Mack, Robert Lytle, and the rest of the Chamber of Commerce crowd were woefully inexperienced when it came to strikebreaking during the early 1900s. As was proven by the one-sided labor offensive waged from 1902 to 1906, without a more concerted campaign local employers were left to flail impotently against battle-hardened unionists who were affiliated with international unions, wielded large strike funds, and enjoyed some successes with the use of the boycott and labor press.² The size and strength of the Harbor’s early labor movement bear out this point. By 1904, twenty-three unions represented all branches of industry from loggers to laundry workers in Aberdeen. Collectively, Aberdeen and Hoquiam boasted no fewer than fifty-two labor unions between 1904 and 1908.³

Members of the Shingle Mills Bureau (SMB) first recognized the potential for a trade association to function as what historian William Millikan has called “a union

¹ Jay Fox, “Thugs Rule in Aberdeen,” *Agitator* 2:3 (15 December 1911): 1.

² See Chapters 4 and 5.

³ *Grays Harbor Post*, 7 May; 20 August; 3 September 1904; 3 May 1905; 20 January 1906; 4, 11, 18, 25 August 1906; 31 August 1907; 21 March; 5 September 1908.

against unions.”⁴ Formed in 1905, the Bureau was but one of several shingle associations formed between 1899 and 1914.⁵ Grays Harbor lumber manufacturers, including Grays Harbor Commercial Company manager C. F. White, had long taken an interest in the class solidarity these groups provided.⁶ But by 1905, after a series of stinging defeats by the ISWUA, the imposition of a defacto closed shop on all of the large shingle mills in Aberdeen and Hoquiam, and the radicalization of several prominent weavers, shingle manufacturers decided to band together in a fight against their militant workers.⁷ Bureau members soon established a defense fund and declared that “manufacturers must cooperate for mutual protection against the abuses of organized labor. Contribute to the Defense Fund and do it now.”⁸ Joining White atop the organization was Robert Lytle, whose Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle Mill was by 1906 the most prolific shingle operation on the Pacific Coast.⁹ Lytle’s hostility towards workers matched White’s, and gained the Hoquiam manufacturer the reputation among unionists as “the most vigorous and slimy foe of the Shingle Weavers’ Union,” and a man with “but slight regard for the provisions of a contract” and for “flagrantly” violating contracts.¹⁰

⁴ William Millikan, *A Union Against Unions: The Minneapolis Citizens’ Alliance and Its Fight Against Organized Labor, 1903-1947* (St. Paul: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

⁵ At least nine shingle organizations formed before 1914. The lack of a permanent organization was due in large part to the chaos that ensued from the case of new manufacturers entering the trade. See Cox, “Trade Associations,” 288; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 16 January 1904.

⁶ In 1904 White was Third Vice President of the Interstate Red Cedar Shingle Association, which had contracts with three hundred Washington mills and controlled ninety percent of the state’s product. Several Grays Harbor firms, including the American Mill, North Western Lumber Company, and Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle Company, were members of the association in 1904. *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 16 January 1904. As early as the 1890s White was serving as the president of the Washington Red Cedar Shingle Manufacturers’ Association. See Prosser, *A History of the Puget Sound Country*, 279.

⁷ For an analysis of the radicalization of the shingle weavers’ union, see Chapter 5.

⁸ *Seattle Union Record*, 16 June 1906. Cited in Dreyfus, “Timber Workers, Unionism and Syndicalism in the Pacific Northwest, 1900-1917” (Ph.D. diss., Graduate School of the City University of New York, 1993), 97.

⁹ *Shingle Weaver*, June 1904; Hunt and Kaylor, *Washington, West of the Cascades*, 73.

¹⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 14 December 1911; *Shingle Weaver*, September 1906.

The Bureau proved to be a well-oiled machine as its members humbled the shingle weavers in 1906. The strike began in Ballard in April 1906.¹¹ After more than two months of strike activity with little to show for it, a general strike in the shingle industry was put into effect by the ISWUA on 21 June.¹² Despite a few victories where shingle manufacturers signed contracts recognizing the union, the vast majority of mills refused to deal with the weavers.¹³ The Grays Harbor weavers were the last to concede defeat, but by mid-August all those weavers who could return to work did so.¹⁴ On 8 September, the five largest Grays Harbor shingle mills issued a resolution declaring their adherence to the open shop plan, an act repeated throughout Washington State.¹⁵ The strike devastated the union. Hoquiam ISWUA President J. G. Brown said the international had been nearly destroyed, while several locals, including Aberdeen Local No. 15, were forced to disband. Scabs retained their jobs and employers raised the open shop banner around the Harbor. Crowing over the one-sided victory, North Western mill manager E. O. McLaughlin triumphantly informed the *Grays Harbor Washingtonian* that, “You can say through your paper that the Northwestern Lumber company does not forget its enemies. . . . We will not discriminate between men, but it is the open shop which we will now establish.”¹⁶

¹¹ Dreyfus, “Timber Workers,” 95.

¹² Howd, 56; Dreyfus, “Timber Workers,” 102; *Seattle Times*, 18, 20 July 1906.

¹³ As of 24 July, forty-two mills, representing about six percent of the state’s output of shingles, had signed the shingle weavers’ union agreement. Four of these mills -- all small firms -- were in Chehalis (Grays Harbor) County. *Grays Harbor Washingtonian*, 24 July 1906.

¹⁴ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 21 August 1906.

¹⁵ On 11 July 1906, Grays Harbor shingle mill owners met in Elma and declared that once operations at their mills were resumed, “it will be under the policy of the open shop.” *Aberdeen Daily World*, 12 July 1906. Under the headline “Open Shop Plan,” Grays Harbor shingle manufacturers’ resolution was printed in the pages of the *Grays Harbor Post*, 8 September 1906; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 5 September 1906.

¹⁶ *Grays Harbor Washingtonian*, 2 August 1906.

Employers then turned on the Sailors' Union of the Pacific (SUP), the oldest and most powerful trade union in Grays Harbor during the first decade of the twentieth century. In April 1898 John Gronow, an agent for the Seattle SUP, moved to Aberdeen. Described by Washington State Federation of Labor (WSFL) President William Blackman in 1906 as one of the "pioneers of the movement," Gronow immediately established a branch of the sailors' union in Aberdeen.¹⁷ The sailors' agent proved vital in the organization of a longshoremen's union shortly after his arrival, and by August 1898 the Aberdeen dock workers were "thoroughly organized."¹⁸ Between 1898 and 1910 maritime unionists held every leadership position in the local labor movement, from Vice President of the WSFL and President of the Grays Harbor Trades and Labor Congress (GHTLC) to the head of the local Labor Day celebration committee.¹⁹ Unionized Grays Harbor sailors and longshoremen performed most of the labor that connected the lush forests of Grays Harbor to the lucrative markets of Asia, South America, and California. In 1906, during a strike of Pacific Coast sailors and longshoremen, Harbor workers demonstrated the vulnerability of the Harbor's maritime trade to a strike of marine transport workers at this choke point.²⁰

Few confrontations better illustrated the need for greater employing-class solidarity than that which occurred on 12 June 1906 aboard the lumber schooner *Centralia*. The *Centralia* had come into port the previous day as the first ship to arrive during the great

¹⁷ *Coast Seamen's Journal*, 27 April 1898; *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Convention of the Washington State Federation of Labor* (Aberdeen, WA, 1906), 11-12.

¹⁸ *Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Washington State Federation of Labor*, (Everett, WA, 1906), 27; *Coast Seamen's Journal*, 17 August 1898.

¹⁹ *Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Washington State Federation of Labor*, 27; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 9, 16 July 1904.

²⁰ For information on the 1906 Pacific Coast maritime strike, see Hyman Weintraub, *Andrew Furuseth: Emancipator of the Seamen* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), 74-75; *Coast Seamen's Journal*, 2, 9 May 1906; 13, 20 June 1906; *Grays Harbor Post*, 9 June 1906; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 9 June 1906.

1906 maritime strike. From the start the scab ship found difficulties. Captain Erickson, master of the ship, could not secure a crew of longshoremen, and after learning that no strikebreakers dared approach the ship, he begged Aberdeen Mayor John Lindstrom for special officers to guard private property during the strike.²¹ Responding positively, if tentatively, Lindstrom assigned the first of what would become many “specials,” Deputy Frank Rattie, to guard the ship, the docks, and the men who worked on them. By the next day Erickson had secured enough men to unload the ship, but with the SUP boycott on all unfair steam schooners, he was unable to secure a crew to load and sail the ship back down the coast. There, the captain waited along with Rattie and Slade mill manager W. B. Mack until early in the evening when a crowd of about two hundred men marched through the Slade mill with SUP agent William Gohl at its head, to the docks and onto the *Centralia*.²² In a letter written by Gohl, the agent said the offensive against the *Centralia* was mustered because of rumors that its crew had been shanghaied or otherwise misled in San Francisco into accepting their positions onboard.²³ When Gohl and a number of others boarded the ship, the union agent and Mack exchanged gunshots. According to most sources, the shots were aimed into the river and sky, and thus intended less to harm and more to gain attention and incite fear. Mack, however, put a different spin on things. He stated that after firing his shot into the river, Gohl turned the gun on him and stated, “If you make a move, you’ll get yours.” “After firing into the air,” Mack continued, “he said to me that I was not the only one who could make a ‘gun play.’ I told him I thought I could see where he was right.”²⁴

²¹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 16 June 1906; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 13 June 1906.

²² *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 13 June 1906; *Grays Harbor Post*, 16 June 1906.

²³ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 13 June 1906; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 14 June 1906.

²⁴ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 13, 15 June 1906; *Grays Harbor Post*, 16 June 1906.

Militant confrontations like the *Centralia* incident continued through the summer months as the coalition of union longshoremen and sailors shut down the Grays Harbor lumber port for the first time in its history. The damage to employers' pocketbooks demonstrated the potency of working-class solidarity. The strikers knew full well that they had an advantage during the strike. The Pacific Coast economy was booming, and with the need for building materials created by the San Francisco earthquake and fire, organized labor was in prime position to dictate terms in 1906.²⁵ Some of the most common sources of building materials were the forests of Grays Harbor. Yet, with the strikers' control of the docks both in Grays Harbor and San Francisco, nearly all coastwise shipping halted during the strike. The anti-labor *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin* complained that the strike was strangling the local economy, writing, "Nothing else could have prevented the people of the harbor country from enjoying an era of very great prosperity."²⁶ Complain as they might, employers failed for the most part to crack the picket lines, and by two weeks into the strike the S. E. Slade Lumber Company and its logging camps had temporarily laid off nearly five hundred men.²⁷ Grays Harbor's prolific lumber trade had been disrupted by only a few dozen seamen and their allies on the docks in the summer of 1906. As a result, the flow of capital was cut off to the region

²⁵ On the San Francisco earthquake and fire, see *Coast Seamen's Journal*, 25 April; 2 May 1906. Michael Kazin, *Barons of Labor: The San Francisco Building Trades and Union Power in the Progressive Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 126-127. In the immediate wake of the earthquake many trades refused to use the opportunity to increase wages, an act that according to the *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin* proved that the "Sailors Show Right Spirit" when the SUP "discontinue[d] its demand for higher wages." *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 22 April 1906; Paul S. Taylor, *The Sailors' Union of the Pacific* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 104-105.

²⁶ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 22 June 1906. During 1905, 595 vessels carried cargo from Grays Harbor and the *Bulletin* trumpeted that during "1906 the list will probably grow to 800 vessels carrying cargo seaward."

²⁷ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 20 June 1906; *Pacific Lumber Trade Journal*, January 1907; *Grays Harbor Post*, 5 February 1910.

just as Grays Harbor employers whetted their thirst for San Francisco reconstruction profits.

For employers, the maritime strike conclusively demonstrated the necessity of an obedient workforce in this vital industry. After the strike, local employers took the necessary steps to ensure a healthy supply of non-union labor. These efforts reached fruition with the incorporation of the Grays Harbor Stevedore Company in 1908. Prior to that point, the stevedore firm had always been a small affair, one operated by independent proprietors contracted to secure workers by mill and ship owners. In June 1908, a series of disagreements between the SUP, longshoremen, and mill owners occurred, which delayed shipping and lost many work hours.²⁸ On 18 September 1908, ten of the major mill owners of the region responded to this trouble by signing articles of incorporation for a significantly enlarged Grays Harbor Stevedore Company. The articles stated that the firm was designed to “engage in the stevedoring, brokerage, and vessel agents’ business on Grays harbor, Washington” and to “load and unload vessels, and do a general brokerage, vessel agents’, and contracting business with relation to the handling of vessels.”²⁹ But its real purpose was to break unions. Shortly after the stevedore firm was incorporated, the mill owners began an eighteen-month-long lockout of union longshoremen who refused to load alongside scab workers supplied by the new company. With their massive resources, these men -- ten of the wealthiest on the Harbor -- were able to hire non-union longshoremen. One hundred unionists were turned out of work,

²⁸ *Aberdeen World*, 15, 19, 23 June; 16 September 1908.

²⁹ Articles of Incorporation of the Grays Harbor Stevedore Company, Chehalis County, State of Washington, 18 September 1908. Articles of Incorporation, Grays Harbor County Government Records, SWA. Owners of the firm included W. B. Mack, A. P. Stockwell, M. R. Sherwood, F. A. Hart, and C. M. Weatherwax of Aberdeen; and A. L. Paine, A. H. Kuhn, N. J. Blagen, and E. O. McLaughlin of Hoquiam.

their places filled by men supplied by the Grays Harbor Stevedore Company.³⁰ One of the central outcomes of the lockout, however, was a threatened general strike, orchestrated by an old alliance of seamen and longshoremen in December 1909, and originating from the SUP agent William Gohl. While the general strike never materialized, it proved a vivid reminder of the potency of maritime solidarity on the Harbor.³¹ A month after the threat was issued, however, local employers, aided by state agents and labor spies, ensured this was the last flash of maritime militancy to originate from the office of the sailors' union.

To even up the odds between themselves and local unions, Harbor merchants and manufacturers imported more experienced men to assist with, and frequently command, the open shop drives. This group included strikebreakers, gunmen, and labor spies. By far the most important of the three groups were the spies who infiltrated and subverted unions and radical organizations, concocted testimony and coerced witnesses against unionists, fought alongside employers in street fights against workers, and channeled their intelligence to employers and state authorities.

Labor spies, particularly those hailing from private agencies, have nearly as long a historical pedigree in the US as labor unions themselves. Their continued use throughout much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be attributed to spies' successful infiltration of unions, their implication of unionists and radicals for real and imagined subversive activities, and ultimately, their ability to destroy workers' organizations.³² A

³⁰ *Grays Harbor Washingtonian*, 10 April 1910; United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County, City of Aberdeen.

³¹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 30 December 1909. This issue of the *Daily World* reminded its readers that this threatened strike was an "Echo of Old Difficulty," a reference to the 1906 strike.

³² There exists a sizeable literature on the history of labor spies. See Frank Morn, *"The Eye that Never Sleeps": A History of the Pinkerton National Detective Agency* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982); Robert P. Weiss, "Private Detective Agencies and Labour Discipline in the United States, 1855-

key to their success was that private spy agencies operated in secret, free from the public scrutiny that occasionally hinders public officials from abusing their power. In Washington State, from the turn of the century the most prominent of these agencies -- always described as “private detectives” rather than labor spies -- was the Thiel Detective Service Company. Gus Thiel, the agency’s founder, worked as a Pinkerton agent during the 1860s before setting out on his own in 1873 when he moved to St. Louis and then Chicago, to set up his own agency.³³ Within a decade the agency was in a thriving condition with branches scattered throughout the US, particularly in the West where the Thiel agents became the dominant force in their industry.³⁴ The Seattle branch was set up initially during the late nineteenth century, but by 1901 the Thiels already had ample competition in the Evergreen State. Six agencies, including the infamous Pinkerton National Detective Agency, maintained headquarters in Seattle, while the Northwest Detective and Bell-Church Llewelyn agencies operated in Grays Harbor.³⁵ Beginning in 1908 and extending well into the 1920s Harbor employers funneled thousands of dollars into detective agencies, particularly the Thiel agency headed by its Seattle manager, W.

1946,” *The Historical Journal* 29:1 (1986): 87-107; Leo Huberman, *The Labor Spy Racket* (New York: Modern Age Books, 1937); Robert M. Smith, *From Blackjacks to Briefcases: A History of Commercialized Strikebreaking and Unionbusting in the United States* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003); Stephen H. Norwood, *Strikebreaking and Intimidation: Mercenaries and Masculinity in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *Violence and Reform in American History* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1978), 100-114.

³³ Lukacs, *Big Trouble*, 84-85; Robert Michael Smith, *From BlackJacks to Briefcases*, 21.

³⁴ Boyer and Morais, 151-157; Morn, 103; Vernon H. Jensen, *Heritage of Conflict: Labor Relations in the Nonferrous Metals Industry up to 1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1950; New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 202. In their book *Labour Before the Law*, Judy Fudge and Eric Tucker argue that the Thiel Detective Agency also had great strength in Canada. Judy Fudge and Eric Tucker, *Labour Before the Law: The Regulation of Workers’ Collective Action in Canada, 1900-1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 86.

³⁵ *Polk’s Seattle City Directory*, 1900, 1158; *Polk and Company’s Seattle City Directory*, 1901, 1309-1310; *Polk’s Seattle City Directory*, 1905, 1449; *R. L. Polk and Company’s Grays Harbor Cities Directory*, 1908, 19, 553; Dreyfus, “Timber Workers,” 159-160; *Aberdeen World*, 11 February 1909.

S. Seavey.³⁶ Reports of Pinkerton, local, and independent spies also surfaced between 1909 and 1912, but thereafter, the Thiels maintained a monopoly over this service for several years in the Harbor towns.³⁷ In many of the key labor conflicts that shook the early twentieth century Pacific Northwest, and indeed in each of those centered on the Harbor, the interlocking relationship between these spies, their employer sponsors, and the “public” police departments with which they coordinated activities, played major roles in the union-busting and anti-radical terrors that partially constituted the long counter-subversive tradition in Pacific Northwest history. Several prominent businessmen also cultivated enduring relationships with Seavey, who was widely praised by the *Grays Harbor Post*, ostensibly a labor newspaper.³⁸

Professional investigators frequently infiltrated labor and radical organizations, and succeeded at gaining the trust of members. For example, during the 1910s, labor spies were elected to leadership positions for Grays Harbor IWW branches.³⁹ Part of the spies’ jobs was to keep employers apprised of their targets’ actions. Harbor bosses received lists of suspected agitators’ names, skills, and detailed physical descriptions, including that of one man under surveillance who was “45 years. 5’9”. 210 lbs, clean

³⁶ W. S. Seavey served as manager for the Seattle branch of the Thiel Detective Agency throughout the early twentieth century until being replaced in 1917 by H. P. Wunderling, “a veteran of the Thiel Detective Service.” See W. S. Seavey to E. G. Ames, 14 August 1917, Edwin Gardner Ames Papers, Accession No. 3820, Box 16, Folder 22, UW; *R. L. Polk and Company’s Grays Harbor Cities Directory*, 1908, 19, 553.

³⁷ One confirmed Pinkerton agent to work on the Harbor was Charles W. Wappenstein, the superintendent of the Portland branch of the Pinkerton agency, who resigned this post to take oversee an Aberdeen bank while it was in receivership. Wolfe and Co., *Sketches of Washingtonians*, 297. See also *Aberdeen World*, 17 February 1909.

³⁸ *Grays Harbor Post*, 16 November 1912. On the use of labor spies during Pacific Northwest strikes, see Lukacs, *Big Trouble*, 84-102; Robert Michael Smith, *From BlackJacks to Briefcases*, 21.

³⁹ E. B. Report, 30 January 1918, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, Washington State Archives, Olympia, WA (Hereafter WSA).

shaven and heavy florid face; dark hair; wears blue suit, derby hat, and dark overcoat.”⁴⁰

Some lumbermen remained in the loop through Edwin G. Ames, a prominent Puget Sound lumber manufacturer. Ames peddled information about Wobblies, trade unionists, and employees’ work habits to western Washington State lumbermen, including Grays Harbor Commercial Company manager Neil Cooney and Grays Harbor Lumber Company manager N. J. Blagen. The information flowed both directions. After gaining an upper hand during the 1912 Grays Harbor strike, information from Harbor employers was usefully deployed by Puget Sound employers engaged in similar battles against the “won’t work gang.”⁴¹ Oftentimes, there was little distinction between the public and private sphere regarding labor spies, as operatives performed double-duty as Thiel agents and Aberdeen municipal police officers.⁴² Agents from the United States War Department and Grays Harbor Sheriff’s Department also worked for the Grays Harbor Stevedore Company and lumbermen’s trade associations, spying and scab-herding during strikes.⁴³

Labor spies gained their initial toehold on the Harbor during the open shop drives waged against the Grays Harbor Waterfront Federation (GHWFF) and its constituent unions. A main target of the labor espionage was William Gohl, two-time president of the Grays Harbor TLC, founder of the GHWFF, secretary of the sailors’ union, and a man

⁴⁰ Report of Agent 31, 25 November 1917, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA; Report of Agent 31, 30 December 1917; Washington State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA.

⁴¹ W.S. Seavey to E. G. Ames, 17 September 1912, Edwin Gardner Ames Papers, Accession No. 3820, Box 93, Folder 20, UW.

⁴² *Grays Harbor Post*, 16 November 1912.

⁴³ Testimony of John A. McBride, 3768-3769, 3778-3780, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 114, Folder 6, 9515, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI (Hereafter WSU). A significant amount of testimony was delivered by residents of Grays Harbor about the IWW’s activities in the region during the *United States v. Haywood, et al.* trial.

labeled by Chehalis County Superior Court Judge Mason Irwin as “deliberate in action, energetic, aggressive and courageous,” but who “lacks good judgment and discretion.”⁴⁴

After many failed attempts by labor spies to dig up information against Gohl “and his gang,” several “public-spirited” men formed the Citizens’ Committee, an employers’ association designed to remove Gohl from power, and turned to the Thiel Agency.⁴⁵ In the public-private investigation that ensued, the first and most important spy engaged was Patrick J. McHugh, better known as “Paddy.” McHugh had a long, strange career on the Harbor. He was one of the region’s early loggers, working in the woods alongside his brother Neil for fourteen years.⁴⁶ Between 1895 and 1902 he owned a piece of no fewer than four independent logging operations in Grays Harbor, a feat of social-climbing frequently made by local loggers during these early years.⁴⁷ He then briefly moved south to California where his luck took a turn for the worse. In June 1904 he lay “dying,” according to the *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, in a Portland, Oregon, hospital, due to injuries sustained while logging in Northern California.⁴⁸ It is unknown how he recovered, but by 1907 “Paddy” had returned to Aberdeen, purchased a home on East Wishkah Street, and operated a saloon directly underneath the sailors’ union hall.⁴⁹ McHugh spent the next

⁴⁴ Opinion of the Court, Superior Court of Chehalis County, Case, 26 July 1906, *C. F. Drake and H. Van Tassel, Partners, doing business as Grays Harbor Stevedore Company vs. Aberdeen Branch Sailors Union of the Pacific, and Wm. Gohl, et al.*, No. 6431, SWA.

⁴⁵ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 10 August 1911; Aho, “The Ghoul of Grays Harbor,” 22.

⁴⁶ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 16 June 1904; L. R. Brooks and W. B. Crammatte, *R. L. Polk and Company’s Grays Harbor City Directory*, 1902, 43; John D. Fairbairn, “Fairbairn’s Guide to History of Logging in Chehalis-Grays Harbor County since 1882,” p. 145, Aberdeen: Before 1920 Collection, Aberdeen Public Library, Aberdeen, Washington.

⁴⁷ According to the figures compiled by John D. Fairbairn in his “History of Logging,” well over five hundred logging firms operated in Chehalis-Grays Harbor County between 1882 and 1920. This is the most complete source of information on the firms that operated in the region.

⁴⁸ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 16 June 1904.

⁴⁹ *R. L. Polk & Company’s Grays Harbor Cities and Chehalis County Directory*, 1907, 110; 1908, 44; 1910, 170.

four years pursuing the life of a small businessman, saloon owner, then as a Thiel spy, and finally as proprietor of the Baldwin Motel in Hoquiam.⁵⁰

In mid-1909, after months of trying and failing to incriminate the union agent, the Citizens' Committee engaged McHugh, a man who according to local historian Ed Van Syckle, "knew every move of Gohl's gang."⁵¹ Sometime during 1909 McHugh began to receive a salary from the local Citizens' Committee in exchange for spying and reporting back about Gohl's alleged crimes.⁵² A second Thiel agent, Billie Montyee, also known as "Billie Montana," was also hired to produce evidence against Gohl and report back to Dean.⁵³ In 1909 and early 1910, McHugh and Montana operated in secret, sneaking into Dean's house "as often as safety allowed, after saloon hours" to report on their investigation of Gohl.⁵⁴

In early February 1910, a number of stories in the local press claimed that Aberdeen Chief of Police George Dean was visited by a "reliable business man of Aberdeen," who told him that Gohl had drunkenly confessed to the murders of sailor Charles Hadberg and cigar dealer John Hoffman.⁵⁵ It was revealed shortly thereafter that the businessman in question was McHugh, the Thiel agent. According to McHugh, Gohl bragged to him on the evening of 21 December that he and sailor John Klingenberg were going to murder Hoffman later that night, and then kill Hadberg the following morning.

⁵⁰ *Aberdeen Herald*, 9 May 1910; *R. L. Polk & Co.'s Grays Harbor Cities and Chehalis County Directory*, 1911, 363.

⁵¹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 9 April 1910; Van Syckle, *They Tried*, 244; Aho, "The Ghoul of Grays Harbor," 23-24.

⁵² *Grays Harbor Washingtonian*, 8 May 1910; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 10 August 1911; Aho, "On the Harbor," 23.

⁵³ Hughes and Beckwith, *On the Harbor*, 23; *Grays Harbor Washingtonian*, 10 May 1910; *Aberdeen Herald*, 2, 16 May 1910.

⁵⁴ Fultz, *Famous Northwest Manhunts*, 38.

⁵⁵ *Tacoma Daily-Ledger*, 6 February 1910; *Grays Harbor Washingtonian*, 6 February 1910; *Grays Harbor Post*, 7 May 1910.

The next day, McHugh alleged, Gohl returned to McHugh's saloon and revealed the grisly details of the crimes, stating that he and Klingenberg had "planted the bodies in the waters of Grays Harbor with anchors for pillows."⁵⁶ The body of Hadberg was discovered with two bullet holes the head, tied down in the water by a fifty-pound anchor, matching much of McHugh's description.⁵⁷ Hoffman's body was never discovered.⁵⁸

The relevance of the Thiel agents' work cannot be overestimated, for their involvement in the case, even if it had been minor, would cast a pall of disrepute over the whole process. Labor spies were renowned for fabricating stories about union activists' alleged crimes such as the charges they concocted against Western Federation of Miners officials "Big" Bill Haywood, Charles Moyer, and George Pettibone during the investigation of the murder of Idaho's former governor Frank Steunenberg. In the Steunenberg investigation, labor spy James McParland offered Harry Orchard, the key suspect in the murder, a plea deal in exchange for Orchard's "confession" that he was the "tool" of WFM officials who had paid him to murder the former governor. While McParland's efforts to implicate Haywood, Moyer, and Pettibone in Steunenberg's murder failed when a jury acquitted Haywood and charges against the other two defendants were dropped, employers and labor spies in Grays Harbor succeeded at convicting Gohl and removing him from the region using a similar strategy three years later.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ *Aberdeen Herald*, 9 May 1910.

⁵⁷ *Grays Harbor Post*, 15 October 1910; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 3 February 1910.

⁵⁸ Hughes and Beckwith, *On the Harbor*, 30; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 4 February 1910; *Grays Harbor Washingtonian*, 5 February; 12 May 1910.

⁵⁹ The Steunenberg murder case has been the subject of numerous works. See Joseph R. Conlin, *Big Bill Haywood and the Radical Union Movement* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1969), 52-68; Lucas, *Big Trouble*; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 40-59.

The Thiel agents were at the center of the investigation into Gohl's alleged criminal activities. Indeed, it was their information gathering that the case hinged upon. The Citizens' Committee and City of Aberdeen paid thousands of dollars to the Thiel Agency to keep McHugh "in the field" for approximately one year, and after Gohl's arrest in February 1910, another eight agents were brought in to "secure evidence" and "find witnesses," two of the specialties of which the agency boasted.⁶⁰ It was McHugh's information that sent Dean to Indian Creek blindly groping for Hadberg's body, and when two youths fell upon a body at the creek, it was Paddy's testimony that tied the case together and gave the police cause to arrest Gohl. Furthermore, shortly before the trial began in May 1910, McHugh gained a private session with the prosecution's key witness, sailor John Klingenberg, after the man had been forcibly interned and transported to Grays Harbor from Mexico, but before he was allowed access to legal council. This meeting between labor spy and witness closely resembled that which took place in an Idaho jail between labor spy James McParland and Harry Orchard three years earlier. Moreover, the results were the same: Klingenberg agreed to testify against Gohl in exchange for leniency in his own trial.⁶¹ The *Grays Harbor Post* described Klingenberg's reaction to the interrogation, writing, "Tears streamed down the prisoner's cheeks and he repeatedly exclaimed to the detective nearest him, 'This is Hell. Won't you shoot me and put me out of my misery?'"⁶² McHugh also showed up at Gohl's trial to testify for the prosecution. However, it was Klingenberg's testimony that he had carried out the murders on Gohl's orders that sealed the agent's fate. On 12 May, Gohl was convicted of murder in the first degree, although the jury, which had trouble reaching

⁶⁰ *Aberdeen Herald*, 2, 16 May 1910; *R. L. Polk & Co.'s Seattle City Directory*, 1905, 1449.

⁶¹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 12 October 1910; *Grays Harbor Washingtonian*, 10 May 1910.

⁶² *Grays Harbor Post*, 9 April 1910; *Grays Harbor Washingtonian*, 9 April 1910.

consensus, recommended “as much leniency as possible” in sentencing the defendant.⁶³ W. L. Byng, a longshoreman, the lone Aberdeen resident and one of only three workers on the jury, had voted for acquittal, and the jury as a whole asked Judge Sheeks if Gohl could be convicted of a lesser crime.⁶⁴ However, after the judge ruled that a second-degree murder charge was not possible, the jurors returned a verdict of guilty of murder in the first degree. On 24 May, Gohl was sentenced to life in prison. Klingenberg was later convicted of murder in the second degree and sentenced to between ten and twenty years in prison.⁶⁵ That Klingenberg later recanted his testimony, called the trials of him and Gohl a “put up job,” and demanded a new trial mattered little to the employers who secured the union agent’s conviction.⁶⁶ Few Aberdeen residents outside the Citizens’ Committee knew that Thiel agents were brought in to investigate the case, and even after it was made public, no newspaper reported the scope of agency’s involvement.⁶⁷ Only after Gohl had been convicted, sentenced, imprisoned, and his union devastated would banker W. J. Patterson, the public face of the Citizens’ Committee, admit publicly that thousands of dollars had been paid to Thiel agents to remove Gohl from office.⁶⁸

Concurrent with the Citizens’ Committee campaign to destroy the Harbor’s maritime unions was the coordination of Aberdeen lumbermen into a combination to

⁶³ Verdict, 12 May 1910, *State of Washington vs. William Gohl*, No. 8505, Superior Court of the State of Washington, for Chehalis County (1910), Billy Gohl Documentation, SWA.

⁶⁴ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 12 May 1910. “List of Jurors Drawn in Cause No. 8505,” *State of Washington vs. William Gohl*, No. 8505, Superior Court of the State of Washington, for Chehalis County (1910), Billy Gohl Documentation, SWA; *R. L. Polk & Co.’s Grays Harbor Cities and Chehalis County Directory*, 1910, 307, 496; *Grays Harbor Washingtonian*, 4, 5 May 1910.

⁶⁵ *Grays Harbor Post*, 22 October; 5 November 1910; Hughes and Beckwith, *On the Harbor*, 31.

⁶⁶ *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 October; 5 November 1910.

⁶⁷ The Aberdeen city council was not informed of the use of the Thiel Agency until August 1911, more than a year after Gohl’s conviction. During a 9 August, 1911, city council meeting, councilman Hilts said the meeting was “the first time that he had been informed as to the use of the money and why it was paid out,” while Councilman Myles followed, noting “he had been in the dark as to the uses to which this money had been put.” *Aberdeen Daily World*, 10 August 1911.

⁶⁸ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 10 August 1911.

defeat the unskilled mill hands who, without union guidance or support, struck Aberdeen mills four times between 1904 and 1910. Indeed, the first major lumber strikes in Grays Harbor history were not the product of machinations by Wobbly agitators or the concerted efforts of ISWUA organizers. Instead, like so many of the conflicts that engulfed the region for the next twenty-five years these strikes were brought about by uprisings against low wages. A case in point came during June 1909, as a strike wave initiated by Aberdeen mill hands swept through the city's entire lumber industry when employers rolled back wages by 25 cents from the \$2 minimum. Wages were a paltry \$1.75 a day for "common" labor at the Slade, American, and several other Aberdeen mills. Workers struck at only those mills where wages were reduced by twenty-five cents; those that maintained the previous \$2 minimum, notably the Wilson Brothers, Aberdeen Lumber and Shingle, and Hart Wood Lumber Company, were spared the walkout.⁶⁹ Lumber manufacturers discovered much to their liking in a principled unity based on their shared hostility towards unionism. This statement applied even to traditionally moderate lumber operations, such as the Wilson Brothers mill, a local bastion of paternalistic labor relations and one the *Grays Harbor Post* labeled a "splendidly conducted mill," which "stands as a monument of just labor conditions and business sagacity."⁷⁰ Jonathan Wilson, manager of the Wilson Brothers mill, wrote the company's San Francisco headquarters predicting that their operations would remain running despite the trouble, noting "The laboring men are still on a strike here for an increase in wages. We will not have any trouble as we are paying \$2.00 per day."⁷¹

⁶⁹ Wilson, *From Boats to Board Feet*, 160-161; *Grays Harbor Post*, 5 June 1909.

⁷⁰ *Grays Harbor Post*, 16 June; 15 September 1906.

⁷¹ Cited in Wilson, *From Boats to Board Feet*, 161.

Wilson's confidence that his mill would be spared from the strike did not deter the Wilson Brothers' managers from working with other lumbermen to break the strike. Indeed, to the challenge issued by the mill workers, Harbor lumber manufacturers worked together in a terrific show of capital coordination. Twelve Aberdeen lumber mills, including Wilson Brothers, stopped operations in sympathy with the struck mills and formed the Aberdeen Manufacturers' Association to better coordinate their activities.⁷² The lockout tossed a total of more than 2,500 laborers out of work for more than a month, as boss lumbermen vowed "to close down until July 4."⁷³ Labor unrest and economic conditions helped forge unity among local mill owners who acted "in concert," determined to form a permanent lumber manufacturers association on the Harbor.⁷⁴ In the words of A. P. Stockwell, manager of the C. E. Burrows Lumber Company and spokesman for the local lumber manufacturers' association, none of the mills "had come anywhere near breaking even for the past year or eighteen months, and all of them are only too glad of the opportunity to close down until the market conditions are better."⁷⁵ With little to gain from running their operations during a period of low profits, employers possessed a major strategic advantage over their employees, men whose low wages and paltry savings required them to work or starve.

Employing-class solidarity won the day, and workers returned to the job with only the unskilled workers having had their demands met. The Aberdeen manufacturers -- led by Mack -- offered twenty-five cents per day raises for all yardmen, bringing all

⁷² *Aberdeen Daily World*, 6 June 1909.

⁷³ *Grays Harbor Post*, 12 June 1909.

⁷⁴ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 10 June 1909.

⁷⁵ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 4 June 1909.

Aberdeen mills up to a two-dollar minimum wage.⁷⁶ The increase applied only to the lowly paid unskilled laborers, and no concessions were offered to the skilled men whose solidarity with their fellow workers had made the strike force so potent. Indeed, from the onset of the strike owners had agreed to raise the wages of the lowest-paid unskilled workers, but had stood together in resisting wage increases for higher-paid workers. At the end of the strike, the twelve major manufacturers signed their names to the agreement bringing uniformity to Harbor lumber workers' wages.⁷⁷ Lest the social and economic leaders of the region celebrate too long, however, a new, more radical class enemy was organizing on the Harbor

In the wake of the open shop drive, highlighted by the defeat of the shingle weavers' union, the removal of Gohl, and compromise settlement with their unskilled mill hands, Harbor employers faced a new and radical challenge from the IWW. The Wobblies had formed two branches on the Harbor in 1907 and recruited a small membership among Aberdeen and Hoquiam shingle weavers and mill hands. By mid-1911 the Wobblies had forged several radical outposts within Grays Harbor manufacturing and transportation workplaces, those industries with recent histories of union-busting and practically no history of industrial union organization by the AFL.⁷⁸ Between October 1911 and May 1912 Harbor employers faced off in a long, protracted series of struggles against local workers who joined or sympathized with the IWW. The Aberdeen Free Speech Fight and Grays Harbor lumber strike, as the conflicts were

⁷⁶ This specific quotation comes from W. B. Mack, although several other prominent Aberdeen citizens, including American mill manager Quackenbush and Mayor E. B. Benn, registered similar thoughts. Cited in *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 May; 5 June 1909. See also *Aberdeen Daily World*, 3, 4, 5 June 1909; Wilson, *From Boats to Board Feet*, 160-161.

⁷⁷ *Grays Harbor Post*, 5 June 1909.

⁷⁸ The composition of the trade union movement in Grays Harbor is analyzed in Chapters 4 and 5.

popularly known, witnessed a new style of employer offensive for the region, one waged by an employing class bent on driving radicals out of their communities and workplaces.⁷⁹ Their efforts were based primarily on brute physical force. The costs of employers' efforts proved heavy in terms of working-class blood and agony. It also provided local manufacturers with an efficient model of anti-unionism based on cooperation with each other, violent direct action against workers, and heavy assistance from state and the mainstream press.

The Wobblies posed special problems to their employers. As revolutionists the IWW eschewed the class collaboration of trade unionists and electioneering of the local branches of the Socialist Party. They relied on direct action at the point of production and mass community pressure to achieve their aims. As was made clear by their earlier open shop campaigns, local employers wanted little or nothing to do with unions. It was equally clear that Harbor lumber manufacturers, boss loggers, and their allies saw the IWW as both a union and as a "red menace," a revolutionary "horde of men" who sought to bring anarchy to their towns.⁸⁰ IWW official Vincent St. John's 1911 letter to Aberdeen Mayor Parks threatening to "make grass grow on the streets of Aberdeen," only added to the concerns of Aberdeen's municipal administration and employers, men who considered themselves the logical stewards for Aberdeen residents' collective well-being.⁸¹ Their responses to the IWW were conditioned as much by this perceived threat to their dominant positions within the community, as much, if not more, than employers' hostility towards unions. John Carney, Democratic editor of the *Aberdeen Herald* and

⁷⁹ The "Greek Strike" of 1912 is covered in detail in Dreyfus, "Reds, Whites, and Greeks," and Goings, "Free Speech and Industrial Unionism."

⁸⁰ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 25 November 1911.

⁸¹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 25 November 1911; *Aberdeen Herald*, 20 May 1912; Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 41.

one of the directors of the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce, left little doubt as to this fact, writing, “The issue is not free speech; it is not whether or not street speaking be permitted or denied, but who shall control Aberdeen, its resident citizens or a bunch of irresponsibles gathered under the red banner of anarchy by a small coterie of grafting officials parading under the high sounding name of the Industrial Workers of the World.”⁸² As Carney suggested, free speech fights were as much about community control as they were about free speech. Geographer Don Mitchell argued similarly that IWW free speech fights were really contests over turf within a community. He wrote that that “the streets and parks of American cities were the most important organizing ground. . . . ‘if denied the right to agitate there, then they must remain silent.’”⁸³

Key to employers’ ability to maintain control of the streets was their display of class solidarity on a scale unprecedented in the Pacific Northwest. But the Wobblies’ violation of the speaking ban was merely a catalyst to these men’s collective action. Much of the logistical work that went into the creation of the Citizens’ Committee had been in the works long before the IWW upsurge. Banker William J. Patterson and others had convened an inner cadre of businessmen to a citizens’ committee two years earlier, and 1910-1912 was a period of rapid growth in the membership and activity of local and regional commercial associations. Perhaps aware that a large labor conflict was on the horizon, the Hoquiam Commercial Club called on members to bring “to the meeting next Wednesday . . . at least one person to be elected to membership.”⁸⁴ In the midst of the conflict, the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce, the parent organization to the Citizens’

⁸² *Aberdeen Herald*, 11 January 1912; *Grays Harbor Post*, 20 January 1912.

⁸³ Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2003), 56.

⁸⁴ *Daily Washingtonian*, 7 December 1911.

Committee, had doubled its ranks, becoming the most powerful commercial body in southwest Washington.⁸⁵ In early October 1911, Aberdeen merchants and manufacturers hosted a major meeting of the Southwest Washington Development Association, again proving their readiness for cooperation.⁸⁶ Thus, Harbor employers were clearly moving in the direction of a wider degree of cooperation in their united front against labor and radicals; the emergence of the Wobblies as a major challenge to their rule over community affairs served as an impetus driving the Grays Harbor bourgeoisie towards militant direct action.

To combat the threatened Wobbly “invasion,” Aberdeen was put under martial law.⁸⁷ Citizens’ Committee members roamed the streets wearing white tags to identify themselves as members and subjecting all working class men to indiscriminate searches. Border patrols were assembled and stationed at each of the town’s entrances, while all trains entering the city were searched for Wobblies.⁸⁸ Aberdeen police and deputized citizens, in tandem with Chehalis County Sheriff’s Department and municipal police throughout western Washington, harassed and arrested the Wobblies. By November they commanded more than one thousand men, all trains coming into the city were searched, and streets were patrolled day and night by special police.⁸⁹ A curfew was put in place, all public gatherings were dispersed, and farmers were urged to deny food to anyone who

⁸⁵ *Grays Harbor Post*, 20 January 1912; *Daily Washingtonian*, 5 December 1911.

⁸⁶ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 3 October 1911.

⁸⁷ Threats of “invasions” were used liberally by the mainstream press throughout the free speech fight. See *Grays Harbor Post*, 9 December 1911; 6 January 1912. The *Grays Harbor Post*, 30 December 1911, also referred to this “invasion” as “an advance up on Aberdeen.”

⁸⁸ *Aberdeen Daily World* 25 November 1911

⁸⁹ Carol J. Lind, *Big Timber, Big Men* (Seattle: Hancock House, 1978), 114; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 25, 26 November 1911; *Daily Washingtonian*, 25, 26 November 1911.

showed up on their property.⁹⁰ A new tactic adopted by the Aberdeen Citizens' Committee was to deport the radicals from town, which was designed to prevent committed law-breakers from filling up the jails, demanding individual trials, and thus draining the municipal treasury, as Wobblies had successfully done in previous free speech fights.⁹¹ During one such forced removal from town, Citizens' Committee member L. G. Humbarger confessed that they operated outside the law in his warning the deportees "What we have done we did by taking the law in our own hands. You men go and never return. God bless you if you remain away, but God help you if you ever return."⁹² The *Aberdeen Daily World* took note of the vigilance of the city's anti-IWW forces, writing, "The city will not place them [the IWWs] in jail, nor will meals be furnished them. They will be shipped out by the carload or train load, if necessary, and as soon as enough of them have been collected to make up a shipment."⁹³ Appalled at the notion that their city could be "invaded" by a "nomadic bunch of Won't Works," the *Grays Harbor Post* threatened, "Should the I.W.W.'s [sic] invade Aberdeen, they will discover it will be no pink tea party."⁹⁴

⁹⁰ *Daily Washingtonian*, 25 November 1911; *Industrial Worker*, 30 November 1911; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 25 November 1911.

⁹¹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 23 November 1911; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 190; Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 41-121.

⁹² *Industrial Worker*, 1 February 1912; Ben Weatherwax, "Hometown Scrapbook -- No. 71 -- The Wobblies," radio script for Station KBKW, Aberdeen, recorded in the 1950s, Pacific Northwest History Collection, APL. In his affidavit, IWW Tracy Newell suggested a slightly different wording in the committee's warning. Newell recalled the threat as, "God bless you if you stay away and God help you if you come back. This is not the law; this is an organization of citizens. We intend by any and all means to suppress your organization." Tracy Newell, Sworn Testimony given to Pierce County Notary Public 16 December 1911. Governor's Papers, Governor Marion E. Hay, Judiciary, 1911-Labor Conflicts/IWW, Box 2G-2-19, Labor Conflicts-Aberdeen, Raymond, Spokane, 1910-1912, WSA. Humbarger was a prominent resident of Aberdeen, serving as President of the Aberdeen Elks' Lodge during 1914-1915 and as President of the Washington State Council of Defense during the First World War. See "Aberdeen, WA #593," <http://www.elks.org/lodges/LodgePages.cfm?LodgeNumber=593&ID=2643>, Accessed 20 March 2010; Anonymous, *Report of the State Council of Defense to the Governor of Washington*, BiblioLife, LLC Edition (Charleston, SC: Bibliolife, LLC, 2009), 90.

⁹³ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 24 November 1911.

⁹⁴ *Aberdeen Herald*, 15 April 1912; *Grays Harbor Post*, 30 December 1911.

The employment of professional labor spies in public offices increased during the years of violent confrontations between Grays Harbor employers and the IWW. In 1909 or 1910, Webber S. Seavey, assistant general manager of the Thiel Detective Service of the US, “loaned” then-mayor E. B. Benn the services of L. D. Templeman, one of his chief lieutenants, to serve as Aberdeen’s police chief.⁹⁵ Hoping to head off any of the radical labor upsurges that had recently occurred in Spokane and Portland, and likely worried about potential backlash from the Gohl trial, Aberdeen city fathers could not be faulted for hiring a professional to handle these duties.⁹⁶ Prior to his assignment as chief, Templeman was an officer engaged in “police work,” but not a member of the Aberdeen police force, a condition that led one *Daily World* journalist to write of the mysterious new chief, “He has lived here very quietly and is not well known.”⁹⁷ Templeman was clearly a determined fighter and experienced commander of men. As the local employers’ associations transitioned from open shop campaigns of 1906 to 1910 to physically fighting radicals and strikers, the new chief proved his mettle by holding off strikers with his revolver, ordering his deputies into street meetings to club demonstrators, and spraying down women and babies with a high-powered water hose. During the opening stages of the Aberdeen Free Speech Fight, 1,500 protestors marched to city hall carrying banners, passing out literature, and singing rebel songs.⁹⁸ There, Templeman met them with the city’s fire hose, sparing none, and causing, in the words of

⁹⁵ *Grays Harbor Post*, 16 November 1912; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 21 March 1912.

⁹⁶ On the IWW strike in Portland, Oregon, see Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 129-131, and for the Spokane Free Speech Fight of 1909-1910, see Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 177-185; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 175-184; John Duda, ed., *Wanted: Men to Fill the Jails of Spokane: Fighting for Free Speech with the Hobo Agitators of the IWW* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2009).

⁹⁷ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 17, 18 May 1911.

⁹⁸ *Daily Washingtonian*, 24 November 1911.

the *Grays Harbor Post*, “a second edition of Bull Run.”⁹⁹ At another point, the chief taunted the Wobblies with, “You have preached direct action and you are getting it; what are you going to do about it?”¹⁰⁰

“Temp,” as his bosses labeled him, proved to be a wildly successful strikebreaker. During the 1912 strike, when roving pickets arrived at the Aberdeen Lumber and Shingle Company, they ran headlong into Templeman. He was ruthless in the execution of his duties. In what the chief described as “playing ‘pigs in clover,’” he drove picketers off the grounds of the mill in waves by threatening them with his revolver, boasting, “I would succeed in driving out a few when I would turn around and face another crowd. At last, after getting them out of the shingle room, and around the table, the leaders left the building and the rest of the crowd followed.”¹⁰¹ Templeman was joined in his anti-union efforts by S. D. Llewellyn, Aberdeen police officer, head of the Aberdeen-based Llewellyn Detective Bureau, and like Templeman, an agent with close Thiel agency ties. So egregious were his deeds during the strike, that even in Grays Harbor where employers had tight control over the legal system, Llewellyn was arrested, charged with deathly injury, assault, and burglary, and eventually found guilty of third degree assault in a Chehalis County Superior Court.¹⁰²

Never relying solely on physical force, Templeman and his subordinates also maintained a vast espionage network, capable of routing information on unionists to employers throughout the state. Reports from the 1912 lumber strike were circulated among lumbermen who were justifiably concerned about the IWW. One such report

⁹⁹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 25 November 1911.

¹⁰⁰ Cited in *Solidarity*, 23 December 1911.

¹⁰¹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 21 March 1912.

¹⁰² *Aberdeen Daily World*, 24 March; 24 September 1912; Dreyfus, “Timber Workers,” 159-160.

issued by Seavey in July 1912 indicated that more than one thousand Wobblies were working in the Grays Harbor district alone. IWW correspondence was intercepted by local officials, and agents were assigned specifically to track prominent radicals such as John Pancner who operated in Grays Harbor.¹⁰³ Templeman also maintained a conspicuous presence at the county courthouse, serving as the chief state's witness against Wobblies and socialists in several highly publicized cases. In the best-known case Chehalis County Superior Court Judge Mason Irwin refused to grant Aberdeen's "Red" Finns an injunction against Templeman and Aberdeen Mayor Parks after the mayor and chief had forcibly closed up the socialists' hall. In his verdict Irwin declared, "I must condemn to the fullest degree the methods that are advocated in that book on the part of the Industrial Workers of the World," demanding the IWWs be barred from the hall, or he would permanently close the space.¹⁰⁴ The chief also appeared for the state in the trials of IWWs and socialists for the remainder of the year for offenses ranging from inciting to riot to criminal conspiracy.¹⁰⁵

One result of the growth of the IWW in Grays Harbor was that lumbermen introduced of a blacklist at logging operations. In discussing the decline of the IWW during the mid-1920s, historian Richard Rajala cited the widespread use and success of the blacklist, thus disallowing Wobblies their needed place at the point of production.

¹⁰³ W. S. Seavey to E. G. Ames, 17 September 1912, Box 93, Folder 30. Edwin Gardner Ames Papers, Accession No. 3820, UW; W.S. Seavey to E. G. Ames, 29 July 1912, Box 93, Folder 29, Edwin Gardner Ames Papers, Accession No. 3820, UW. While it is impossible to determine the exact numbers of men and women who joined the Grays Harbor IWW in 1911 and 1912, the IWW press echoed Seavey's assessment that their numbers were great. See Chapter 7 below.

¹⁰⁴ *Grays Harbor Post*, 27 April 1912; *Aberdeen Herald*, 25 April 1912; Dreyfus, "Timber Workers," 150-151.

¹⁰⁵ *Aberdeen Herald*, 1, 4 April; 20 May 1912. Templeman served as chief state's witness on several IWW cases at Chehalis County Superior Court on 19 June 1912. See, *Grays Harbor Post*, 22 June 1912. Noted socialist Dr. Herman Titus was charged in a federal court with "conspiracy with attempt to defraud American citizens of their rights as citizens of the United States." See, *Aberdeen Herald*, 4 April 1912.

More than a decade earlier, however, lumbermen on the Harbor and elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest used similar, and in some ways more devious, methods to oust agitators from their ranks. In one version of the blacklisting operation, out-of-work loggers were required to produce their time-check cards from their previous job, a card that contained the phrase “This Statement is subject to correction and payable at the Company’s Office in Aberdeen, Washington.” Unbeknownst to the potential employee, however, the card “carries with it a blacklist that is far reaching and actually is the means of supplying the record of every man that works in the logging camps on the Pacific coast.” How the scheme worked was made clear in a letter from the owners of the Grays Harbor Lumber Company to logging camp foreman Dan Peterson, in which the secret code on the card was exposed. “When a man quits underscore the words of the code which will give us the information why the man is getting his time,” read the letter. If the word “This” was underlined, the logger had been discharged from his previous job; if “payable” received an underscore, then he was fired for showing up drunk at work; if “to” was underlined the card holder was designated a “poor workman”; and if his bosses underlined “the,” then the card’s receivers knew him to be an “agitator.” The result was, in the words of one Wobbly, “a spy system that outdoes anything that was ever concocted in the fertile brain of the oppressors of Russia.”¹⁰⁶

In spite of the blacklist and employer violence, the local presence of the IWW grew rapidly in the wake of the free speech fight. The Wobblies organized a lumber workers’ local in Hoquiam and a branch of the Marine Transport Workers’ Industrial

¹⁰⁶ Richard Rajala, “A Dandy Bunch of Wobblies: Pacific Northwest Loggers and the Industrial Workers of the World, 1900-1930,” *Labor History* 37:2 (Spring 1996): 231-232; *Industrial Worker*, 4 January 1912.

Union (MTWIU) in Aberdeen.¹⁰⁷ But while local employers and their state allies conceded to radical workers the right to organize on street corners, Harbor employers refused to consider the possibility of a contested control over their workplaces. As the site of exploitation, shop floor control was of utmost necessity to boss loggers and manufacturers who required the ability to extract as much surplus as possible from their workers by speeding up production, cutting wages and jobs, and firing agitators with impunity. A union, especially a militant one like the IWW, threatened bosses' managerial prerogatives by improving wages and working conditions, restricting their ability to hire and fire whoever they pleased, and threatening to limit production through strikes, slowdowns, and stints. Thus, when the Harbor Wobblies carried their protests from the streets and into the mills, they were met by a group of employers who had fought together during the free speech fight and were bent on maintaining the open shop they had earned in years prior. It was in this context of several years of employer cooperation and the aftermath of the Aberdeen free speech fight that the Citizens' Committee transitioned from its role as community defender to that of aggressive strikebreaker. Brought to a new level of solidarity by the threat of a permanently entrenched group of radicals operating within their plants, the "militant minority" of Grays Harbor employers emerged as a clear majority during spring 1912 lumber strike.

The strike began at the Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle Company when two hundred mill hands walked off the job during the March 14 morning shift. Later in the day the mill workers spread the strike to other Hoquiam mills, and at a meeting that night at Hoquiam Finn Hall, nearly three hundred strikers officially joined the IWW. Built upon previous experiences with inter-ethnic cooperation and the practice of mass

¹⁰⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 29 February 1912.

picketing commonly associated with the Wobblies, Aberdeen and Hoquiam mill hands needed little to spark their protest.¹⁰⁸ The conflict was the Harbor's first experience with a strike whose makers openly proclaimed revolutionary aims. By 20 March, 2,600 workers in Hoquiam and Aberdeen were on strike; within two weeks seventeen mills in the "twin cities" were closed down as the largest lumber region in the world came to a screeching halt. Soon, Harbor sailors and longshoremen, many of whom were members of the IWW's MTWIU, struck the mills that employed them as well as the mill workers. This restricted lumbermen's ability to transport finished lumber, as well as produce any new product. Camp delegates entrenched in Grays Harbor and Puget Sound logging camps spread news of the strike, and in an unprecedented show of logger-mill worker solidarity, much of the western Washington lumber industry erupted into a general strike. All told, by early May three thousand lumber and shingle mill workers and five thousand loggers had struck.¹⁰⁹ In the Grays Harbor district alone somewhere between one thousand and two thousand workers took out their red cards in the IWW.¹¹⁰

Only two large mills, the Grays Harbor Commercial Company in Cosmopolis and South Aberdeen's Aberdeen Lumber and Shingle Company, remained running during the early days of the strike, although the Aberdeen mill capitulated shortly thereafter. On 20 March, a large contingent of strikers marched the three miles from Aberdeen in hopes of calling their fellow workers out to join them at the Cosmopolis plant. Here, they attempted to spread the strike to the symbolic center of employer control, and a mill that

¹⁰⁸ For a full examination of inter-ethnic activism in Grays Harbor, see Chapters 6 and 7.

¹⁰⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 9 May 1912.

¹¹⁰ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 14, 15 March 1912. According to labor spy W.S. Seavy, 1,060 IWWs were employed at the mills and camps of Grays Harbor in July 1912, well after the close of the 1912 mass strike. See W.S. Seavey to E. G. Ames, 29 July 1912, Edwin Gardner Ames Papers, Accession No. 3820, Box 93, Folder 29, UW. See also, Chapter 7 below.

had not succumbed to a strike since 1902. Strikers were met by more than one hundred men armed with guns and clubs barricaded behind the ropes draped around the perimeter of the mill.¹¹¹ Across the Harbor, businessmen rallied to the Commercial Company's support. Although frequently critical of the Comopolis mill's hiring and employment practices, each of the mainstream papers cast its lot in with the mill in this time of labor trouble. The *Daily World*, with chamber of commerce director Werner Rupp at its helm, praised the resolve of Cooney to hold off the "mob," noting "the Industrial Workers of the World withdrew in the face of the decisive determination of one man."¹¹² A second standoff came at the Aberdeen Lumber and Shingle Company, a large south Aberdeen mill owned by C. M. Weatherwax. There, two hundred strikers surrounded the mill, sang IWW songs, assaulted scabs, and enjoined many others to quit work. Their efforts were finally halted when mill foreman M. Suesday fired a revolver at the strikers and a force of special police and regulars arrived to protect the scabs, allowing the "most valuable men" to keep the plant running.¹¹³

As the strike dragged on, employees crossed picket lines because of a mixture of conciliation and coercion, but only the iron fist was used to clear their path to the mills. The Aberdeen Citizens' Committee numbered close to one thousand members, its Hoquiam counterpart consisted of one hundred men, and both units received support from the fifty strikebreakers imported from Seattle and Portland.¹¹⁴ The weapon of choice for the "law and order" committee was the ax handle, although many of the

¹¹¹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 21 March 1912.

¹¹² *Aberdeen Daily World*, 21 March 1912.

¹¹³ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 23, 28 March 1912.

¹¹⁴ *Seattle Times*, 30 March 1912; *Industrial Worker*, 4 April 1912.

deputized citizens also took to sporting revolvers during their strikebreaking activities.¹¹⁵ Merchants, many of whom belonged to the Chamber of Commerce or the Commercial Club, refused to offer strikers credit at their stores. Desperate, some workers approached their bosses looking for back pay. At the Anderson and Middleton mill, “Mill manager Anderson, swinging a heavy club and brandishing a revolver, urged his thugs to shoot down the workers. . . . He had shot a workingman who had come after his pay and who was leaving the vicinity of violence. Shot from behind. He may recover.”¹¹⁶ At the small Coates shingle mill, Manager Jesse Lewis met the strikers at the mill gate waving a gun in their faces and declaring his mill’s intention to maintain the “open shop plan.”¹¹⁷

As the mill workers and loggers slowly went back to their jobs, the outside agitators drifted or were driven from town, Grays Harbor Stevedore Company longshoremen kept the port open, and the citizens’ committees drew down to peacetime levels. A labor spy retained his post as police chief; *Washingtonian* editor Albert Johnson, one of the central proponents of “law and order” vigilantism, was elected to Congress; and Aberdeen Mayor Parks was rewarded for his austere leadership with adulation from near and far.¹¹⁸ Most important for members of the local employing class, the Harbor towns maintained their positions as open shop bastions in key manufacturing and transportation sectors. Several Wobblies were permanently removed from the Harbor, and carrying a red card became a dangerous and de facto illegal act. Yet, as will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, this control was not as complete as employers

¹¹⁵ *Oregonian* (Portland), 2 April 1912; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 26, 27 March 1912; *Aberdeen Herald*, 28 March 1912; Goings, “Free Speech and Industrial Unionism,” 180-223.

¹¹⁶ *Industrial Worker*, 4 April 1912.

¹¹⁷ *Aberdeen Herald*, 21 March 1912.

¹¹⁸ *Grays Harbor Post*, 11 May 1912; Aaron Goings, “Johnson, Albert (1869-1957), http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=8721. Accessed 3 November 2009; Alfred J. Hillier, “Albert Johnson: Congressman, *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 36 (1945): 193-211.

believed. The IWW maintained several pockets of influence in the community and key industries between 1912 and 1917, bedeviling employers with their ability to “go back to work in the mills prepared to strike quick and to strike hard at the slightest attempt to force you back to old conditions.”¹¹⁹ To the unorganized mill hands and loggers the community activism and cultural creations molded by the Wobblies influenced the Harbor for decades to come. Still, as the most obvious signs of the terror of 1911-1912 expired, few on the Harbor could dispute that Grays Harbor lumbermen had a monopoly of workplace power in their industry. The threat of syndicalism, paired with the flamboyant activism of radical immigrant men and women, had been repelled by a group of bosses willing to use every weapon at their disposal.

Thus, in mid-1912, Grays Harbor employers had reason to celebrate. By this point, the Harbor towns had been dug out of the swamps and forests, and were established as bustling port cities, ones complete with a heterogeneous working class that set annual production records. Aberdeen, Hoquiam, and Cosmopolis also had an entrenched oligarchy, a group of men who exerted social, political, and economic dominance over the vast majority of the region’s population. They had faced down a group of radical workers’ challenge for control over the workplace. They, too, had established themselves as unequivocally the driving force behind community development. Employers were unrivaled in the level of praise they engendered from each of the several mainstream press outlets. Colluding with local editors and state authorities, employers came together as a class on the streets and in the workplaces of Grays Harbor. But as examined below radical and militant workers never abandoned their challenges to employer hegemony in the region. When they did pose new challenges, however, Harbor

¹¹⁹ *Solidarity*, 11 May 1912.

workers were confronted by a group of lumbermen who acted “as one man” to protect their class interests. Furthermore, divisions in the local working class limited the effectiveness of the labor movement in advancing its interests. Indeed, while local unions developed rapidly between 1898 and 1906, these institutions failed to represent the majority of Harbor laborers. As the next two chapters argue, the unwillingness and inability of Harbor unions to organize beyond their narrow craft, ethnic, and gender boundaries left the local working class fragmented and weak in the face of employer offensives.

CHAPTER IV
RACE, GENDER, GEOGRAPHY,
AND UNIONISM IN GRAYS HARBOR, 1898-1910

On Labor Day 1904, members of the Grays Harbor labor movement turned out in force on the streets of Hoquiam. Twenty-three Aberdeen and Hoquiam unions, representing 1,500 men, assembled that day to march throughout Hoquiam, making their festivity “the most successful celebration of its kind ever observed on the Harbor.”¹ The parade included everyone from sawyers and filers to laundry workers, while the shingle weavers had the most men in line of any trade. Several of the locals sported floats, including the longshoremen, whose entry was a fully rigged ship on wheels and loaded with lumber; the carpenters, who wheeled out a completed “house with yard, flowers in bloom”; and the bartenders, who manned a bar and played a piano on their float.² The march was particularly impressive considering that it reflected the amount of growth undergone by the local labor movement. In 1897 Aberdeen and Hoquiam had no unions and no Labor Day parade; the next year twenty-two sailors, eleven longshoremen, and four cigar makers marched through downtown Aberdeen.³ That five hundred workers showed up for the 1902 celebration shocked the mainstream press as the “Number of Labor Union Men in the Parade was A Revelation to Many.”⁴ Thereafter for many years the event broke its own annual record for participation and audience attendance. The celebrations were hailed each September as “the finest seen in Hoquiam for many years”

¹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 3 September 1904; *Daily Washingtonian*, 8 September 1904; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 16 July 1904.

² *Daily Washingtonian*, 8 September 1904.

³ *Grays Harbor Post*, 10 September 1910.

⁴ *Aberdeen Herald*, 1 September 1902.

and “Most Successful Parade.”⁵ As tradition had it, the day ended with a string of sporting contests: the shingle weavers routed the printers and the bartenders defeated the teamsters in baseball games, while Ed Henry “caused lots of fun” by winning the “fat men’s race.”⁶ By all accounts the lone disappointment came when the shingle weavers’ float, a “portable” mill capable of “cutting shingles on the main street of Hoquiam” broke an axle, causing “some of the boys . . . to swear audibly under their breath as their hopes of the \$35.00 prize went glimmering.”⁷ It was truly a momentous day in the history of the Grays Harbor labor movement.

Labor Day parades revealed much about the Grays Harbor labor movement during its first dozen years, from 1898-1910. Each year gatherings of working people drawn largely from the ranks of organized labor came together to assert their rights as white laborers. These events were reported on by mainstream press outlets, including the anti-labor *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, which appeared surprised to note in 1905 that, “Labor Day Ends Without One Discreditable Feature In It.”⁸ For its own part, the conservative labor newspaper *Grays Harbor Post* contributed detailed reports on the planning and execution of each year’s parade, speeches, and other varieties of entertainment.⁹

But, the parades also spoke volumes about the exclusivity of local unions. Labor unions functioned as shields of exclusivity, at once accepting some workers and yet denying membership to others based on race, ethnicity, sex, and geography. Absent from

⁵ *Daily Washingtonian*, 8 September 1904; *Grays Harbor Post*, 11 September 1909. The 1904 parade record was broken when more than two thousand marchers turned out in for the 1907 event in Hoquiam despite a heavy rain. See “Aberdeen, Wash.,” *Typographical Journal* 25:5 (November 1904): 485; *Shingle Weaver*, September 1907.

⁶ *Daily Washingtonian*, 8 September 1904.

⁷ *Shingle Weaver*, September 1904.

⁸ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 5 September 1905.

⁹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 3 September 1904; 25 August; 8 September 1906; 17, 31 August; 7 September 1907; 5 September 1908; 11 September 1909.

Labor Day celebrations were domestic servants, lumber mill hands, prostitutes and dance hall girls, and even loggers whose short-lived Aberdeen and Hoquiam Loggers' Protective unions had enrolled more than two hundred woodsmen in mid-1904.¹⁰ Nor was shingle weavers' union official J. G. Brown's egalitarian rhetoric about "1800 proud, vigorous men and women [who] marched through the streets" entirely accurate.¹¹ Instead, those unions that included women members did so within gendered assumptions about women's labor and political activism, portraying them as important, if secondary, members of the union. At the 1907 Labor Day parade, for instance, male members of the Aberdeen clerks' union "took their chances on foot with the rest of the boys," while "carriages and automobiles were furnished for the lady clerks."¹²

This chapter and the next seek to build upon the literature of class, race, gender, and geography as they affected the everyday lives of western workers. An already extensive historiography drawing out the interactions of these identities has been constructed by scholars such as Alexander Saxton, Elizabeth Jameson, and Dana Frank.¹³ I seek, however to build upon these works in two ways. First, I will extend their analyses into the work of the early twentieth century lumber worker. Here, despite a large historiography featuring the fine scholarship of Richard Rajala and William G. Robbins, little progress has been made since 1969 when Melvyn Dubofsky described lumber

¹⁰ *Grays Harbor Post*, 23 April; 14 May; 23 July 1904.

¹¹ *Shingle Weaver*, September 1904.

¹² *Grays Harbor Post*, 7 September 1907.

¹³ Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic* (London: Verso, 1990); and *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); Jameson, *All that Glitters*; Dana Frank, *Purchasing Power: Consumer Organizing, Gender, and the Seattle Labor Movement, 1919-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). See also Bruce Nelson, *Divided We Stand: American Workers and the Struggle for Black Equality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Geoff Mann, "Race, Skill, and Section in Northern California," *Politics and Society* 30:3 (2002): 465-496; Mark Leier, *Red Flags and Red Tape: The Making of A Labor Bureaucracy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

workers as “mostly native Americans or northern Europeans,” who “spoke English, lived together, drank together, slept together, whored together, and fought together.”¹⁴ By generalizing upon the experiences of some lumber workers, Dubofsky and others have omitted the social and cultural complexities that marked the lives of these men. This has marginalized racial, ethnic, sexual, and spatial divisions within the industry and downplayed the significance of these divisions between lumber workers and those in other industries. Moreover, this contention fails to explain why a group of workers who were supposedly “mostly native American or northern Europeans” remained outside the practically all-white labor movement.

Second, in sharp contrast to historians Richard White and W. Peter Ward, I look at race and gender without losing track of the fundamental importance of class, capitalism, and conflict in my analysis. Class consciousness among western workers was not, as argued by White “fragile when it existed at all,” nor were ethnic and racial solidarity “more important than working-class solidarity.”¹⁵ Instead, if we are to equate

¹⁴ Rajala, “A Dandy Bunch”; and “Bill and the Boss: Labor Protest, Technological Change and the Transformation of the West Coast Logging Camp, 1890-1930,” *Journal of Forest History* 33 (October 1989): 168-179; William G. Robbins, “The Social Context of Forestry: The Pacific Northwest in the Twentieth Century,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 16:4 (October 1985): 413-427; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 129. The publicity given to the work of Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) activist Covington Hall, written mostly by David Roediger, has indicated the profound complexity of relationships between class and racial identities, ones that, at least in the case of Hall and fellow southern lumber workers, enabled an interracial alliance to form in the piney woods of the American South. See Covington Hall, *Labor Struggles in the Deep South & Other Writings*, ed. David R. Roediger (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Press, 1999).

¹⁵ Richard White, “*It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own*”: *A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 288-289; W. Peter Ward, “Class and Race in the Social Structure of British Columbia, 1870-1939” *BC Studies* 45 (Spring 1980): 17-36. In contrast to White and Ward, historian Carlos Schwantes argued of Pacific Northwest workers that “conservative craft unionism had little appeal for the class-conscious workers of the region, who saw industrial unionism and reform politics as better suited to the unique environment in which they found themselves.” Schwantes, *Radical Heritage: Labor, Socialism, and Reform in Washington and British Columbia, 1885-1917* (1979; reprint, Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1994), 21. In the most detailed study of the shingle weavers, historian Norman H. Clark literally likened class consciousness to disease, noting that the hazards of the job, lack of occupational mobility, and “casual disregard for craft differentiations. . . . [were] classic symptoms of class consciousness.” See Clark, *Mill Town*, 93.

class consciousness with radicalism and militancy, then surely laborers in the American West were among the most “conscious” in all of North America. Lumber workers in the Pacific Northwest joined formal leftist organizations, including the Socialist Party of America (SPA) and the IWW in great numbers, and struck against their employers with a far greater frequency than scholars have cared to acknowledge.¹⁶ Furthermore, even relatively apolitical or conservative loggers, mill hands, and shingle weavers still possessed what E. P. Thompson called “consciousness of class.”¹⁷ These men readily quit work over minor grievances or the chance at better wages at another workplace, and were eager to join strikes of their more aggressive workmates.¹⁸ Craft unionists such as shingle weavers, machinists, and longshoremen in Grays Harbor were active in local socialist politics, writing leftist articles in the labor press, campaigning for political office on socialist platforms, and forming socialist institutions such as political parties and newspapers.¹⁹ In addition, working-class consciousness was not demonstrated only by those who voted for socialist politicians, joined a union, or participated in strikes. Instead, the working-class experience was a daily, lived reality for working people. Regardless of how they voted or whether they supported unions, all Harbor workers experienced relationships of class such as the arbitrary authority of bosses, the

¹⁶ On the frequency of lumber workers’ strikes, see Chapters 5-15.

¹⁷ E. P. Thompson, *The Making*,

¹⁸ Rajala, “A Dandy Bunch of Wobblies,” 205-234. Strikes in the lumber industry demonstrated a tendency to spread rapidly throughout entire regions, either all of Grays Harbor or the entire Pacific Northwest. This fact will be evinced throughout this thesis.

¹⁹ For an analysis of the radicalism of the shingle weavers’ union, see Chapter 5. Machinist Alma Upton was active in the formation of the *Grays Harbor Socialist* newspaper and ran as a socialist for Mayor of Hoquiam in 1904, and longshoreman August Jonas ran for the Aberdeen city council. See *Hoquiam Sawyer*, 1 December 1904; *Grays Harbor Post*, 25 February 1905; 15 December 1906. R. N. Moody and J. T. Duffy, two early leaders of the Aberdeen Trades and Labor Council, used their prominent positions within that body to pass a resolution stating that “if the militia was in the parade the council would not be,” because “when there is trouble between employers and employees the first action of the employer is to call out the militia, and out they come.” See *Grays Harbor Post*, 24 June 1905.

segregation of neighborhoods by class, the possibilities of speedups and stretchouts on the job, and the dangers of capitalist workplaces.

This analysis of the intersections of race, class, and gender among Harbor workers is divided into two chapters. In the first I focus on the Grays Harbor labor movement as a whole, aiming my lens at the dozens of labor unions that operated on the Harbor during the early twentieth century. I examine the racial and sexual composition of local unions and union officials, as well as the overtly masculine and chauvinistic nature of the Harbor's union culture. The following chapter will pick up on these themes by analyzing the unionized shingle weavers of Grays Harbor. The International Shingle Weavers' Union of America (ISWUA) was among the most radical trade unions in the Pacific Northwest during the early twentieth century. Its members endorsed socialist candidates, supported collective ownership of the means of production, and waged repeated militant strikes against their employers. That even this radical institution was wed to politics of racism and sexism demonstrated the depths to which these ideologies affected the labor movement as a whole.

The early Grays Harbor unions comprised among the largest and most powerful local movement in the Pacific Northwest during the first decade of the twentieth century. Up to forty local unions were affiliated with the movement at any one time, and between 1904 and 1908 Aberdeen and Hoquiam contained a minimum of fifty-two labor unions, two central labor councils, two building trades councils, and the Grays Harbor Waterfront Federation.²⁰ Their two thousand members included men and women working in dozens

²⁰ *Grays Harbor Post*, 3 May 1905; 20 January; 15 September 1906; 4 May 1907. The unions included the: Aberdeen: Aberdeen Typographical Union No. 573; Bartenders' League, Local No. 774; Carpenters' and Joiners' Union, Local No. 883; Cigarmakers' Union; Retail Clerks' Union; Teamsters' and Deliverymens' Union No. 170; Longshoremen's Union, Local No. 2; Sailors' Union of the Pacific;

of trades, and the movement's momentum was spreading labor organizations to new and uncharted territory: Hoquiam musicians in May 1905, tugboat operators in June 1907, and an impressive five new unions organized during a two-week period in March 1904.²¹ The Harbor towns hosted Washington State Federation of Labor (WSFL) conventions in 1906 and 1910. At the 1906 convention in Aberdeen, federation president William Blackman noted that on the Harbor, "We find more organized men in this section, according to population, than any other place in the State."²² Blackman's bold claim was reinforced with plenty of evidence. By 1906, Harbor unionists operated their own newspaper, ran and endorsed candidates for local elected office, and won a number of strikes against shingle manufacturers and shipping companies.²³

However, between 1902 and 1910, when the Aberdeen and Hoquiam labor councils contained up to forty member branches at any one time, local unions never represented anything like a majority of the region's wage labor force.²⁴ A partial list of

Engineers' Union No. 255; The Shirt, Waist, and Laundry Workers' International Union; Plumbers and Steamfitters' Union, Local No. 195; International Hod Carrier and Building Laborers' Union; Musicians' Mutual Protective Union, Local No. 236; Local Union No. 458 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; Journeymen Tailors' Union, Local No. 331; Bricklayers' International Union, No. 11; Painters' Union, No. 526; International Association of Machinists, Grays Harbor Lodge No. 522; Pacific Coast Maritime Federation; Cooks' and Waiters' Local No. 791; Journeymen Barbers' Local No. 91; Tugboat Drivers' Union; Hoquiam: Grays Harbor Piledrivers' Union No. 12,088; Carpenters' Local, No. 775; *Grays Harbor Post*, 21 March; 22 August 1908.

²¹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 4 May 1905; 15 June 1907; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 19 March 1904.

²² *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Convention of the Washington State Federation of Labor*, (Aberdeen, WA, 1906), 12.

²³ See Chapters 4 and 5. A list of the "Friends of the Post," the men who assisted in the formation of the *Grays Harbor Post*, was printed in the 10 April 1909 edition of the newspaper. Included in the list were W. A. Brisco, president of the Hoquiam Trades and Labor Council (HTLC); H. A. Livermore, recording secretary of the HTLC; M. L. Cagley, statistician for the HTLC; R. N. Moody, treasurer of the Aberdeen Trade and Labor Council (ATLC); and J. T. Duffy, president of the ATLC.

²⁴ In April 1904, Hoquiam had 782 union members in good standing. *Grays Harbor Post*, 2 April 1904. Early estimates for the harbor as a whole approximated the two thousand given by the *Grays Harbor Post* in May 1905. *Grays Harbor Post*, 27 May 1905. Aberdeen was indeed a "city of payrolls," but only about two thousand wage earners on those roles belonged to unions. See "Aberdeen, Washington," *The Coast* 13:5 (May 1907): 298. This article claimed that Aberdeen had the largest per capita pay roll of any city in the US. In 1910, the unions of the American Federation of Labor enrolled five million members. See, Saxton, *The Rise and Fall*, 307.

Aberdeen and Hoquiam unions in 1908 revealed unionized teamsters, shirt waist and laundry workers, shingle weavers, two carpenters unions, bartenders, barbers, painters, and cigar makers. Although many of these craft unions represented all workers in their industry, their memberships numbered only 506 at the time of their polling.²⁵ This mirrored the unrepresentative nature of the Washington State labor movement as a whole. In 1913-1914, the WSFL was comprised of 233 affiliated local unions and twenty thousand members in a state with 521,501 “gainful workers.”²⁶ Even the Labor Day Parade, the most potent demonstration of unity, strength, and class solidarity, demonstrated as much about who was not enrolled as who was. Aberdeen and Hoquiam unions contained few southern and eastern European immigrants and practically no Asian American, black, or Native American workers. According to the 1910 census, out of eighty-two Hoquiam shingle weavers, seventy were white males born in Canada, northwest Europe, or the northern US. Of the twelve other weavers only three were designated as non-white by the census: Native Americans William and Simon Charlie, and Philip Ounstead, a forty-two year old weaver born in the Philippines whose race went unrecorded by the census-takers.²⁷ The case of the Sailors’ Union of the Pacific (SUP) provided an even clearer illustration of the ethnic composition of Pacific Coast trade unions. Of the 3,441 members registered with the national union in 1904, all hailed from European, Australian, or North American backgrounds, and only six hundred could be

²⁵ The nine unions were those that reported to the questionnaires sent out by the Washington State Bureau of Labor Statistics for the 1907-1908 period. It is noteworthy to point out that 300 of the 506 unionists came from two locals, the Hoquiam branches of the ISWUA and Carpenters’ and Joiners’ Union. State of Washington, *Sixth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor of the State of Washington, 1907-1908*.

²⁶ Another 212 local unions composed of an unknown number of members were not affiliated with the federation. State of Washington, *Ninth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1913-1914*, 100.

²⁷ United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County, City of Hoquiam.

positively shown to have been born in southern or eastern Europe.²⁸ During the Labor Day parade in 1904, members of the Aberdeen SUP marched at “the head of the line because of being first on the Harbor.” The sailors’ leadership of the march, however, said just as much about their representatives of white men’s unions as it did about their roles as the “first on Harbor.”²⁹

One measure of the unrepresentative nature of the Grays Harbor labor movement was the racial, ethnic, and sexual composition of the local labor bureaucracy. During the first dozen years of the local labor movement’s existence, this group was comprised almost entirely of white men hailing from North America or northern and western Europe. Shortly after its founding in 1904, the local labor newspaper *Grays Harbor Post* ran an article entitled “Prominent Local Labor Workers: A Few of the Great Army of Aberdeen Bread Winners,” which included photographs and short biographies of local union officials. The article featured five prominent local union bureaucrats, all of whom were white males: carpenters Henry B. Stewart and R. N. Moody, clerks’ union president George F. Nye, longshoremen’s president H. L. Green, and sailors’ union agent William Gohl.³⁰ Additionally, of the sixteen Aberdeen and Hoquiam labor council executive board members whom I identified through census data or articles in the *Grays Harbor Post*, fourteen were white males born in the US, and the other two were first-generation immigrants from northern European countries.³¹ The confinement of elected union

²⁸ *Coast Seamen’s Journal*, 17 August 1904; Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront*, 48-50.

²⁹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 3 September 1904. It was customary for the SUP to march first each year during the Labor Day parade because they were the first local union organized. The Aberdeen SUP was first organized in 1898 in large part due to the diligent efforts of former Seattle SUP agent John Gronow. See *Coast Seamen’s Journal*, 27 April 1898; *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Convention of the Washington State Federation of Labor*, (Aberdeen, WA, 1906), 11-12; *Coast Seaman’s Journal*, 17 August 1898.

³⁰ *Grays Harbor Post*, 3 September 1904.

³¹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 2, 16 April; 9, 16 July; 3 September 1904; 4 February; 17 June; 28 October 1905; United States Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900*,

positions on the Harbor to white males from the US, Canada, and northern and western Europe was not a local aberration. As Jonathan Dembo showed in his analysis of the racial and ethnic composition of Washington State labor leaders between 1900 and 1940, less than four percent of the state's elected officials were southern or eastern Europeans, African Americans, or Asian Americans.³²

Members of the SUP were the most vocal opponents of non-white labor on the Harbor. Unionized sailors, nearly all of whom were born in the US, Australia, Canada, or northern Europe, introduced and passed Asian Exclusion resolutions annually at the WSFL conventions.³³ Aberdeen SUP agent William Gohl was the founder of Aberdeen's Asiatic Exclusion Club in 1908, and introduced a resolution at the 1910 WSFL convention in Hoquiam entitled "Extension of Chinese Exclusion Act to include all Asiatics."³⁴ Sailors were not alone among wage laborers in their antagonism towards non-whites. In December 1907, Hoquiam ISWUA Secretary W. E. Willis publicly applauded the creation of the Japanese and Korean Exclusion Leagues, which he viewed as "a step in the right direction and should have the moral and financial support of every Union in the Northwest."³⁵

Washington State, Chehalis County; United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County.

³² Dembo, *Unions and Politics in Washington State*, 629-632. Dembo's study counted 1,161 Washington State labor leaders. Twenty hailed from southern Europe, seventeen were from eastern Europe, seven were African Americans, and only one union official was an Asian American.

³³ *Grays Harbor Post*, 15 January 1910; *Grays Harbor Post*, 2 December 1905. For further proof of leading Grays Harbor unionists' racist views, see *Grays Harbor Post*, 17 July 1909. On the ethnicity and race of SUP members, see *Coast Seamen's Journal*, 17 August 1904; Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront*, 48-50.

³⁴ *Grays Harbor Post*, 15 February 1908.

³⁵ *Shingle Weaver*, December 1907. One of the earliest editions of the *Grays Harbor Post*, written in 1904 when the paper still strongly supported the local labor movement, ran the headline "Solution of the Jap Question," referring, of course, to how best to exclude Japanese Americans from local communities. *Grays Harbor Post*, 16 April 1904.

The resolutions, exclusion leagues, and all-white men's clubs represented the customary attitude for West Coast AFL action, but to merely suggest that the unionists were racist does not advance our understanding of the world of the worker very far. Working-class racism was and is a highly variable ideology. How and where it is manifested depends on several factors, including the races and ethnic groups under examination, the contemporary state of international relations, employer attitudes, and real and imagined job competition. Nor does it proceed in uniform from one historical epoch to another. Two workers with similar socioeconomic experiences may express their racism in very different manners. Only by placing race relations on the Harbor in their historical context can we understand why Hoquiam shingle weaver J. G. Brown would criticize "Japs" and "Cooley labor," only to move on to become Communist William Z. Foster's main lieutenant during the 1919 steel strike, national secretary of the Farmer-Labor Party, and an official of the Communist Friends of Soviet Russia, three positions that put him at or near the vanguard of working-class anti-racism.³⁶ Equally contradictory positions were taken by SUP agent William Gohl, who was both the founder of the Aberdeen Asiatic Exclusion League and the man most responsible for preventing working-class crowd activity from spilling over into race riots aimed against the African-American, Japanese, and Hawaiian scabs imported during a 1906 maritime strike.³⁷

Shingle weavers' vituperations against "Japs" and other racialized groups frequently arose in the context of direct economic competition because, in the weavers'

³⁶ Theodore Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (New York: Viking Press, 1957, New Edition, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 63; Mary Harris Jones, *Autobiography of Mother Jones* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1925), 129-134; "Officers of the Friends of Soviet Russia," *Soviet Russia* 6:7 (15 April 1922): 203.

³⁷ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 25 May; 19, 20, 26 June 1906.

view, Asian workers could and did work for significantly lower wages and demanded fewer holidays than their white counterparts, and were employed for those reasons.³⁸ According to the Washington State Bureau of Labor, Asian workers comprised a significant body of laborers in the lumber industry. In 1913, out of 21,548 workers employed in lumber manufacturing, 1,248, or roughly 5.8%, were classified as “Oriental” by the Bureau.³⁹ Regardless of whether these so-called “Oriental” workers were classified as “skilled” or “common” labor, they earned significantly less than their white counterparts. For example, in 1901 the Washington State Bureau of Labor reported that lumber mill workers and loggers employed in the state earned between \$1.94 and \$3.25 per day, but the “45 Japs” who earned only \$1.33 per day were not included in these totals.⁴⁰ In 1913 the top daily wage rate paid to “unskilled” Asian laborers at Washington State lumber mills was \$2.50, while “unskilled” white workers were paid up to \$3 per day. At sawmills employing between ten and one hundred workers, the highest-paid “skilled” Asian laborers made \$3.75, a full \$1.25 less than the best-paid white workers.⁴¹ The racialized wage differentials provided evidence of employers’ racism, while their desire to lower all workers’ wages to the lower rates received by Asian laborers demonstrated their desire to extract the most profits from all workers regardless of race. ISWUA President C. R. Pickins understood this fact, and attacked shingle mill owner H. E. Richardson who “informed [Pickins] . . . that he could not run with white labor, and that he had contracted for a Japanese crew and would put them in his mill the following

³⁸ On the lack of holidays for Asian-American workers, see Frank, *Purchasing Power*, 228.

³⁹ *Ninth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Factory Inspection*, 1913-1914 (Olympia: Public Printer, 1914), 50.

⁴⁰ *Third Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Factory Inspection*, 1901-1902 (Olympia: Blankenship Saterlee Company, 1904), 71.

⁴¹ *Ninth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 1913-1914, 34-35.

Monday. He also stated that it was a fight to a finish, and he would starve every shingle weaver in Olympia until he would be glad to work for Jap wages.”⁴²

This, of course, does not mean that white supremacy emerged in the minds of shingle weavers as part of a crude economic formula, the product of job competition alone.⁴³ Instead, weavers, like workers throughout the West, adopted attitudes towards non-white and not-quite-white workers that were rooted in centuries-old racial ideologies, ones that declared anyone hailing from outside northern and western Europe to be inferior “others” to be kept excluded, segregated, oppressed, and exploited.⁴⁴ One indication of this fact was that overt racism was not confined to unions such as the shingle weavers and sailors -- two unions that were threatened by Asian competition -- but was common among much, if not all, of the Grays Harbor labor movement. The *Grays Harbor Post*, edited by carpenters’ union official J. W. Clarke, and financially dependent on local unions and their officials, carried explicitly racist articles and editorials. One such piece warned of the formation of a Japanese “colony” near the Harbor’s beaches that would serve as a headquarters for the immigrants to “make maps of the entrance to Grays Harbor which is considered . . . a most strategic point for the Japanese in case of war with the United States.”⁴⁵ In addition, the Hoquiam People’s Party, a short-lived political party formed in part by top local labor leaders to run candidates for the 1908 municipal election, included a plank opposing “the importation of Greeks, Dagos, Hindus, and all other Asiatic labor into this city, and we pledge our

⁴² *Shingle Weaver*, July 1904.

⁴³ Saxton, *The Rise and Fall*, 6-8.

⁴⁴ See, for instance, Saxton, *The Rise and Fall*; Tomas Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*; Neil Foley, *White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Gunther Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in the North American West, 1880-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁴⁵ *Grays Harbor Post*, 30 July 1910. See also *Grays Harbor Post*, 23 January 1909.

candidates to use all means within their power to remove all such undesirable persons from our midst.”⁴⁶

To work on the Harbor and to belong to a union also meant to be a “union man.” The term connotes the intersections of class and gender that linked the “union wage,” all-male cultural activities, and masculine virtue. The union man was expected to act a certain way. He attended all-male lodge meetings, played in the union’s ballgames, attended and sometimes competed in boxing matches, drank at saloons tended by unionized bartenders, and marched alongside his brothers on Labor Day. The *Grays Harbor Post* ran an editorial distinguishing between a union “member,” who will pay “his dues only when he is forced to, usually comes to meetings only when he has an ax to be ground,” and the “union man,” who “criticizes when criticism is justified and fights for what he thinks is right.”⁴⁷ The all-encompassing nature of union culture was laid out in “A Union Man,” a poem “Handed In” to the *Grays Harbor Post* in 1905. As the anonymous poet argues, being in a union did not stop at the plant gate, but extended to a wife’s decisions on where to shop and even to the appearance of a new baby:

I vos a Chonny Mitchell man,
Mine frau, she vos one too;
She choins dot womans league,
Und keeps her promise true.

She noddings buy from any store
But she vill turn it right side in,
Und if she finds no label on
She raise an awful din.

De store clerk, he’s union mans,
Or Anne no vill trade.
“Ve buy from devil not from scab,”

⁴⁶ *Grays Harbor Post*, 15 February 1908. The People’s Party went down to a major defeat in this election. See *Grays Harbor Post*, 11 April 1908.

⁴⁷ *Grays Harbor Post*, 13 May 1905; 23 August 1913.

Dots what my Anne said.

Von day, vhen I goes home,
No Anne did I see
But up dem stairs I heard
A little baby cry.

I runs right up, all black mit dirt
In spite of midder-in-law,
Und in dot bet mit Anne dear,
Der schweetest ding I saw.

I feel so proud I vos a pop,
After waiting seven year,
I tink I go und tell de poys
Und buy tree kegs of beer.

But Anne say, “go quvick und wash
Und come right back to me.
If baby has der label on
Vey right away must see.”

Ve search dot baby half an hour,
Ve looks in every shpot,
Der vas no label on der kid;
“Mein Gott!” ve said “Mein Gott”

“Go take her back to Dr. Schmitt”
Mine frau did sadly say,
“Ve’ll have a union baby Yohn
Or doctor’ll get no pay.”⁴⁸

Manly virtue, too, spilled over to the shop floor. Union men depicted themselves as highly skilled laborers, thereby separating themselves from non-union or scab “boys.” To become a member of the carpenters’ union, for instance, an apprentice needed to serve three years and pass an examination before admission to the union.⁴⁹ When a “raw

⁴⁸ *Grays Harbor Post*, 2 December 1905. The use of “Chonny Mitchell” is a reference to John Mitchell, president of the United Mine Workers and a major figure in the AFL. See Craig Phelan, *Divided Loyalties: The Public and Private Life of Labor Leader John Mitchell* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

⁴⁹ *Seventh Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Factory Inspection, 1909-1910* (Olympia: C. W. Gorham, Public Printer, 1908), 72.

Finlander” took a job as a shingle weaver at the non-union Grays Harbor Commercial Company he immediately fell and had his “shoulder crushed,” resulting in his being “crippled for life,” because he “could neither speak nor understand a word of English,” and lacked the skills of his unionized counterparts.⁵⁰ But the ultimate disqualification from the union men’s club was to scab. In their frequent references to scabs in the *Trades Council Gazette* and *Shingle Weaver*, two labor periodicals, pro-union writers referred to scabs in terms mocking their manhood, as “boys” or beasts. For example, shingle weaver Andy Raynor wrote in the *Shingle Weaver* of “the 57 or more varieties of scabs now known to biological science,” all of which were “recognized as infallible indications of mental, moral, and physical degeneration.”⁵¹ In one *Grays Harbor Post* editorial a writer named “Ex” compared a scab to “a human turtle,” someone who “never learns by experience.”⁵²

While comparisons between scabs and beasts were the results of exaggeration and rhetorical flourish, characterizations of some scabs as “boys” or children were accurate.⁵³ In fact, in 1904, 1916, and 1917, children scabbed on striking Grays Harbor workers, actions that shingle weavers’ union member Si Gotchy blamed on the educational system. He wrote, “Why did the high school punks scab on the shingle weavers in Ballard and also on the Grays Harbor longshoremen? Here is one reason: Fathers and mothers send their children to school and when they are old enough to pass the eighth grade all they know is what they hear there. The teachers are influenced in their teachings largely by

⁵⁰ *Shingle Weaver*, March 1904.

⁵¹ The *Coast Seamen’s Journal* argued that the scab lacked any “manly character.” *Shingle Weaver*, 22 September 1917; *Coast Seamen’s Journal*, 20 January 1904.

⁵² *Grays Harbor Post*, 20 August 1904.

⁵³ High school and university students were on occasion used as scabs during shingle weavers’ strikes. During the 1906 statewide general strike in the shingle industry, university students from the University of Washington were hired as scabs to work at the Ballard mills. *Ballard News*, 22 June 1906. On the use of students as strikebreakers throughout the US, see Norwood, *Strikebreaking and Intimidation*, 15-33.

the employing class, hence the children are taught nothing in regard to unions or unionism.” At the Grays Harbor Commercial Company, the lone Harbor mill to successfully break the shingle weavers’ union on the Harbor, the company secured replacement “boys” by forcing them “against their will to go scabbing by bringing official pressure to bear upon their parents. . . . Many of these boys be it said to their everlasting credit, have forsaken their homes rather than scab.”⁵⁴ Indeed, the threat posed by employers who used children to break strikes was so persistent that W. C. Judson, an Aberdeen teamster, succeeded in passing a resolution at the 1908 WSFL convention that condemned “the employment of young boys for strikebreaking purposes during teamsters’ strikes, and praying the enactment of laws prohibiting such employment.”⁵⁵ During the 1912 lumber strike, F. H. Allison, an organizer for the IWW, wrote to a fellow worker on the Harbor threatening to punish “the high school boys from Tacoma” who were scabbing. He concluded, “Those rah-rah boys had better look sharp or they will get their brain loosened up down there.”⁵⁶

Unions were masculine institutions, complete with pictures of virile memberships, union rhetoric, and programs. Indeed, masculine language exudes from much of the labor literature of the period. When they acted as the gendered codes insisted they must, a member was deemed a “union man,” one of a group of “determined men, or “the worthy union man.”⁵⁷ Those who violated the prescribed code of manly working-class ethics became “responsible for everything that is done wrong.”⁵⁸ To follow the union’s ethical code meant to be expressly devoted to the union, to be someone who never missed

⁵⁴ *Shingle Weaver*, March 1904; 17 February 1917; 18 August; 22 September 1917.

⁵⁵ *Grays Harbor Post*, 18 January 1908.

⁵⁶ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 1 April 1912.

⁵⁷ *Grays Harbor Post*, 13 May 1905; 23 August 1913; *Seattle Union Record*, 12 May 1906.

⁵⁸ *Grays Harbor Post*, 20 January 1906.

a lodge meeting or allowed his dues to fall into arrears. Those who failed to properly adhere to these duties were labeled “the rottenest grape in the bunch. . . . He does more harm than all the other disrupters put together.”⁵⁹ Unionists were men of action, the epitome of proletarian manhood. “To be a real union man,” argued Brown, “requires not only the saying of things but doing things.”⁶⁰

At the annual Grays Harbor Labor Day parade, the marchers’ manly attributes were clearly on display. The *Grays Harbor Post* paid fitting tribute to the parading men at the 1907 parade, noting the “Hoquiam pile drivers 45 strong, under the command of P. A. Peterson,” “the painters, 28 men, erect and well dressed,” and the presence of guards posted throughout the march, a daunting challenge to any who dared interfere with labor’s march. At the parade’s end, several sporting contests, including a tug-of-war and baseball game were offered to the “union men,” while the “girls” were afforded the chance to compete in an egg and spoon race. The sports advertisement ended with a warning that, “None but union men or their children allowed in these contests.”⁶¹

Grays Harbor unionists were also expected to live up to a hyper-masculine code of ethics that encouraged physical combat with class enemies. This was especially true during strikes.⁶² Strikebreakers were frequently the subjects of beatings, verbal harangues, and property destruction.⁶³ Their names were published in the local and regional labor press, and when a man crossed a picket line his name was communicated

⁵⁹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 20 January 1906.

⁶⁰ *Shingle Weaver*, August 1907.

⁶¹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 31 August; 7 September 1907.

⁶² For local examples of violent treatment against scabs, see *Aberdeen Herald*, 24 October 1901; In the Justice’s Court City of Aberdeen Precinct, 30 August 1906, *State of Washington vs. William Gohl*, No. 6499, SWA; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 12 July; 25 August 1906.

⁶³ *Aberdeen Herald*, 31 October 1901; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 22 August, 18, 19 September 1906.

far and wide to ensure a lifetime blacklisting from sympathetic unionists.⁶⁴ After scabbing on his fellow unionists during a 1906 shingle weavers' strike, "Jent" Butler became the subject of a sustained attack in the pages of the *Shingle Weaver*, which stated, "Butler is absolutely devoid of even a shadow of principle, simply a slimy, crawling, unclean thing that is an eyesore to decent people everywhere. A traitor is, and should be, ever regarded with suspicion and treated with contempt."⁶⁵ During the World War I lumber strike, shingle weavers' union official Si Gotchy advised that: "I think each local union should get the names of every one of them on the 'we don't work with' list; a new variety -- the spineless rat."⁶⁶ Local shingle weavers participated in masculine displays of violence against scabs. They traveled across town, hunting down scabs and non-union weavers, and subjecting them to a variety of retributive acts. During major strikes, such as the 1906 Grays Harbor shingle conflict, Hoquiam manufacturers built bull-pens to house their imported workmen so as to protect them against the unionists' retributive acts.⁶⁷ The Cosmopolis weavers who had scabbed during the 1902 shingle strike and remained on the job thereafter -- the lone symbol of anti-unionism in a solidly pro-union industry -- were signaled out for special treatment. In April 1903 seven Hoquiam weavers were arrested for "disturbing the peaceful slumbers" of the Cosmopolis weavers, while the *Shingle Weaver* celebrated when the "Cosmopolis scabs had a fight among themselves, and three of them got badly hurt. Let the good work go on."⁶⁸ Two years

⁶⁴ Shingle weavers from several towns listed the names of scabs from local labor conflicts. See *Shingle Weaver*, August 1906; 21 September 1912; 9 November 1912.

⁶⁵ *Shingle Weaver*, September 1906. Butler was also targeted the *Shingle Weaver*, October 1906.

⁶⁶ *Shingle Weaver*, 13 October 1917.

⁶⁷ *Shingle Weaver*, September; October 1906.

⁶⁸ *Shingle Weaver*, April; July 1903. In 1903 the weavers of both Aberdeen and Hoquiam were completely unionized. For approval of the "Cosmopolis scabs" fighting one another, see *Shingle Weaver*, July 1903.

later, scabs from Cosmopolis had their property destroyed by Hoquiam ISWUA members.⁶⁹

This gendered ideology of the early Grays Harbor labor movement was visible in the *Trades Council Gazette*, a short-run daily published by the *Grays Harbor Post* during the 1906 maritime strike. The *Gazette* published only a handful of issues, but its sole focus on labor issues and rank-and-file activities provides an excellent window into the specific type of unionism advocated on the Harbor. As a strike bulletin the *Gazette* aimed its columns at the securing and retention of the family wage. Striking sailors were portrayed as respected family and community members: “Our interests are here, our homes, our loved ones.”⁷⁰ The wage increase they demanded was fair because of shipping companies’ increased profits, but it was also necessary to further their “organization [that] has made men of us, and as time goes on we hope to succeed in our aim to make a sailor’s life worth living, and we will have the same rights as our fellow workmen on shore.”⁷¹

For all its journalistic qualities, the *Gazette* succeeded most masterfully at satire, ridiculing its nemeses’ supposed femininity, launching attacks upon the “Discredited Editors” of the *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin* and *Aberdeen Herald* who “hire their columns to the employers for the purpose of stirring up strife and riot,” and taking direct aim at the feminine qualities of employers, scabs, thugs, and “special” police.⁷² For example, in “Sweet Pete,” a series of poems and quips, *Gazette* writers targeted Peter Christensen, the Aberdeen Police Chief and union longshoreman who quit the union and renounced his

⁶⁹ *Shingle Weaver*, October 1905.

⁷⁰ *Trades Council Gazette* (Aberdeen, WA), 23 June 1906.

⁷¹ William Gohl to Editor Post, 2 January 1904, in *Grays Harbor Post*, 7 January 1904.

⁷² *Trades Council Gazette*, no date.

fellow workers at the height of the 1906 maritime strike in response to threats from lumber capitalists and the Aberdeen city council. In the *Gazette and Post* “Sweet Pete” was portrayed as the ultimate turncoat, a depraved, effeminate coward who “threw up his card” and “let his playmates down hard.” This image contrasts sharply with Christensen the union police officer, who, prior to renouncing the union, was widely supported by his fellow workers. Before Christensen’s departure from the union the labor newspaper *Grays Harbor Post* was complimentary toward Christensen, asking the chief to use his power to arrest the editor from the anti-labor *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, who they felt was like “a typical Russian nihilist, [who] finds fiendish joy in condemning government officials (city preferred), wears glasses and chews gum.”⁷³

The “Sweet Pete” caricature also depicted the chief as both stupid and vain. In one of their “Quips,” the *Gazette* editors wrote of a “little girl” who visits a druggist on Pete’s behalf to request “a package of dye and he wants it in a fashionable color.” When pressed as to the source of the request, the girl responds that “the doctor said there was something the matter with his complexion, and he ought to diet, and Pete says if he has to dye it he would like something to match his beautiful eyes.”⁷⁴ Christensen’s most noteworthy characteristic, however, was his cowardliness. Christensen had committed the greatest of sins against his fellow unionists, trading his union card and friends for a cushy, prestigious job as police chief, scab-herder, and strikebreaker. One *Gazette* bard wrote:

In walking the street, should you happen to meet
With a pair of beautiful eyes,
Don’t lose your feet, they belong to Pete

⁷³ *Trades Council Gazette*, no date; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 18 June 1906; *Grays Harbor Post*, 10 June 1905. Christensen’s letter of resignation from the union appeared in this edition of the *Bulletin*.

⁷⁴ *Trades Council Gazette*, 26 June 1906.

The chum of non-union guys -- oho!⁷⁵

By mocking his lack of manly virtue and chastising his cowardliness, however, the unionists contributed to the police chief's decision to act less than "sweet" in his dealings with the strikers. Threatened and offended by the attacks, Christensen led bands of club-wielding police officers and "specials" in a series of attacks on the strikers. Thus, Christensen proved that he could, in the words of one scholar, "mobilize masculinity" during street fights every bit as well as the sailors and longshoremen did in the pages of the labor press.⁷⁶

One reason why masculine actions and rhetoric were able to reign supreme was the near total absence of women from the Grays Harbor labor movement. As throughout the world, women on the Harbor worked. In 1900, when the adult female population of Aberdeen and Hoquiam was approximately 6,600, the two towns contained 77 domestic servants and 30 landladies. The census for Hoquiam alone counted fourteen prostitutes, while the census-taker for Aberdeen refrained from listing any ladies of the night, despite Aberdeen's far more famous Red Light District.⁷⁷ Figures were even more pronounced a decade later as the two cities expanded in population and industrial production. That year, in Aberdeen alone there were 187 domestic servants.⁷⁸ Bessie Hager, for instance, labored as a domestic servant before meeting and marrying SUP agent William Gohl,

⁷⁵ *Trades Council Gazette*, no date. Christensen was appointed chief of police in early January 1906. See *Grays Harbor Post*, 13 January 1906. Despite his loyalty to the ruling class during the 1906 maritime strike, "Sweet Pete" was removed from his post in July 1906 by a unified Aberdeen city council after Christensen sought to restrict prostitution within the city's Red Light District. See *Hoquiam Washingtonian*, 26 July 1906.

⁷⁶ Norwood, *Strikebreaking and Intimidation*. On the use of "special" police to break the 1906 maritime strike, see *Grays Harbor Post*, 23 June; 7 July 1906.

⁷⁷ United States Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900*, Washington State, Chehalis County, Cities of Aberdeen and Hoquiam.

⁷⁸ United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County, City of Aberdeen.

after which she became a housewife and proprietor of their family's boarding house.⁷⁹ But Grays Harbor was a one-industry region dominated by major lumber concerns, and with few exceptions, women did not work in lumber before World War I.⁸⁰ A 1910 Washington State Bureau of Labor report stated that only 1 out of 2,729 lumber, shingle, and wood product workers included in its study of Grays Harbor lumber workers was a woman. That same report recorded 30 women laboring in an Aberdeen clam cannery and 78 women spread around 5 Harbor laundries.⁸¹

Though women worked for wages, few belonged to trade unions on the Harbor during the first decade of the twentieth century. Only 15 of the 712 members of Aberdeen and Hoquiam unions listed in the 1904 and 1906 biennial reports of the Bureau of Labor of the State of Washington were women.⁸² Female members of the unionized shingle weavers, though rare, were not unheard of. Mrs. Mae Mason, Elma weaver and union official, could pack shingle for "ten hours besides attending to her household

⁷⁹ Bessie Hager, later Bessie Gohl, was the subject of significant press attention for her marriage to the sailors' union agent. See *Aberdeen Herald*, 22 July 1909; *Chehalis County Vidette*, 16 May 1905; 23 November 1906; *Grays Harbor Post*, 15 February 1908. Local historians have speculated on Bessie Gohl's alleged involvement with criminal activities. See Aho, "The Ghoul of Grays Harbor," 18-20, 26-31; Betts, "Launched 100 Murders," 19-21, 56-58; Richard J. Goodrich, "The Madman of Aberdeen," *Harborquest* 3 (August 1992): 8-9, 23.

⁸⁰ On women entering the lumber workforce as strikebreakers during the great 1917 lumber strike, see *Daily Washingtonian*, 7 August 1917; *Shingle Weaver*, 18 August 1917.

⁸¹ Figures are taken from State of Washington, *Seventh Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Factory Inspection*, 1909-1910, 180-182. According to the *Eight Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Factory Inspection*, 1911-1912, only two of 3,899 lumber, shingle, lath, and wood product mill workers were women. The *Ninth Biennial Report* listed the twenty-eight most common occupations held by women in the State of Washington for the year 1910. "Servants" was easily the highest recorded occupation with 11,847 working in that field during the census year. Significantly, lumber work was not included among the list. Equally significant was the fact that these reports made no mention of women laboring as loggers in Washington State, an indication that it did not exist, went unreported, or occurred without the knowledge of employers or their assistants who compiled the company's employment statistics.

⁸² Membership statistics for selected unions were included in the Washington State Bureau of Labor, *Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor of the State of Washington*, 1904, 1906 (Olympia: Public Printer, 1904 and 1906).

duties.”⁸³ Three months after this bit of condescending praise appeared in the *Shingle Weaver*, however, she moved to Aberdeen, leaving her husband “Art to look after No. 15,” a reference to ISWUA Local 15.⁸⁴ Thereafter, the “shingle weaving craft” remained a male domain until women strikebreakers were recruited during the wave of lumber strikes that broke out during the Great War.⁸⁵

The main source of women’s unionism on the Harbor was the Laundry Workers’ Union, which in April 1904 was composed of twenty-one women and three men.⁸⁶ Of the laundry workers, some, including Lena Turk, doubled as co-owners of the Gloss Steam Laundry, a cooperative laundry run entirely by the Grays Harbor labor movement for the benefit of its members.⁸⁷ Like men’s unions, the laundry workers held fundraisers and hosted socials, and like their male counterparts the laundry workers felt threatened by competitors who employed Asian-American labor, boasting in the labor press of their product’s “whiteness and purity.”⁸⁸ Despite their majority in the laundry workers’ union and Gloss Steam Laundry, women were underrepresented among the leadership in both organizations. During its first year, male unionists were frequently chosen as elected officials and speakers for the laundry workers’ union, while Lena Turk was the sole female member of the fifteen-person Gloss Steam Laundry board of directors.⁸⁹

⁸³ *Shingle Weaver*, March 1904.

⁸⁴ *Shingle Weaver*, June 1904.

⁸⁵ During the 1917 lumber strike, correspondents to the *Shingle Weaver* complained bitterly of female strikebreakers working in their places. See *Shingle Weaver*, 8 August 1917.

⁸⁶ A list of the twenty-four members of the Aberdeen Shirtwaist and Laundry Workers’ Union appeared in the *Grays Harbor Post*, 23 April 1904.

⁸⁷ Ben K. Weatherwax, “Hometown Scrapbook,” 29 October 1953.

⁸⁸ *Grays Harbor Post*, 20 May 1905; 10 June 1905; 2 December 1905. In the 3 May 1905 *Grays Harbor Post*, a “special fight” was declared “against the Chinese laundries in the city.”

⁸⁹ The manager for the Gloss Steam Laundry was, in 1905, W. A. Connell, “an experienced laundry man.” Of the group elected in January 1906, Lena Turk was the sole woman. *Grays Harbor Post*, 2 December 1905; 13 January 1906. For examples of male leadership of the laundry workers’ union, see *Grays Harbor Post*, 23 April, 20 August; 23 September 1904.

As the composition of the laundry workers' leadership indicated, the Harbor's labor officialdom was dominated by men.⁹⁰ Of 115 union officials listed in the weekly "Grays Harbor Union Directory," between January and December 1906, only six were women; of this number all but one held the office of recording secretary. Thus, even on the rare occasion that women gained election to union positions, men retained the highest bureaucratic offices. Slight elevations in women's power were paired with their continued secondary status within unions, performing clerical duties rather than outright leadership.⁹¹

Throughout the first decade of the twentieth century there remained a paucity of female voices at high-level labor conventions in Washington State. The first two WSFL conventions held in the Harbor towns, in Aberdeen in 1906 and Hoquiam in 1910, featured a total of five women out of a total of over three hundred delegates.⁹² For the upcoming 1910 WSFL convention in Hoquiam, the *Post* ran an article on the sixty-one "Labor Men" who would attend or serve as alternates on behalf of the Harbor unions. Despite the minimal travel time necessary, no women unionists were included in the list.⁹³ When women were included in union activities, it was usually as entertainment or company for male members. The Hoquiam shingle weavers, for example, were renowned for their dances, which regularly drew large crowds and were heavily

⁹⁰ *Grays Harbor Post*, 1 January 1910.

⁹¹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 6, 13 January; 3 February; 9 June; 7 July; 4 August; 22 September; 13 October; 24 November; 29 December 1906.

⁹² *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Convention of the Washington State Federation of Labor*, (Aberdeen, WA, 1906); *Grays Harbor Post*, 8, 15 January 1910. The five delegates were: May Sargent, delegate for the Aberdeen Cooks and Waiters' Union, and Alice M. Lord, Seattle delegate in 1906; and Lena Turk, Aberdeen Laundry Workers' Union delegate, Mrs. Frank W. Cotterill of the Clerks' Union of Seattle, and Lord, in 1910. *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Convention of the Washington State Federation of Labor*, held in Aberdeen, Washington, 4 January 1906.

⁹³ Although she was not included on this initial list, Lena Turk of the Aberdeen Laundry Workers' Union did attend the convention as an official delegate. The minutes of the convention, as well as a list of delegates who attended, was printed in *Grays Harbor Post*, 15 January 1910.

advertised in the local press.⁹⁴ To draw in more female participation, women were offered free admission, and at a May 1905 dance, “Miss Ethel” joined her brother in a performance of “Man in the Overalls.”⁹⁵

The chauvinistic attitudes of local unionists were equally visible in the lack of attention assigned to women workers or women’s issues more generally. Woman suffrage, reproduction, and domestic duties, were assumed to be women’s issues and were either ignored in public by male unionists or greeted with hostility by their male spokesmen. The pages of the *Shingle Weaver*, *Trades Council Gazette*, and the explicitly labor-focused journalism of the *Grays Harbor Post* reveal the total absence of attention paid to women. In the *Weaver* the only time a woman’s name was mentioned was on the occasion of her becoming a union bride, while the *Gazette* made mention of women exactly zero times during its short run in 1906.⁹⁶ Even union brides became the butt of jokes or the object of warnings issued to male unionists, constructed as the temptresses and tricksters hoping to entice a man into marriage, rob him of his independence, and spend his money.⁹⁷ Thus, after three weavers married in 1903, one Grays Harbor correspondent to the *Shingle Weaver* asked, “Who will be the next unlucky one?” This theme was repeated in 1908 when Hoquiam ISWUA official W. E. Willis bemoaned the fate of W. L. Sparks who “started in the New Year by committing one of the most heinous crimes on the calendar -- he deliberately got married to one of Hoquiam’s most charming young ladies.”⁹⁸ Showing his ambivalence toward organizing women laborers,

⁹⁴ *Hoquiam Sawyer*, 18 March 1905; *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 October 1910; 28 October 1905; 30 April 1904.

⁹⁵ *Shingle Weaver*, April, May 1905; *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 October 1910.

⁹⁶ This conclusion was taken from a thorough examination of the three existing issues of the *Trades Council Gazette*, 1906.

⁹⁷ *Shingle Weaver*, May 1906; February 1908.

⁹⁸ *Shingle Weaver*, July 1903.

Grays Harbor Post editor and carpenters' union official J. W. Clark argued, "Women who work should be accepted on equal terms with men into the union of their craft. But no unionist is justified in patronizing a non-union establishment because another union debars women from membership."⁹⁹ Even the struggles waged by laundry workers, a union with a large female membership, as well as a strike by the unorganized "Hello Girls" in 1906, received sparse attention in the labor press.¹⁰⁰ These comments were always brief and paled in comparison to the attention given the sailors, longshoremen, and shingle weavers, whose manly stands against the lumber oligarchy caught headlines.¹⁰¹

Although underrepresented, undervalued, and occasionally mocked, women unionists were not mere victims of male chauvinism, neglect, and other forms of abuse. Their positions as union members, planners of union social events, and key attendees at these activities gave them critical access to the male-dominated labor council and its resources, namely the labor press and union treasury. The experience of the laundry workers' union is telling in this regard. A small union comprised mostly of low-paid women, the laundry workers actively sought out assistance from large and well-established unions such as the carpenters. Shortly after their founding in 1904, the laundry workers "arranged an entertainment in the way of a surprise" for the carpenters, "their brother workers," which included an ice cream and cake social, speeches, and "mingling in the rhythmic beat of good music." The *Post* commended the "stronger"

⁹⁹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 1 September 1906.

¹⁰⁰ When they struck in October 1906, the "Hello Girls" were noticed by only a small article in the *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, garnering far less attention than men's unions regularly received. See *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 29 October 1906.

¹⁰¹ For examples of the heavy attention paid to male laborers' strikes, see *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 5, 6, 9 June, 18, 22 August 1906; *Grays Harbor Post*, 16 June 1906.

carpenters' union for "furnish[ing] a hall for the Laundry workers," and forming an alliance with the "young women who work ten hour days at trying, difficult work and whose wages are nominal." "The men of the city are, many of them, working an eight hour day. Their wages are fair and conditions satisfactory. All should help to make easier the conditions under which these young women work," concluded the *Post*.¹⁰²

Women's positions within the labor bureaucracy also gave them critical access to the all-important central labor council meetings. According to attendance records for the ATLC, this was a right that female unionists did not take lightly. During the final six months of 1906, of the twenty-five Aberdeen unions that sent delegates to that city's labor council, those with high percentages of female members ranked third and seventeenth in meeting attendance.¹⁰³ Although underrepresented, women unionists still pushed through resolutions and provoked discussions of issues of women's suffrage and the need for greater unionization of women laborers.¹⁰⁴ At the 1905 WSFL convention in Everett, for example, delegates succeeded at having all wording amended to say "person or persons" instead of "man" or "men."¹⁰⁵

Furthermore, the local labor movement was not a static institution, and women's position within local unions changed over time. During the first decade of the twentieth century, women expanded their membership in, and leadership of, local unions. In April 1904, the Aberdeen laundry workers' union was comprised of twenty-one women and

¹⁰² *Grays Harbor Post*, 23 April 1904. See also *Grays Harbor Post*, 20 May; 10 June 1905.

¹⁰³ Attendance for the Grays Harbor Trades and Labor Council meetings held between 1 July 1906 and 1 January 1907 was listed in the *Grays Harbor Post*, 19 January 1907. For the twenty-four meetings held between those dates, the Aberdeen Typographical Union attended all of the meetings, as did the Longshoremen's Union. The local Cooks' and Waiters, with fifty male and fifteen female members, attended all but one of the meetings; while the Aberdeen Laundry Workers, with a solidly female membership, attended fourteen of the meetings.

¹⁰⁴ *Grays Harbor Post*, 8, 15, 22 January 1910.

¹⁰⁵ *Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Washington State Federation of Labor*, 31.

three men, but the union's executive positions was made up of two men and one woman: Joseph Thomas, Sam Anderson, and Anna Rumquist.¹⁰⁶ However, by 1905 women such as Lena Turk, Zelma Johnson, and Mabel Stryker were in firm control over this union's leadership positions and they remained in control for the remainder of the decade.¹⁰⁷ During the 1907 Labor Day parade, "the 23 members of the Aberdeen laundry workers, in charge of Miss Lena Turk," marched behind the all-male iron molders' union and in front of the men of the pattern makers' union.¹⁰⁸ Additionally, women were elected to leadership positions within unions in which they did not constitute a majority of the membership, demonstrating that their male fellow unionists respected their leadership abilities. Mae Mason of the Elma shingle weavers, Pernie Stout of the retail clerks, and May Sargent of the Hoquiam cooks and waiters' union were each elected to leadership positions in their unions.¹⁰⁹ Sargent joined Aberdeen laundry workers' union president and director of the Gloss Steam Laundry Lena Turk as women delegates from Grays Harbor to the WSFL convention in Hoquiam in 1910.¹¹⁰

Women's influence in the labor movement was not confined to their membership and leadership in unions. During Labor Day celebrations and state labor conventions, women unionists occasionally served on dance or planning committees, as did Emile

¹⁰⁶ *Grays Harbor Post*, 23 April; 20 August; 3 September 1904.

¹⁰⁷ See *Grays Harbor Post*, 3 May 1905; 20 January; 25 January; 21 March; 22 August 1908.

¹⁰⁸ *Grays Harbor Post*, 7 September 1907.

¹⁰⁹ *Shingle Weaver*, March 1904; *Grays Harbor Post*, 13, 20 January 1906.

¹¹⁰ *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Convention of the Washington State Federation of Labor*, (Aberdeen, WA, 1906); *Grays Harbor Post*, 8, 15 January 1910. The five delegates were: May Sargent, delegate for the Aberdeen Cooks and Waiters' Union, and Alice M. Lord, Seattle delegate in 1906; and Lena Turk, Aberdeen Laundry Workers' Union delegate, Mrs. Frank W. Cotterill of the Clerks' Union of Seattle, and Lord, in 1910. *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Convention of the Washington State Federation of Labor*, held in Aberdeen, Washington, 4 January 1906.

Hesse in 1904 and Lena Lightfoot three years later.¹¹¹ Another source of their power came in the formation of union auxiliaries, especially label leagues, through which female unionists and union supporters used their collective purchasing power to support “fair” companies that hired union labor, and punish “unfair” companies that used non-union labor or otherwise ran afoul of unions. Cities across Washington State formed local women’s labor leagues prior to 1910. The Women’s Union Card and Label League (WUCLL), a formal institution, was founded in 1911. Within a year Aberdeen and Hoquiam women formed their own branches of the league, although support for such endeavors was manifested as early as 1906 when *Grays Harbor Post* editor J. W. Clark suggested that “women should consider the benefits derived and unite with the label league, then use the purchasing power to better the condition of the community.”¹¹² In spite of their late start in forming label leagues in Grays Harbor, female union supporters formed labor groups ancillary to the movement much earlier. Beginning as early as 1904, women unionists and male union members’ wives planned dances and socials, served on Labor Day planning committees, and helped to plan the social activities of the Harbor’s

¹¹¹ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 16 July 1904; *Grays Harbor Post*, 5 September 1908. Lena Turk also served on the Dance Committee for the 1905 Labor Day. See *Grays Harbor Post*, 12 August 1905. The mostly women’s laundry workers’ union made a positive impression on the all-male Aberdeen carpenters’ union when the former union hosted an entertainment and dance to repay the carpenters for financing a union hall for the laundry workers. The sometimes carpenters’ union official and *Grays Harbor Post* editor J. W. Clarke was also impressed by the festivities, which, in his words, forged “ties of fraternity . . . which will be of lasting value to both unions.” *Grays Harbor Post*, 23 April 1904. The lone woman involved in the twenty-person planning committees was Lena Turk, a laundry worker, assigned to the Ball Committee. See *Grays Harbor Post*, 31 August; 7 September 1907.

¹¹² *Grays Harbor Post*, 1 September 1906; 14 November 1908; 17 July 1909. For a general survey on the Women’s Union Card and Label League, see K. J. Oberdeck, “‘Not Pink Teas’: The Seattle Working-Class Women’s Movement, 1905-1918,” *Labor History* 32:2 (Spring 1991): 205; Maurine Weiner Greenwald, “Working-Class Feminism and the Family Wage Ideal: The Seattle Debate on Married Women’s Right to Work, 1914-1920,” in *Women in Pacific Northwest History*, revised edition, ed. Karen Blair (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 105-107. Additional information on Grays Harbor Women’s Label Leagues can be found in *Grays Harbor Post*, 15 June 1912; 11 January; 16 August 1913; 17 January; 14 April; 29 August; 5 September 1914.

early socialist clubs.¹¹³ Expressing his approval of the auxiliaries, Clark stated that “the wives of the workers were and are a potent influence in the trades union movement.” He continued in his praise of auxiliaries, which “are not merely social clubs, nor are they sewing circles and pink tea clubs, they are practical from the word go.”¹¹⁴

Like women, rural laborers, namely the thousands of loggers who worked and lived in the region’s woods, were conspicuous in their absence from Grays Harbor unions. Craft unions were almost exclusively urban institutions: their headquarters and halls were in cities and towns, they enrolled members who lived and worked in urban areas, and the largest US labor movements were those in cities, such as New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Seattle. But loggers were a rural proletariat who shared little of the urban culture of AFL trade unions. These distinctions proved great during the first decade of the twentieth century, as the three thousand or more loggers who lived and worked in the woods of Grays Harbor remained, like most women and racialized workers, outside of the ranks of organized labor.¹¹⁵

A handful of short-lived loggers’ unions were founded in the Pacific Northwest before 1910, but none lasted more than a few months, dying out due to lack of interest on the part of the woodsmen, rather than any concerted employer attack.¹¹⁶ In Grays Harbor, two branches of the Logger’s Protective Union formed in April 1904, one in each of the twin cities with 238 combined members “and a large number applications . . . on hand.” The unions held business meetings and smokers and appointed an organizer to

¹¹³ *Grays Harbor Post*, 23 April 1904; 25 February; 20 May; 12 August 1905; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 11 August 1905; 11 September 1909.

¹¹⁴ *Grays Harbor Post*, 20 January 1906.

¹¹⁵ A. E. Gagner, secretary of Loggers’ Protective Union 11596, estimated that there were three thousand loggers living in Grays Harbor in 1904. *Grays Harbor Post*, 23 April 1904.

¹¹⁶ Howd, 57; Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 119.

travel throughout the region.¹¹⁷ These acts briefly increased the membership of the unions. But the organized loggers never adopted anything but the most conservative trade union approach. Aberdeen local branch 11596 secretary A. E. Gagner described why, in his view, unions were unnecessary: “Now that we are getting well arranged, we recognize the fact that our employers’ interests are identical to our own,” and that “the boss loggers have paid more to the man in his employ, than any other employer on Gray’s [sic] Harbor, and his profit has been least.”¹¹⁸ In spite of, or perhaps due to, this faith in the identity of interests between classes, both loggers’ locals died out during their first year. In his explanation as to why the Aberdeen Loggers’ union was closing its books in July 1904, its secretary drew a correlation between the union’s decline and what he saw as the benevolent treatment afforded loggers by their bosses. He wrote, “None of our so-called rights have suffered at the hands of our employers,” and advising “corporation employers of labor, come to the boss loggers and learn how to treat your employes and do away with all unions.”¹¹⁹

The loggers’ opposition to unionism cannot be wholly attributed to a lack of class consciousness on their part. Instead, trade unions did little to appeal directly to the interests of loggers, and those offers that were extended hinted at labor leaders’ insensitivity to the differences between town and country. The two loggers’ unions formed in Grays Harbor during 1904 had headquarters in Aberdeen and Hoquiam, far away from the logging camps and bunkhouses where loggers spent their time. The social activities of the union occurred in Aberdeen, miles away from most logging camps in an era before loggers had access to automobiles. Even the speakers chosen by local unions

¹¹⁷ *Grays Harbor Post*, 14 May 1904.

¹¹⁸ *Grays Harbor Post*, 24 April 1904.

¹¹⁹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 23 July 1904.

to address potential recruits -- J. G. Brown, J. T. Duffy, and John Gronow -- were urban workers who shared little in the way of life experiences with their logging counterparts.¹²⁰ The distinction between unionists and loggers was made clear by the dissolution of the two loggers' union branches "on account of non-attendance," a product of either potential recruits' lack of interest in the union or their inability to reach union gatherings held in the city.¹²¹

The spatial differences between urban union members and loggers were reflected in cultural differences between city and country dwellers. For the most part, male union members lived in houses with their wives, in neighborhoods, near to urban amenities such as grocery stores, laundries, and street cars. For example, of the eighty-one Hoquiam shingle weavers whose marital status was recorded in the 1910 census, forty-four were married. In addition, ten of fifteen members of the Aberdeen and Hoquiam labor council executive board members from 1904 and 1905 whose marital status could be discerned were married.¹²² This contrasts sharply with the living conditions of loggers, most of whom lived well outside of the city limits without urban amenities, and remained unmarried during their time as woodsmen. For example, at one camp owned by the Clemons Logging Company only three of the forty-seven loggers were married, while

¹²⁰ *Grays Harbor Post*, 14 May 1904. J. T. Duffy was a carpenter, J. G. Brown worked as a shingle weaver, and John Gronow was the founder of the Aberdeen branch of the SUP. See *Grays Harbor Post*, 7 May 1904; Chapters 3 and 4.

¹²¹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 14 May; 23 July 1904.

¹²² *Grays Harbor Post*, 2, 16 April; 9, 16 July; 3 September 1904; 4 February; 17 June; 28 October 1905; United States Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900*, Washington State, Chehalis County; United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County. All members of the Aberdeen and Hoquiam labor councils who were listed in the 1900 and 1910 census lived within the city limits of Aberdeen or Hoquiam.

at a second Clemons camp, only one of fourteen loggers had a wife.¹²³ The distinctions between the homes and families of urban unionists also differed sharply from the living conditions of western Washington loggers. James Rowan, an organizer with the IWW, observed the type of “home” where loggers lived. He wrote, “As the lumber companies furnished no bedding in the camps, each man had to furnish his own. This was not only an added expense, but forced a man to carry his bed on his back when looking for a job.”¹²⁴

Even during their brief involvement with the labor movement, loggers no doubt took note of the cultural differences between themselves and their fellow unionists. For instance, the entirety of the Aberdeen and Hoquiam labor council executive officers for the years 1904-1905 lived in the city, and there is no evidence that these men spent any time in the Harbor's logging camps. When they did address the loggers, unionists usually did so from familiar environments, through the labor press or in speeches at union halls. Thus, after employers threatened to bring in loggers to scab during the 1906 maritime strike, the unionist writers of the *Trades Council Gazette* used masculine and patriotic appeals in hopes of stroking the woodsmen's ego. “The boys from the logging camps have shown their manly principles in many ways during the past few weeks. They have refused to be influenced by the efforts of the millowners and the howls of a subsidized press against the lockedout seamen and longshoremen,” ran one *Gazette* editorial.¹²⁵

Equally telling, loggers' own words were wholly missing from articles written about their

¹²³ United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County, Montesano Precinct.

¹²⁴ James Rowan, *The IWW in the Lumber Industry* (1920; reprint, Seattle: The Shorey Book Store, 1969), 12.

¹²⁵ *Trades Council Gazette*, no date. A series of editorial appeals under the headline “Loggers Show Their Hand” appealed in this issue of the *Gazette*.

union, while news of the cities' trade union leaders offering advice to the woodsmen as to "perfecting trade unions" was printed in the local labor press.¹²⁶ In short, the lived experiences of loggers differed substantially from those of most urban workers, and the Harbor labor movement, completely dominated by city dwellers, did little to bridge this division in order to recruit this untapped source of membership.

The vast majority of Harbor workers remained outside the ranks of the official labor movement. Grays Harbor unionists, their elected union officials, the labor press, the labor movement's cultural activities, and their political programs all bore marks of white supremacy, male and urban chauvinism, and the virility of the male leadership of the movement. The unions were at once working-class institutions designed to win gains for their members and white men's protective associations designed to preserve a monopoly over relatively "good" wage-earning jobs for their members. As the next chapter will attest, racism and sexism were major elements of even the most radical unions of the day, including the socialist ISWUA. That the unionized shingle weavers' narrow and exclusivist practices hindered them in their struggles with the boss, divided the union between those who supported more inclusive forms of unionism and those who adhered to the principles of craft unionism on the labor movement will be the major themes of the following chapter.

¹²⁶ *Grays Harbor Post*, 14 May 1904.

CHAPTER V

GRAYS HARBOR SHINGLE WEAVERS

AND THE MAKING OF ONE [NOT VERY] BIG UNION

To speak of labor organizations in the lumber industry during the first four decades after Washington became a state in 1889 was to speak almost exclusively of the shingle weavers. Indeed, in lumber, unquestionably the Pacific Northwest's most important industry, labor unions were notable for their insignificance. The major exceptions were the several thousand men, and at least one woman, who worked in shingle manufacturing plants and joined one of the dozens of local branches that belonged to the International Shingle Weavers' Union of America (ISWUA) during its formative period from 1903 to 1910. Partly because of their importance in the early economy of the Pacific Northwest, the two to three thousand organized weavers have received scholarly attention that would appear to defy their membership numbers. In fact, each of the historians of "lumber and labor" has touched upon the unionized weavers, a group that in May 1905 numbered only 2,400 members.¹

Shingle weavers' unions were not significant solely because they were the first and often the only union in the region's largest industry. Weavers were also among the most militant and radical members of the Pacific Northwest labor movement.² After founding the union in 1903, ISWUA members moved decisively to spread their union to "every point in America where there are one or more shingle mills located."³ The union's socialist views were captured in Hoquiam weaver J. G. Brown's argument as to

¹ *Shingle Weaver*, June 1905; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 218; Morgan, *The Last Wilderness*, 140-141; Todes, *Lumber and Labor*, 152-161; Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 117-119.

² Clark, *Mill Town*, 91-93.

³ *Shingle Weaver*, January 1903.

why unionists “must ally ourselves with some political party that shall represent our interests as opposed to capitalist interests.” He wrote,

Pure reason would seem to say that if we are spoiling for a strike, let us go after the eight hour day; call a district convention, as suggested by the *Shingle Weaver*. Make a move in the right direction! Experience has proven beyond a doubt that it is impossible for employer and employee to organize into a sort of “brother.” Our methods lie apart; our interests are in conflict, and men usually twist their logic to fit their interests. Our International officers may well go slow in this matter. And in no case should it be done without submitting the whole proposition to a referendum vote. Keep the power close to the rank and file.⁴

Brown was a leader of the Grays Harbor shingle weavers, and as his statement illustrated, Hoquiam and Aberdeen locals were among the most militant and radical branches of the ISWUA. In fact, between 1902 and 1908, Hoquiam weavers alone engaged in at least nine strikes at local mills, and union leaders had no qualms about antagonizing their employers in verse.⁵ In one poem, shingle weaver J. E. Elliot attacked Robert Lytle, owner of the Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle Company, for his use of a bullpen to house scabs during a 1906 shingle strike:

One mill man built a big bull pen,
Its walls are standing still,
And there he kept his working men
Like beasts he meant to kill⁶

Grays Harbor ISWUA members also ran for political office as socialists, delivered public addresses where they spoke of the need to elect friendly politicians to large audiences, and edited the region’s first socialist newspaper, the *Grays Harbor Socialist*, founded in 1905.⁷

⁴ *Shingle Weaver*, October 1904.

⁵ *Hoquiam Washingtonian*, 6 February 1902; 14 July 1904; *Shingle Weaver*, February, March, April, May, July 1904; July, October 1905; June, July, August, September 1906; *Grays Harbor Post*, 16 April 1905; 3, 17 February 1906; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 5 February 1906.

⁶ This poem, entitled “Why the Shingle Weavers Struck,” by J. E. Elliot, was originally printed in the *Shingle Weaver* and reprinted in the *Grays Harbor Post* 11 August 1906.

⁷ *Hoquiam Sawyer*, 8, 22 April 1905.

For all of their efforts to shift the labor movement in more radical directions, the ISWUA was still representative of much of the local AFL movement as a whole in terms of its attitudes on race and gender.⁸ Like Grays Harbor unionists at large, the overwhelming majority of weavers and ISWUA officials were men, while the rhetoric of both leaders and rank and file was exclusively masculine and focused on shop floor struggles and male-dominated cultural activities. J. G. Brown reported on a 28 April 1904 “monster open meeting” or “social session” in his monthly column to the *Shingle Weaver* that “one of the largest halls in the city was secured and a grand, free, happy, enjoyable time was had. . . . The lunch was then served, together with other refreshments, and was interspersed with some racy stories by Frank Reagan, the proprietor of the pool room resort. . . . About 300 cigars were donated.”⁹ Shingle weavers, including their most radical union officials, were also often overtly racist. They advocated Asian exclusion legislation and counseled massive resistance to the employment of Asian-American workers in shingle mills. J. G. Brown lambasted H. E. Richardson, an Olympia shingle manufacturer, for his plan to employ Japanese laborers, a plan that would, in Brown’s view, force “white workingmen to the point where they then must compete with cheap Cooley labor.”¹⁰

Thus, the shingle weavers simultaneously challenged the narrow, restrictive boundaries of AFL craft unionism through their advocacy of socialism and industrial unionism, and undermined those views with an inability and unwillingness to adhere to a

⁸ An excellent analysis of the attitudes of the AFL towards organizing women can be found in Alice Kessler Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 152-171. See also Philip S. Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement: From the First Trade Unions to the Present* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 98-119.

⁹ *Shingle Weaver*, May 1904.

¹⁰ *Shingle Weaver*, August 1904.

more inclusive type of unionism in practice. The fragmentation of the local working class, as advocated by the ISWUA, hindered the development of class-wide solidarity movements. These movements, extant only in nascent stages prior to the 1910s, were the product of local radicals, whose ideas threatened to strike decisive blows at dominant notions about capitalism, corporate control of the state, and the exclusivity of craft unions. Indeed, revolutionary demands for changes in the ways unions operated, who should comprise their memberships, and what political programs they should pursue were all championed by small segments of the Grays Harbor labor movement during the first decade of the twentieth century. Thousands of local workers built unions, affiliated with state and federal labor federations, and formed trade councils, while still others pushed to expand the boundaries of their unions by organizing industrial rather than craft unions, while even more moved into politics with their support for Socialist or Workingmen's tickets.¹¹ These challenges from the left were not the sole province of the ISWUA, and in fact socialists from the typographical, longshoremen's, and sailors' unions also posed challenges to the prerogatives of traditional craft unionism. But, on the Harbor, tensions among restrictive, chauvinistic, and expansive social visions of unionism were particularly noticeable among the organized shingle weavers, whose commitment to industrial unionism and socialist politics were well-known. Indeed, as this chapter will argue, even the most radical craft unions of the early twentieth century failed to unite alongside their fellow workers in a broad working-class movement.

The term "shingle weaver" is somewhat deceptive, in part because of the varying interpretations of its derivation. Showing up in several early American reference texts,

¹¹ See Chapters 4, 6, and 7.

the most common definition of the term is that of a “workman who dresses shingles.”¹² Historian Norman Clark clarified the meaning of the term more in his book *Mill Town*, noting the “term ‘shingle weaver’ was generic, and was applied alike to the sawyers, filers, and packers who worked as a crew in the mills that produced these shingles.”¹³ By 1918, the meaning of the term had broadened to include any “worker in a shingle mill,” which paralleled the increased jurisdiction of the shingle weavers’ unions to activities to include all those who labored in or around shingle mills.¹⁴ While no direct correlation between the organizational practices of shingle weavers’ unions and alterations in common discourse can be made, it was clear that by the mid-1910s, at which point the ISWUA came to organize all workers in shingle manufacturing, the term itself had broadened to include all workers involved in the shingle-production process.¹⁵

Initially organized in 1890 among weavers in several Puget Sound and southwest Washington towns, the International Shingle Weavers’ Union (ISWU) expanded to include locals at Ballard, Tacoma, Sedro Wooley, Snohomish, Arlington, and Chehalis. The unionists significantly increased wages at several mills and established a set wage scale before losing a decisive strike in 1893 on the front edge of a major depression that gradually destroyed this first shingle weavers’ union. After eight years of declining wages in an open shop shingle industry, weavers in Ballard, Washington, struck for increased pay in April 1901, an action that was quickly followed by workers across the Pacific Northwest. From this activity, shingle weavers’ locals formed in towns

¹² Joan Houston Hall, ed., *Dictionary of Regional English*, Vol. 4 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 908.

¹³ Clark, *Mill Town*, 91.

¹⁴ Hall, *Dictionary*, 908; Clark, *Mill Town*, 91; Howd, 55.

¹⁵ The ISWUA was given jurisdiction over all Pacific Northwest lumber workers in 1913. See Todes, *Lumber and Labor*, 155; Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 122.

throughout the Pacific Northwest and Upper Midwest, culminating in January 1903 with the formation of the ISWUA at Everett, Washington.¹⁶

Weavers in several Harbor towns were swept up in the organizational upsurge that accompanied the return of more prosperous times just after the turn of the century. The first shingle weavers' union in Grays Harbor was a local branch organized by George M. Combes, who, after arriving from Puget Sound, worked with J. G. Brown and "a few willing helpers," to organize an Aberdeen shingle weavers' local on 21 January 1902. The new union demanded that a wage increase go into effect on 1 February, and when manufacturers refused, all but two Grays Harbor mills were struck. Recognizing the need for greater solidarity, the new local applied for and received its AFL charter in mid-February, becoming Grays Harbor Shingle Weavers' Union No. 9618. After eight months of struggle, every mill in the county except the Grays Harbor Commercial Company in Cosmopolis acceded to the new wage scale and recognized their union crews. So popular was the union that on 11 September 1902, a second Grays Harbor local, Hoquiam Shingle Weavers' Union 10,294, received its AFL charter. The men who organized these two unions, including Combes, Brown, J. L. Havens, and William Ingram, were at the center of the weavers' movement during the next decade.¹⁷ They organized weavers in many of the region's smaller towns, forming ISWUA locals in Elma (1903), Cosmopolis (1906), and Montesano (1907).¹⁸ Three Grays Harbor shingle

¹⁶ Howd, 55-57; *Shingle Weaver*, 8 February 1913. Shingle weavers in Michigan had organized earlier, in 1886. See George Milton Janes, *American Trade Unionism* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1922), 26-27.

¹⁷ George Combes and J. G. Brown were both members of the HTLC executive council in 1904. *Grays Harbor Post*, 16 July 1904.

¹⁸ *Shingle Weaver*, November 1905; June 1906; September; October 1907

weavers' unions -- one each in Aberdeen, Elma, and Hoquiam -- affiliated with the ISWUA when it was formed in January 1903.¹⁹

The Harbor's ISWUA locals were harried and pressed by their employers from the start. At the center of these struggles were the Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle Company and its owners Robert and Joseph Lytle. Weavers struck the "Lytle mill" frequently. The shingle mill had been built in 1902 by the Lytles, two long-time Grays Harbor residents, logging camp owners, and proprietors of a Hoquiam grocery store.²⁰ Shortly after starting up, the mill immediately jumped to the head of global shingle production and J. G. Brown declared it "probably the greatest shingle producing plant in the state."²¹ By 1905 the mill was already leading the world in shingle production, and a year later the Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle Company employed 280 workers.²² With his increased prominence, Lytle was elected First Vice President of the Shingle Mills Bureau in 1906.²³ A year later, one lumber trade publication extolled the stature of the Lytles' mill, which employed 325 men, turned out 200,000 board feet of lumber on the ten hour

¹⁹ Howd, 55-56; *Shingle Weaver*, January, February 1903; *Shingle Weaver*, January 1903; November 1905; October 1907; *Grays Harbor Post*, 7, 14 April 1906. Shingle weavers in Montesano also conducted a wildcat strike in June 1905. *Shingle Weaver*, July 1905.

²⁰ *Shingle Weaver*, November 1905; Van Syckle, *They Tried*, 120-121, 264; Fairbairn, 35; Articles of Incorporation of the Lytle Logging and Mercantile Company, 21 April 1899. The Lytle Logging and Mercantile Company originally capitalized at \$75,000, divided by Robert and Joseph Lytle, the two trustees of the company. For biographical details on the Lytles, see "How A Western City Grows: Hoquiam, Washington," *The Coast* 5:6 (June 1903): 206-219.

²¹ *Shingle Weaver*, February 1904; "How A Western City Grows," 213. In 1904 the Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle Company cut 150 million shingles, approximately twice as many as the next largest shingle operation on the harbor. *Hoquiam Sawyer*, 31 December 1904.

²² *Grays Harbor Post*, 26 May 1906. This issue of the *Post* reported news taken from the *West Coast Lumberman*, the leading trade journal of its day. In referencing Lytle's mill, the article stated: "One of the shingle mills makes more shingles than any other in the world, its annual cut aggregating 275,000,000." See also, "In Southwestern Washington: Where Lumbering and Agriculture go Hand-in-Hand," *The Coast* 12:1 (July 1906): 18-26.

²³ *Hoquiam Washingtonian*, 1 February 1906; Cox, "Trade Associations," 288-289.

day shift and 125,000 on the night shift. Workers at the shingle mill could cut 650,000 shingles per day.²⁴

Grays Harbor shingle weavers struck at least sixteen times at Grays Harbor mills between 1902 and 1917. They struck for higher wages, control of the workplace and hiring, medical insurance, and the right to restrict the arbitrary authority of foremen.²⁵ At various points, these men enrolled the assistance of local socialists, unorganized mill hands, and Wobblies in their labor conflicts.²⁶ On many occasions they struck in sympathy with desperate fellow workers, as they did in June 1906, when more than two hundred Grays Harbor weavers struck in sympathy with ISWUA Local 12 in Ballard, Washington.²⁷

Shingle weavers have been praised by labor historians for their consistently high levels of militancy, which resulted in the group's relatively high wages, and strong sense of craft solidarity.²⁸ Indeed, union weavers earned substantially more than their non-union counterparts in Pacific Northwest lumber mills. For example, lumber mill hands in Aberdeen were frequently paid only \$1.75 per day during the first decade of the twentieth century.²⁹ In contrast, during his tour of shingle mills on Grays Harbor, one ISWUA organizer "went through the Cosmopolis mills," and criticized the mills for paying non-union shingle weavers only \$2.75 per day, a sum far greater than was paid to most lumber

²⁴ *The Pacific Lumber Trade Journal*, January 1907, 61.

²⁵ *Hoquiam Washingtonian*, 6 February 1902; 14 July 1904; *Shingle Weaver*, February, March, April, May, July 1904; July, October 1905; June, July, August, September 1906; *Grays Harbor Post*, 16 April 1905; 3, 17 February 1906; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 5 February 1906. See also Aaron Goings, "Hoquiam Shingle Weavers," http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=8629, Accessed 3 November 2009.

²⁶ Dreyfus, "Reds, Whites, and Greeks." See also Chapter 7.

²⁷ See Below, pages 154-157.

²⁸ Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 64-65; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Volume 4, 217-221, 521-528.

²⁹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 May 1909.

workers, but an amount the organizer called “scab wages.”³⁰ Unionized weavers in Grays Harbor made an average wage of \$4 per day in 1909.³¹ These wages were high enough for some weavers to purchase their own homes, and even shingle mills of their own. In fact, Hoquiam weavers George Murray and William Brun built and operated their own shingle mill beginning in 1907, and ISWUA official J. G. Brown purchased a shingle mill near Tacoma in 1908.³²

While many of these weavers had dependent families and could aspire to ownership, the frequent depressions and annual or semi-annual production suspensions meant that few weavers were ever economically secure.³³ Some shingle weavers were perpetually in motion, laboring in several different mills and towns stretched across the US. Notably, J. G. Brown labored as a shingle weaver in Cosmopolis, Aberdeen, Elma, Hoquiam, and Raymond before settling into the life of the permanent labor bureaucrat, while editions of the *Shingle Weaver* carried regular notices of weavers’ migrations.³⁴ Of the eighty Hoquiam shingle weavers listed in city directories and the *Shingle Weaver* between 1903 and 1907, only nine remained in the town when the census-takers surveyed the population in 1910.³⁵ During October 1906, at least eight shingle weavers moved to

³⁰ *Shingle Weaver*, October 1905.

³¹ *Seventh Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 1909-1910, 80.

³² *Shingle Weaver*, September 1907; *Grays Harbor Post*, 9, 30 May 1908.

³³ According to the 1910 US Census, forty-four out of the eighty-one Hoquiam shingle weavers were married. United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County, City of Hoquiam.

³⁴ Brown was listed as an elected union official in the first shingle weavers’ local in Aberdeen during January 1902. *Shingle Weaver*, November 1905.

³⁵ United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County, City of Hoquiam; *Polk’s Cities Directory for Grays Harbor*, 1907; *Shingle Weaver*, January; April 1903; January; February; May; August; September 1904; March; June; July; August; November 1905; March; April; May; June; August; September; October; November 1906. According to the 1910 census for the city of Hoquiam, eighty-two men listed “shingle weaver” as their occupation or “shingle mill” as their industry.

Shelton, Washington, to work in a new mill, and two scab weavers from a recent strike were forced to leave town during the same month.³⁶

For some who labored in the shingle industry, the frequency of production shutdowns, combined with the health hazards of the industry, created a perilous situation.³⁷ 1906 proved to be an especially difficult year for “Brother Elmer Moody,” a Hoquiam weaver who, according to J. G. Brown, started the year with “a shutdown, then he cut his thumb which laid him off for several weeks. When he went back to work, the strike shut him down for six weeks of ‘rest.’” “Finally,” continued Brown, “the strike wore itself out and Bro. Moody again went to work only to cut off two fingers in about two weeks. They were well in time to enable him to go to work about two weeks before the present cessation of work, and in that time he had to accumulate enough to carry him through the winter -- the overs he may invest in preferred stock of ‘Standard Oil’ or perpetuate his fame by endowing a college.”³⁸ In August 1907, one Hoquiam weaver wrote, “This has been an unlucky month for the boys, six have had their fingers cut, the worst case being that of Han Hanson, who lost his two middle fingers at the second joint on the right hand while sawing on a hand machine at Ingram’s mill.”³⁹

Despite their transiency, Hoquiam shingle weavers developed some of the most vibrant working-class cultural traditions of early twentieth century Grays Harbor. They contributed poetry, jokes, manifestos, and philosophical tracts to the pages of the *Shingle Weaver*. Weavers, along with local teamsters, bartenders, and other unionists formed their own baseball clubs that organized into leagues and turned out for post-parade Labor

³⁶ *Shingle Weaver*, November 1906.

³⁷ On persistence of shutdowns in the shingle industry, see Todes, *Lumber and Labor*, 92-94.

³⁸ *Shingle Weaver*, January 1907.

³⁹ *Shingle Weaver*, August 1907.

Day ballgames.⁴⁰ They required passwords to enter into meetings and unveiled fanciful nicknames like “Sharkey” “Teck,” and “Soaby” for their fellow workers in the pages of the *Shingle Weaver*.⁴¹

Other examples of the weavers’ cultural traditions were their elaborate funeral rituals used to pay tribute to their fallen fellow workers. These rights of passage were necessary to honor the victims of industrial slaughter, men like C. R. Wyman, a 26-year-old weaver who was sawed in half at the West and Slade mill in Aberdeen, as well as members who died from more natural causes.⁴² Although numerous deaths did occur in the shingle mills, most of the serious injuries were exacted on fingers and hands, torn apart by swirling saws, and lungs, ruined by the sawdust-filled air that caused cedar asthma, a respiratory disease common to shingle mill employees.⁴³ During a single month in 1907, six Hoquiam weavers received serious cuts from the saws, and local president J. H. Cramer was forced to retire from the mills because of a respiratory ailment.⁴⁴

Unions on the Harbor, including the ISWUA, offered strike funds, sickness and death insurance, fraternal camaraderie, a measure of security against arbitrary treatment by foremen, and higher wages than those earned by their unorganized counterparts.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ *Grays Harbor Post*, 7 May 1904; Goings, “Hoquiam Shingle Weavers”; *Shingle Weaver*, September 1904.

⁴¹ *Shingle Weaver*, March 1904; March 1905; August 1907. The use of nicknames by *Shingle Weaver* correspondents increased greatly during the 1910s, when practically every union weaver bore a nickname.

⁴² *Shingle Weaver*, June 1903. James Pierpont, “an insane shingleweaver,” was discovered lying on a Hoquiam beach, his death believed to be the result of a suicide. *Grays Harbor Post*, 25 January 1908.

⁴³ On cedar asthma, see Morgan, *The Last Wilderness*, 140; Todes, *Lumber and Labor*, 137-138; *Eleventh Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Factory Inspection*, 1913-1914 (Olympia: Public Printer, 1918), 50-54.

⁴⁴ *Shingle Weaver*, July; August 1907.

⁴⁵ Of the eighty-four US labor unions surveyed by the US Commissioner of Labor in 1908, all eighty-four offered some sort of death benefits to its members and nineteen unions paid permanent disability payments to its disabled members. See *Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor*, 1908,

The importance of collective security was put poignantly by Grays Harbor shingle weaver Harold M. Stilson, who described his fellow unionists' actions at the hospital when they discovered he might have cancer. "I got this awful pain. I went to Grays Harbor General Hospital for treatment. The union would take as much care as they possibly could of anyone if he was in trouble, so they came in to see me. The secretary of the union went up to talk to the doctor, who told him that I wouldn't be going home because I had cancer."⁴⁶

Because of their numbers, centrality to production and profit, their visibility within the community, and their racial and ethnic privileges, the Harbor's organized shingle weavers challenged the local oligarchy composed of lumbermen and their allies. One of these challenges came in the field of electoral politics, where workers achieved a modicum of success at the municipal level. Between their fellow weavers, fraternal lodge mates, and other unionists, the "labor vote" in cities with sizeable labor movements like Hoquiam and Aberdeen could be considerable. ISWUA members were active not only in political advocacy, but also in running for political office. J. G. Brown and J. H. Stech both ran unsuccessfully for Hoquiam city council as socialists in 1905, socialist weaver John McSlarrow lost his bid for Washington State representative in 1908, and Local 21 secretary W. E. Willis followed suit in 1908 in his campaign for Hoquiam city clerk.⁴⁷ For the 1906 municipal elections in Hoquiam, that city's Working Men's League nominated a full ticket for local offices. Despite strong support from the *Grays Harbor Post*, the Working Men's candidates, most of whom were wage laborers, lost each of

Workmen's Insurance and Benefit Funds in the United States (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1909), 30-39.

⁴⁶ *Western Red Cedar: The Shingle Weaver's Story*, 10.

⁴⁷ *Hoquiam Sawyer*, 17 November 1905; *Grays Harbor Post*, 11 April; 7 November 1908.

their races.⁴⁸ In 1907, one Hoquiam weaver mourned the loss by a labor candidate of that city's mayoral contest by only fifteen votes, finding it "strange that the laboring men can not vote as they march."⁴⁹ The Working Men's League was revived two years later as the People's Party, which included much of the Hoquiam labor leadership and issued its own party platform. Like its predecessor, however, the People's Party failed: thirteen of fourteen candidates went down to defeat.⁵⁰

Individual weavers such as Brown, Stech, and Willis were politically active radicals, but Local 21 in Hoquiam was also in many ways a radical institution. Hoquiam shingle weavers were at the head of the movement to expand their membership and power, move into politics, invest more power in the hands of rank-and-file workers, and expand the range of the union's struggles. As shown in the previous chapter, weavers kept their union a closely guarded white men's club. But by 1905 a new movement was emerging that threatened to unhinge the shingle weavers' carefully guarded craft exclusivity. It came from several militants in Local 21 who looked with apprehension at the growing power of corporate trusts, particularly their control over various state apparatuses, and their use of that power to crush unions

No figure straddled this divide between working-class solidarity and fragmentation so deftly as J. G. Brown. Like so many Harbor lumber workers, Brown gained his first experience with life in Grays Harbor with a trip to Cosmopolis, where he worked as a shingle weaver for the Grays Harbor Commercial Company. By March

⁴⁸ *Grays Harbor Post*, 1, 8 December 1906. The Hoquiam Working Men's League did endorse two victorious candidates, L. C. Houser for city treasurer and Z. T. Wilson for city clerk, both of whom ran unopposed.

⁴⁹ *Shingle Weaver*, April 1907.

⁵⁰ *Grays Harbor Post*, 15, 29 February; 11 April 1908. One victorious candidate, J. C. Fairbairn, received nomination by both the People's Party and Citizens' Ticket, and thus I did not count him in my tally of potential or victorious candidates. These unsuccessful candidates included W. E. Willis, the well-known ISWUA official, who lost the city clerkship by more than a two-to-one count

1904 he had been blacklisted in Cosmopolis for his activities during a strike, worked in an Elma shingle mill, and landed at the Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle mill.⁵¹ As with many weavers, however, Brown's political and economic radicalism was paired with a belief in white supremacy and a desire to use labor unions to protect white workers' jobs. He proudly declared that the "Shingle Weavers' Union has come in for its full share of praise for the prompt manner in which they recognized the danger of allowing the Japs to gain a foothold here, and the very energetic and effective methods they adopted to stop it."⁵² W. E. Willis, Brown's close associate, stated that the Japanese and Korean Exclusion Leagues were "a step in the right direction and should have the moral and financial support of every Union in the Northwest."⁵³

By early 1903 Brown was already a committed socialist and industrial unionist. He was also rapidly climbing into the ranks of the permanent labor bureaucracy, serving as Elma's local president in February 1903, later in a variety of leadership positions for the Hoquiam local, and by January 1904 as ISWUA delegate to the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor.⁵⁴ In his official positions within the union, Brown carried on with his "hobby," the term used by one opponent to refer to his advocacy of socialism.⁵⁵

Brown's radicalism knew few bounds. He supported, in turn, socialism, syndicalism, and communism. While Brown flirted with the IWW he was always much more drawn to the political action of the SPA and Communist Party than to the direct action of the syndicalist Wobblies. One of Brown's closest comrades and fellow workers

⁵¹ *Industrial Relations: Final Report*, 4276; *Shingle Weaver*, February 1903; March 1904.

⁵² *Shingle Weaver*, April 1904.

⁵³ *Shingle Weaver*, December 1907.

⁵⁴ *Shingle Weaver*, February 1903; January 1904; December 1906.

⁵⁵ *Shingle Weaver*, June 1905. The opponent in question was ISWUA President C. R. Case.

was, in fact, William Z. Foster, who worked side-by-side with the shingle weaver organizing lumber workers in the Pacific Northwest. Later, when Foster was head of the 1919 steel strike and later heading up the Trade Union Education League (TUEL) during the 1920s, he repaid the favor by enrolling Brown's help on the great steel strike of 1919. In 1923 Brown served as secretary of the Farmer-Labor Party, where he worked closely with Foster and head of the Chicago Federation of Labor John Fitzpatrick.⁵⁶

In this period of great industrial change, as the Harbor cities emerged out of the mud to become the world's greatest lumber producing and shipping center, J. G. Brown also emerged as the face, voice, and pen of lumber and labor in the Pacific Northwest. By January 1907, he was president of the ISWUA, the only AFL international headquartered in Washington State.⁵⁷ Like the Harbor cities themselves, Brown's rise was meteoric. He served consecutive terms as ISWUA delegate to AFL conventions annually before 1910, addressed Labor Day festivals and WSFL conventions, served as president of the Hoquiam Trades and Labor Council (HTLC) and wrote lengthy, biting articles to the *Shingle Weaver*.⁵⁸ A quick study and voracious reader, Brown followed the labor movement closely. What he found proved distressing, especially when it came to the Colorado "labor wars" of 1903-1904. There, observed Brown, state and capital had unified to defeat the Cripple Creek Western Federation of Miners (WFM) in the most brutal manner possible.

⁵⁶ On Brown's role in the steel strike and Farmer-Labor Party, see Fraser M. Ottanelli, *The Communist Party of the United States* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 11-13; Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, 39-40, 63; Mary Harris Jones, *Autobiography of Mother Jones*, Dover ed. (New York: Dover Publications, 2004), 129, 131, 134.

⁵⁷ The *Shingle Weaver* was the only labor journal published by an AFL affiliate in the Pacific Northwest. See, *The American Labor Yearbook, 1916* (New York: Ran School of Social Science, 1916), 28.

⁵⁸ *Grays Harbor Post*, 13 August 1904; *Shingle Weaver*, January 1904.

For the weavers of Aberdeen and Hoquiam, as for unionists the nation over, the Colorado “labor wars” of 1903-1904 had a decisive political and ideological impact, an effect not unlike that of Haymarket, Lawrence, or Ludlow for earlier and later generations. The Cripple Creek strikers, who were arrested, deported, and assassinated by employers and their allies, received support from throughout the nation. Harbor weavers pledged their money and manpower, holding fundraisers for their fellow workers and devoting much of their press to informing the public of their cause.⁵⁹ But to Harbor weavers, and particularly Brown, their vocal head, the lessons of Cripple Creek and elsewhere were becoming clear for what they said about the need for greater working-class solidarity, a friendly state apparatus, and a self-activated union membership who kept “the power close to the rank and file.”⁶⁰ One Hoquiam weaver argued that “the treatment accorded union men in Colorado would make the cruelest Russian czar seem but an apprentice at despotism.”⁶¹ To Brown and other weavers who echoed his beliefs, the ISWUA needed to abandon its splendid isolation, organize industrially, and mobilize on the offensive before Pacific Northwest lumber and shingle manufacturers dismantled their union. Indeed, with Pacific Northwest employers arrayed “in a belligerent attitude against labor unions,” and asserting “the ‘divine rights’ of employers to employ whomever they choose, regardless of their connection with societies or organizations,” weavers needed to organize well beyond their limited ranks to stave off their impending defeat.⁶²

⁵⁹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 16 April 1904; *Shingle Weaver*, June, July, September, November 1904. There have been numerous studies of the Colorado “labor wars,” including Jameson, *All that Glitters*; Ronald C. Brown, *Hard-Rock Miners: The Intermountain West, 1860-1920* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1979); Wyman, *Hard Rock Epic*.

⁶⁰ *Shingle Weaver*, May 1904.

⁶¹ *Shingle Weaver*, June 1904.

⁶² *Shingle Weaver*, April 1904.

In 1905, Brown's ideological development received expression in what became known as the Hoquiam Manifesto. Penned by Brown and fellow Hoquiam weavers George Combes and S. H. Stech, the manifesto issued a call for the ISWUA to organize the entire lumber industry in an industrial union, to support a socialist political program, and to divest the federation's officials of some of their power. Submitted to each of the ISWUA branches, the manifesto charted a bold change of course for the union, and it caused a major stir among the rank and file who read of it in the *Shingle Weaver* and discussed it in lodge meetings.⁶³

The manifesto divided the union, with several of the militant locals lining up solidly behind Brown, and others from an old guard equating industrial unionism with "lunacy." Contesting Brown were ISWUA President Pickens and George Campbell, who had held a firm grip on ISWUA office since the international's founding in 1903.⁶⁴ After two months of open warfare in the pages of the *Weaver*, Campbell and Pickens barred the Hoquiam weaver's columns from the paper, declaring, "We do not believe the rank and file want to make a rag-chewing sheet out of their official journal."⁶⁵ Conservative weavers also drew upon their lively cultural traditions to challenge the audacious proposals of the Manifesto. "A. Shingleweaver" penned one of the many poetic answers to the Hoquiam weaver's proposition:

Brown thinks that he can bulldoze,
The "Shingle Weaving Craft,"
But the weavers all can understand,
That he is out for graft.

⁶³ *Shingle Weaver*, June 1905. Local 21 weavers, and particularly Brown, had long advocated socialism, writing of the need "of electing to public office, men out of their own ranks who will put an end to a system of barbarity and butchery." See *Shingle Weaver*, March 1904.

⁶⁴ *Shingle Weaver*, April 1903.

⁶⁵ *Shingle Weaver*, June; July 1905.

We know why he is working,
With such an earnest vim,
He wants to be the only fish,
In the unionistic swim.

He wants to be the President,
And Secretary, too;
And he would like to run the paper,
Just to tell what he can do.⁶⁶

Other shingle weaver bards also harangued their token radical in verse:

So Hoquiam, bold Hoquiam
Just have a little sense;
And try to find the nigger,
That is hiding in the fence.

Don't think of a convention,
In a far and distant town;
Just call a special meeting,
And get rid of J. G. Brown.⁶⁷

For all its radical proclamations, the Manifesto would have done little to unhinge the strength of mainstream gender and racial ideologies within the union. Its strongest advocates -- Brown and George Combes -- were overtly chauvinistic towards women and vigorous advocates of Asiatic exclusion. And while industrial unionism, which opens unions to all wage laborers in a given industry, is far less amenable to white supremacy and patriarchy than craft unionism, it was clear that unhinging the power of supremacy and patriarchy was not a priority of its authors.⁶⁸ For instance, a year after issuing the radical platform, Brown complained that local employers “may fill our places with Chinamen or Japs.”⁶⁹ To these radicals, the ideal form industrial unionism was one that

⁶⁶ *Shingle Weaver*, September 1905.

⁶⁷ *Shingle Weaver*, July 1905.

⁶⁸ See Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the Great White Republic*, 312-316.

⁶⁹ *Shingle Weaver*, September 1906.

struggled against capitalism; challenging other modes of oppression was peripheral at best, undesirable at worst.

What eventually doomed the Hoquiam Manifesto was not its adherence to exclusiveness, however, but its inclusiveness. Many assaults on the Manifesto hailed from members of the conservative old guard of Puget Sound weavers, who worried that industrial unionism deprived “craftsmen” of their exclusive status.⁷⁰ Local 21 members’ contention that the ISWUA must expand its ranks aroused the suspicions of several committed craft unionists who expressed their convictions in the pages of the *Weaver*. One critic targeted the Manifesto’s endorsement of industrial unionism, writing that “the open union means a harbor for all classes of scabs, such as was afforded by the Knights of Labor.”⁷¹ That Brown’s critics referred to him as a “nigger” and referenced what one critic saw as his efforts to “organize the Japs” were surely no coincidence, considering the weavers’ widespread fear that an embrace of industrial unionism might break down the thick racial walls separating their union from the unorganized masses.⁷² Some shingle weavers were truly outraged over the Manifesto’s proposal favoring industrial unionism that appeared to dilute their craft, refusing to “tolerate the disruption of trades unionism from within.”⁷³ Correctly noting the parallels between the Hoquiam Manifesto and the radical sentiments issued from Chicago at the opening convention of the IWW, several weavers lashed out at the message and its messenger. J. E. Campbell, secretary-

⁷⁰ *Shingle Weaver*, June 1905.

⁷¹ *Shingle Weaver*, June 1905.

⁷² *Shingle Weaver*, July; September 1905.

⁷³ *Shingle Weaver*, June 1905.

treasurer of the ISWUA, connected the Manifesto to the upstart IWW, arguing, “Brown’s deluded following is a child of this nefarious scheme.”⁷⁴

Prior to 1906, the ISWUA succeeded at maintaining its ranks and exacting gains from employers by following craft union policies. But in Grays Harbor, the shingle weavers’ union proved incapable of withstanding the offensive of an aggressive employing class with strong state support. The weavers’ movement grew unabated until 1906 when the Shingle Mills Bureau, a trade association counting nearly all of the large manufacturers in its ranks, outspent, outgunned, and nearly destroyed the ISWUA. The Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle Company mill proved to be ground zero for the local battle between the Bureau and the ISWUA. The mill employed numerous socialist unionists, and according to the *Shingle Weaver*, Lytle had “always seemed very friendly toward the union.”⁷⁵ Days after his election as vice president of the Bureau in early 1906, Lytle went on the attack. He refused Brown his place back at the mill after a sixty-day shutdown, explaining to the union that the activist was too much of an agitator to remain in his employ. The weavers immediately responded to Lytle’s actions by walking off the job, refusing to work until the discharged man was rehired, and having the mill placed on the unfair list by both the ISWUA and Hoquiam Trades and Labor Council.⁷⁶

But the limitations of the weavers’ craft unionism was made painfully clear to them four months later when the Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle weavers joined their fellow workers in a state-wide general strike of all shingle weavers in support of the striking workers in Ballard, Washington. Unlike earlier strikes, this time Lytle was in no

⁷⁴ *Shingle Weaver*, June 1905.

⁷⁵ *Shingle Weaver*, March 1906.

⁷⁶ *Grays Harbor Post*, 3, 17 February 1906; *Shingle Weaver*, March 1906; *Hoquiam Washingtonian*, 1 February 1906.

mood to compromise.⁷⁷ The Shingle Mills Bureau defeated the ISWUA for the first time, forcing the disbanding of many of its locals, and came relatively close to ending its institutional existence through a remarkable show of ruling class cooperation.⁷⁸ Funded with a huge war chest, the Bureau enabled its members to import scabs from the southern US, constructed bullpens to house strikebreakers, and funded a public relations campaign marked by growing press coverage from several news outlets.⁷⁹

Meanwhile, ISWUA branches were running out of money. Hoquiam's Local 21, with its militant reputation and politically connected leadership, sustained the blows better than most unions. As late as August, while most branches conceded defeat, Brown preferred defiance to compromise:

the Union has set its face like flint against the degrading purpose of these plutocratic bosses and ere the time comes when the distress flag of scabdom waves over the bull-penned mills of Hoquiam, these same lovers of working class dependency will realize that a battle has been fought. In this town at least we have by no means exhausted our resources. Our brothers everywhere may be assured that the union men here will give a good account of themselves in the fight just started.⁸⁰

When Local 21 was finally forced to concede defeat, Bureau members exacted concessions with a merciless precision. Despite the massive influx of profits due to the San Francisco reconstruction project, the mills were “operated under the ‘open shop’ plan, and employers remained closely allied, publicly stating that “any discrimination against any of the undersigned [list of all large Grays Harbor mills] shall be considered as a menace to all.”⁸¹ Imported scabs and retreating unionists, “with one or two exceptions” kept their positions. Some former long-time union members were induced to scab by

⁷⁷ *Seattle Union Record*, 23 June 1906; *Ballard News*, 22 June 1906; *Grays Harbor Post*, 11 August 1906.

⁷⁸ *Dreyfus*, “Timber Workers,” 104; *Ballard News*, 20 July 1906; *Shingle Weaver*, July 1907.

⁷⁹ *Ballard News*, 22 June; 20, 27 July 1906; *Seattle Times*, 11, 18, 19 June; 18, 20 July 1906.

⁸⁰ *Shingle Weaver*, August 1905.

⁸¹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 8 September 1906.

increased wages. Thus, “Jens” Butler’s character was criticized by Brown, who said “\$25.00 per month can buy him -- body, soul, and reputation.”⁸² Even when reaching agreements with the ISWUA, the newly confident mill owners refused to abide by their word. In speaking of Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle mill owner Robert Lytle, Brown wrote that his boss considered “the whole thing a joke” and “the company began to sidestep in all directions in less than twenty-four hours.”⁸³ Brown certainly spoke for much of the membership in describing the defeat as a “sad experience” and the “cause [of] bitter disappointment, humiliation.”⁸⁴ Yet Brown remained defiant. He greeted the new era, including its challenges, writing:

But right here let the statement be made that while the mill men here may be able to run their mills with scabs, may be able to get as good a crew of non-union men as of union men, may be able to transport from other localities standing armies of strike breakers, may build bull-pens and flood the town with their hireling detectives to insult our citizens and stir up strife among our people – they may, with their unlimited means and vast, far-spreading commercial machinery, do all this, but one thing they can’t do: They never can smash the Hoquiam union. They may fill our places with Chinamen or Japs or free-born American scabs, but we’ll go down with our faces to the foe. They may conquer, but they can’t subdue us. There is too much of the spirit of ’76 in the makeup of our membership to ever allow corporate greed to rivet upon our limbs the shackles of industrial servitude. The Hoquiam union stands as strong today with its empty treasury and unemployed members as on the initial hour of the starting struggle.⁸⁵

One positive feature of the strike was that it radicalized much of the ISWUA’s membership. Where Brown had once been too radical, he now had supporters who recalled his earlier prediction of capital’s mission to “strike a crushing blow to organized labor.” Where previously Brown had been attacked in verse, now his defenders turned to

⁸² *Shingle Weaver*, August 1906.

⁸³ *Shingle Weaver*, September 1906.

⁸⁴ *Shingle Weaver*, January; February 1907.

⁸⁵ *Shingle Weaver*, September 1906.

rhyme. Weaver C. T. Freese supported the platform presented in the Manifesto, as well as Brown, its main author:

Brown is a man we know that we can
Rely on his ability.
If elected to office by laws will abide,
And in J. G. Brown we all can confide.⁸⁶

Lining up solidly beside Brown were militant ISWUA branches, including those in Bellingham and Brown's Hoquiam Local 21. In fact, the Bellingham and Hoquiam locals rebelled against the international union, expanding their ranks to include unskilled shingle mill laborers, becoming de facto industrial unions, and consequently emerging as the ISWUA's largest branches during 1907.⁸⁷

One of the first steps towards rebuilding their union was gaining retribution against scabs from the recent strike. Local blacklegs such as Butler, George Denny, Jack Kidder, and others were harassed and fined by the union, and within two months the Hoquiam local had forced Butler's ouster from the Lytle mill, after which he "dropped completely from sight." By October 1906, Brown confidently announced that many of the Harbor mills were "completely union."⁸⁸ In January 1907, at the Bellingham convention of the ISWUA, weavers' votes reflected their changing worldview, as Brown was elected President of the ISWUA.⁸⁹

Before relocating to union headquarters in Everett, Brown, in tandem with militant Harbor workers such as SUP agent William Gohl, embarked on one of the most ambitious labor projects in local history, the creation of the Grays Harbor Water Front

⁸⁶ *Shingle Weaver*, October 1905; July, September 1907; February; April 1908.

⁸⁷ The Bellingham branch of the ISWUA was referred to as "progressive" beginning as early as May 1905. See *Shingle Weaver*, May 1905.

⁸⁸ *Shingle Weaver*, October 1906.

⁸⁹ *Shingle Weaver*, June; August 1907.

Federation (GHWFF).⁹⁰ The tight labor market and uninterrupted production of late 1906 necessitated by the San Francisco reconstruction project boded well for local labor leaders, who sought to institutionalize their solidarity more thoroughly in a new union federation led by the twin cities' most militant labor organizations. The SUP, longshoremen, shingle weavers, and teamsters each waged strikes during 1906, and these were the unions that in September 1906 formed the GHWFF. The organization of the new federation reflected lessons learned by the maritime workers, who, through aggressive shows of solidarity, had won a major coastwise strike in summer 1906 and by the shingle weavers, who, acting alone against a massively funded employing class, were beaten nearly into extinction. In one of his last "Hoquiam" articles in the *Shingle Weaver*, Brown predicted great things to come for a united, radicalized working class.

He wrote:

Individual craft organizations are no longer able, except under very unusual circumstances, to cope with the growing power of organized capital; and union men everywhere are becoming alive to this fact which each industrial conflict brings home to them with added force. One thing capitalists generally ought to keep in sight is that while they are booming trusts, combines, syndicates and mergers, the wheels of the car of progress are not chained in the other avenues of human activity. . . . The tendency of bringing the workers closer together and the general awakening to the need of united political action has been brought about by the tyranny of the heads of great industrial institutions on the one hand and the very partisan way in which the ruling class has been lashing the struggling workers with whip of governmental power on the other. . . . Therein is room for vast possibilities.⁹¹

Ultimately, the Waterfront Federation was far more ambitious in theory than practice. It played a prominent role in a municipal election, organized a boycott on shingles produced by scabs at the Aberdeen Lumber and Shingle Company, and held meetings for slightly over a year. But the federation accomplished little of substance. Its

⁹⁰ *Shingle Weaver*, October 1906; February 1907; *Chehalis County Vidette*, 3 November 1906;

⁹¹ *Shingle Weaver*, October 1906.

greatest victory centered on its members' defeat of a proposal made by Aberdeen and Hoquiam businessmen to remove the county seat, and specifically the courthouse, from Montesano to a site along the Aberdeen-Hoquiam boundary line. Most of Aberdeen's leading citizens vigorously supported the move, and although the removal project eventually earned significant support from outside the employing class, it was clear that the project emanated from above. In the 13 September 1905 issue of the *Bulletin*, for instance, the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce and Business Men's club of Hoquiam formed a committee to outline plans for the removal campaign.⁹² The *Bulletin* led the cheers with headlines like "Removal Proposal will Surely Carry" and "Every Man Must Help: County Seat Demands Support."⁹³ The GHWFF, however, opposed the move, issuing a strongly worded resolution condemning the proposal, "Resolved -- That the Grays Harbor Waterfront Federation in regular meeting assembled at Hoquiam, Wash., on October the twenty-first, 1906, hereby places itself on record as being unalterably opposed to the removal of the county seat, on the grounds of the self-evident graft in connection therewith."⁹⁴ The Waterfront Federation's support proved decisive, pushing the anti-removal vote over the top. On 6 November the removal proposal failed and the courthouse remained in Montesano.⁹⁵

The failures of the Federation were apparent from the start. Members succeeded at the traditional AFL "reward your friends, punish your enemies" policy during a single local election, and at gaining a single incremental economic victory through boycotting

⁹² *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 13 September 1905; 5 November 1906. In the 5 November 1906 issue of the *Bulletin* the names of twenty-four Grays Harbor employers appeared attached to a resolution vigorously supporting the proposal to remove the county seat.

⁹³ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 18, 29 October 1906.

⁹⁴ *Chehalis County Vidette* (Montesano, WA), 26 October 1906

⁹⁵ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 6, 7 November 1906.

an “unfair” lumber mill. But the Federation’s lack of a broader social vision, one that encompassed racial equality or even the inclusion of non-white workers into unions, left Brown, Gohl, and their fellow top brass in the Federation unable to cope with things to come.⁹⁶ These included an employer offensive aimed at breaking waterfront unions, and a huge population of unorganized, ethnic, and racialized workers with no loyalty to the labor movement or to the men who failed to create an inclusive, broad union movement.

By mirroring the exclusivity and conservatism of the local labor movement as a whole, the Waterfront Federation ended up being a short-lived, ineffectual institution. In September 1906, its constituent unions banded together to fight an increasingly energetic, unified capitalist class, but in the process failed to create the type of expansive union movement necessary to succeed in this endeavor. Even J. G. Brown, who for years served as a proponent of industrial unionism and socialism in the Harbor’s labor movement, was by January 1907 enveloped within the ranks of the permanent labor bureaucracy. Separated by occupation from those who paid his salary, Brown dropped his support for the IWW and attacked it for being “down and out,” and joined the ranks of the petit bourgeoisie in 1908 with the purchase of a shingle mill near Tacoma. After his mill failed, Brown took a job as a shingle weaver and in 1913 he became the first president of the International Union of Shingle Weavers, Sawmill Workers, and Woodsmen, an industrial union affiliated with the AFL.⁹⁷ As a union president during the 1910s, Brown became an occasional ally of employers in their struggles against the

⁹⁶ Philip S. Foner, *The History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 3, *The Policies and Practices of the American Federation of Labor, 1900-1909*, Fourth Printing (New York: International Printers, 1981), 321.

⁹⁷ *Shingle Weaver*, December 1906; *Grays Harbor Post*, 9, 30 May 1908; 15 January 1910; Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 122; J. G. Brown, “International Union of Shingle Weavers, Sawmill Workers, and Woodsmen: Rochester Plan Produces Good Results,” *American Federationist* 20:10 (October 1913): 846-847.

Wobblies. Letters written between lumbermen and labor spies during the Great War feared that “J. G. Brown, the president of this organization, is evidently losing his hold” over the workers’ “support.” The cozy relationship between Brown and lumbermen earned the union official the ire and suspicion of the Wobblies who considered him a retrograde champion of trade unionism at best and a labor spy at worst.⁹⁸

Brown’s drift away from a militant position in the class war was only one of many signs of the weakness of the ISWUA, which by 1908 were plainly visible. Union radicals, including Brown, had led repeated efforts to expand the size and inclusiveness of the craft union, often engendering fierce internal union opposition for their efforts. However, the ISWUA remained a craft organization even after the issuance of the Manifesto, the election of Brown as President of the ISWUA, and the formation of the GHWFF. Like its counterparts across the Harbor and state, during the first decade of the twentieth century, the shingle weavers’ union remained a closely guarded white men’s club devoted to members’ pursuit of “bread and butter” goals, the protection of members’ relative privilege in their communities, and the election of favorable -- often socialist -- candidates to public office. In fact, the ISWUA did not broaden into an industrial organization until 1913, when, with permission from the AFL leadership, the weavers were granted jurisdiction over all workers in the lumber industry.⁹⁹ As Chapters 6 and 7 will argue, however, the tens of thousands of non-union lumber workers and immigrants in other industries did not flock into the folds of the suddenly inclusive AFL union. Instead, they chose more radical institutions such as the Socialist Party and IWW.

⁹⁸ H. P. Wunderling to E. G. Ames, 21 November 1917, Edwin Gardner Ames Papers, Accession 3820, Box 17, Folder 18; UW; *Industrial Worker*, 27 April 1918. During late 1917, the Wobblies kept a running diatribe against Brown in the *Industrial Worker*, 19 September; 24 November 1917.

⁹⁹ Howd, 58; Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 155. One year after embracing industrial unionism, the IUSWSWW changed its name to the more manageable International Union of Timber Workers.

Indeed, unrepresented by the official trade union movement, racialized, immigrant, women and rural laborers formed their own institutions or joined radical movement capable of fighting for their class interests.

CHAPTER VI:

THE IMMIGRANT LEFT ON GRAYS HARBOR, 1900-1912

The Grays Harbor trade union movement did not represent the local working class as a whole; nor was it built for that purpose. Instead, the dozens of craft unions that comprised the movement during its first dozen years were designed to represent a small group of privileged workers in selected industries, those sometimes called the “aristocracy of labor.”¹ On the Harbor, as across the US, the vast majority of union members were white men born in the US, Canada, or northern and western Europe.² African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, women, and so-called “new immigrants,” those hailing from southern and eastern European nations, represented only a small minority of union members.³ Worse yet, many AFL unions supported overtly racist, chauvinistic, and nativist positions, supporting Asian exclusion and immigrant restriction legislation, refusing membership to African Americans, and opposing women’s entry into the paid workforce.⁴

Southern and eastern Europeans were rarely officially barred from entry into craft unions, and their exclusion from the House of Labor had more to do with their relegation to so-called unskilled jobs than official exclusionist policies. Trade unions represented workers whose crafts were depicted and defended as “skilled” labor, and “new” immigrants had far less access to these positions than native-born Americans and their more firmly established counterparts from northern and western Europe. But skill is a social construct, which needed to be espoused and vigorously defended by those who

¹ Hobsbawm, *Workers: Worlds of Labor*, 214-226; Leier, *Red Flags and Red Tape*, 102-108.

² Stanley Aronowitz, *False Promises: The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness*, new edition (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 142, 172-174.

³ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 3, 256-259.

⁴ See Chapters 4 and 5.

claimed to be “skilled” laborers and sought the relative privilege conferred upon the “skilled” labor force.⁵ It takes a great deal of mental gymnastics to determine how, for instance, the unionized shingle weavers, whose work process consisted of slicing thin strips of cedar from a larger block of wood, were more skilled than non-union loggers, workers whose job entailed, in part, chopping down two hundred foot tall trees in such a way that the falling log did not crush any persons or property lying in its vicinity. And yet those same shingle weavers were boastful of their craft “skills.” One weaver compared “union vs. non-union weavers,” writing, “The relative ability of skilled union men and unskilled non-union men was shown by an incident in one of the Hoquiam shingle mills when the union weavers went back to work. The first day, one ten-block machine was manned by non-unionists and cut 60,000 shingles. Another similar machine on the same floor, manned by veteran union weavers, cut 170,000 shingles, or nearly three times as many as the non-union men.”⁶ The original constitution of the ISWUA likewise required a one-year apprenticeship and passing a union examination before being admitted to the “skilled” craft union.⁷ Carpenters were equally concerned about defending the sanctity of their craft. The 1906 *Biennial Report* of the Washington State

⁵ On the debate over the social construction of “skill,” see Shirley Tillotson, “‘We May All Soon Be ‘First-Class Men’: Gender and Skill in Canada’s Early Twentieth Century Urban Telegraph Industry,” *Labour/Le Travail* 27 (Spring 1991): 97-125; Christina Burr, “Defending ‘The Art Preservative’: Class and Gender Relations in the Printing Trades Unions, 1850-1914,” *Labour/Le Travail* 31 (Spring 1993): 47-73; Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*; Paul Thompson, “Playing at Being Skilled Men: Factory Culture and Pride in Work Skills among Coventry Car Workers,” *Social History* 13:1 (January 1988): 45-69; Montgomery, *Workers’ Control in America*; Anne Phillips and Barbara Taylor, “Sex and Skill: Notes Towards A Feminist Economics,” *Feminist Review* 6 (1980): 79-88; Mann, “Race, Skill, and Section in Northern California.”

⁶ *Shingle Weaver*, September 1906.

⁷ *Shingle Weaver*, February 1903.

Bureau of Labor recorded one Aberdeen carpenter's opinion that "no craft is paid less for the skill required than a carpenter."⁸

Unions and their members benefited materially from the construction of their trades as "skilled" because it enabled them to create artificial labor shortages, as employers could not pick freely from the "reserve army of labor" to fill positions that required skills that, ostensibly, required significant training. With much of the potential labor pool removed from competition for "skilled" positions, those with the requisite skills possessed a relatively high degree of bargaining leverage with their employers, a leverage used to exact greater gains.⁹ Those with a higher level of social power, namely white males, were able to construct the concept of skill by including their occupations within its fold, and those performed by "others" -- women, immigrants, and racialized groups -- as unskilled. African Americans, Native Americans, women, and Asian Americans have throughout US history been, almost by definition, "unskilled" workers.¹⁰ In the early twentieth century, this statement also applied to southern and eastern Europeans.¹¹ Skill also bears a close relationship to training, although not only in the obvious sense of skill equating training. When large numbers of people have training in a job, then the price of labor can be driven down, regardless of the amount of skill needed to perform that job. Thus, logging, a job in which many Scandinavian and Finnish immigrants had some training from their pre-emigration work lives, had a large surplus of laborers, thereby enabling employers to drive down wages and insist upon calling logging an unskilled

⁸ *Fifth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Factory Inspection, 1905-1906* (Olympia: C. W. Gorham, Public Printer, 1906), 106.

⁹ Leier, *Red Flags and Red Tape*, 132-133.

¹⁰ Phillips and Taylor, "Sex and Skill"; Mann, "Race, Skill, and Section in Northern California."

¹¹ See, for instance, James Green, *The World of the Worker: Labor in Twentieth-Century America* (1980; reprint, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 67-99.

job.¹² The Grays Harbor workforce conformed closely to national patterns: jobs performed by “new” immigrants were classified as “unskilled” and hence nonunion, while those performed by their native-born counterparts were classified as “skilled” and union work.

Grays Harbor was, as historian Philip Dreyfus argued, an “overwhelmingly working class” region, and a sizable part of that working class was comprised of immigrants.¹³ In fact, during the first decade of the twentieth century, as the Harbor's population swelled from 15,124 to 35,590, immigrants came to comprise nearly one-third of that population.¹⁴ To be sure, these workers were not a homogenous lot, but were instead split into a number of distinct ethnic and racial groups. Significant among the divisions were those between the so-called “old” and “new” immigrant groups from Europe, with the “old” groups representing mostly immigrants hailing from northern and western Europe who began emigrating from their home countries prior to 1890. By contrast, “new” immigrants came from southern and eastern Europe, less-industrialized, more rural nations from which few US-bound emigrants left prior to 1890. By the first decade of the twentieth century, several large groups of “old” immigrants were well-established on the Harbor. These included Norwegians, Swedes, Germans, Danes, Irish, and Brits, ethnic groups that collectively comprised approximately twelve percent of the region's

¹² Ella Johansson, “Men Without Bosses: Encounters with Modernity in the Logging Camps of Northern Sweden, 1860-1940,” in *Sustainability, the Challenge: Power, People, and the Environment*, ed. L. Anders Sandberg and Sverker Sorlin (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1998), 141. Johansson estimates that there were between 150,000 and 200,000 loggers in Sweden each year during the 1910s.

¹³ Dreyfus, “Timber Workers,” 40. Emphasis in original.

¹⁴ United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County; Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, *Population by Counties and Minor Civil Divisions, 1890, 1900, 1910* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1912), 546.

population in 1910.¹⁵ Like their US-born counterparts, these men and women faced little in the way of overt discrimination by the twentieth century and many of their number lived comfortably after succeeding in business or politics, or carving out a healthy living as union members. Peter Christensen, for example, was born in Norway, moved to Aberdeen, and took a job as a union longshoreman and union member on the Harbor's docks. In 1906 Christensen was appointed chief of police for the City of Aberdeen by fellow Scandinavian immigrant and Aberdeen mayor John Lindstrom. Celebrating rather than denigrating the police chief's ethnicity, the labor newspaper *Grays Harbor Post* suggested that Christensen was qualified to "return at once to Norway and assume the vacant throne."¹⁶ In addition, William Gohl, the German-born agent for the Aberdeen branch of the Sailors' Union of the Pacific (SUP), was the founding president of the Aberdeen Trade and Labor Council (ATLC), an officer in the Grays Harbor Waterfront Federation (GHWFF), and a member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles, the largest fraternal organization on the Harbor.¹⁷

The experiences of Scandinavian Americans such as Christensen and German Americans such as Gohl differed dramatically from those of the "new" immigrants, men, women, and children who emigrated to Grays Harbor from southern and eastern Europe. These ethnic groups -- Finns, Russians, Croatians, Poles, Italians, Greeks, and others -- represented a sizable number of Harbor residents by 1910. According to the 1910 census, in fact, Grays Harbor residents claiming Finnish, Russian, Austrian, Greek,

¹⁵ United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County.

¹⁶ *Grays Harbor Post*, 10 June 1905; 28 June 1906; Van Syckle, *They Tried*, 225; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 25 June 1906; *Hoquiam Washingtonian*, 26 July 1906.

¹⁷ "Application for Membership, Fraternal Order of Eagles, Aerie No. 24," 1908, Billy Gohl Collection, Aberdeen Historical Museum, Aberdeen, Washington (Hereafter AHM); *Grays Harbor Post*, 8, 15 February 1908.

and Italian birth numbered over four thousand, approximately twelve percent of the region's population. Of these groups, the 1,685 Finnish Americans represented the largest immigrant group in Grays Harbor, while most of the 1,359 “Austrians” were in fact Croatian Americans.¹⁸

With little access to trade unions, immigrant workers found alternative methods of political and community activism, forming their own institutions and pursuing their own activities to protect their class interests. Grays Harbor immigrants founded food and mercantile cooperatives, insurance associations, sewing clubs, and their own language branches of the Socialist Party of America (SPA). These groups found strength in their distinctive cultural activities based their halls, picnics, and singing and drama clubs.¹⁹ Largely ignored by trade unions, Harbor immigrants nonetheless rose up against their employers, declaring a series of non-union strikes during the early twentieth century. Between 1904 and 1912, unorganized mill hands struck seven times at a total of fifty lumber mills in Aberdeen and Hoquiam.²⁰ These were the first strikes on the Harbor led “from below,” by the lowest-paid, “unskilled” immigrant workers, and were likewise the first to unite workers in inter-ethnic and inter-craft alliances. As this chapter and those that follow will illustrate, it was the mass, inter-ethnic protests of radical, non-union laborers that animated the mass struggles in the Grays Harbor lumber industry during the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s.

¹⁸ United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County; Joe Randich, “Austria-Hungary,” in “Chehalis County Nationality Survey, 1848-1915,” Pacific Northwest History Collection, ATL.

¹⁹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 17 April 1912.

²⁰ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 3 March; 19 April 1904; 9 August 1904; 18, 22, 24 July 1905; *Hoquiam Washingtonian*, 11, 18 August 1904; *Aberdeen Herald*, 20, 24 July 1905; 15 May 1910; *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 May; 3 July 1909; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 31 May; 1, 2, 3 June 1909; 18 May 1910; Dreyfus, “Reds, Whites, and Greeks”; Goings, “Free Speech and Industrial Unionism.”

In Grays Harbor the fortunes of the working-class left were closely tied to Finnish-American socialists, or “Red” Finns, as they were commonly known. Almost totally ignored by AFL craft unions and written off as a separate race by the middle class, Finns were the most militant and radical members of the Harbor working class.²¹ Hopeful of gaining a modicum of respectability and permanence for their leftist causes in the community, Finnish-American radicals in Aberdeen and Hoquiam incorporated several of their institutions with the State of Washington. These included the Hoquiam Finnish Workingman’s Association Ahjola in 1909, two Finnish socialist sick and funeral societies in 1910-1911, and the Finnish Socialist Club of Aberdeen in 1911.²² Already in 1904-1906, when the number of Finns living in Grays Harbor was in the hundreds rather than thousands, Hoquiam and Aberdeen socialists fielded Finnish-American socialist candidates for local elections.²³ Six years later, Finns had gained a minor role on the SPA slate, nearly electing two Finnish-American socialists to the Aberdeen city council.²⁴ Finns were consistently the first group of workers to walk off the job during the strikes of the early twentieth century, a fact recognized by W. B. Mack, manager of the Slade Lumber Company, who agreed to end a 1905 strike at his mill but declared “all

²¹ See, for instance, David Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America’s Immigrants Became White, the Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 64; F. W. Rudler and G. G. Chisholm *Europe* (London: Edward Stanford, 55 Charing Cross, S. W., 1885), 576; Augustus Henry Keane, *Ethnology* (London: C. J. Clay and Sons, 1901), 295, 301, 308.

²² Articles of Incorporation of Hoquiam Finnish Workingman’s Association Ahjola, 21 April 1909, Grays Harbor Auditor, Articles of Incorporation, Box 6, No 516, SWA; Articles of Incorporation of the Finnish Socialist Sick and Funeral Society of Washington, 21 March 1910, Harbor Auditor, Articles of Incorporation, Box 7, No. 568, SWA; Articles of Incorporation of the Finnish Socialist Sick and Funeral Society of Washington, 9 October 1910, Harbor Auditor, Articles of Incorporation, Box 7, No. 642, SWA; Articles of Incorporation of Finnish Socialist Club of Aberdeen, 2 February 1911, Grays Harbor Auditor, Articles of Incorporation, Box 7, No. 618.

²³ Betty Charette, “Finns in Aberdeen: Written for the Polson Museum, Hoquiam, Washington, 1984,” Pacific Northwest Collection, ATL; *Grays Harbor Post*, 15 December 1906. This listed approximately 500 Finns living “in the area” in 1905.

²⁴ *Grays Harbor Post*, 6 April 1912.

right, but . . . I want men who can speak the English language,” a clear swipe at the Finns who dominated the strikers’ ranks.²⁵

While the Finns’ militancy aggravated Harbor employers, it impressed their fellow workers, even those hailing from the far left of the political spectrum, such as members of the syndicalist IWW. Detecting among the Harbor Finns the seeds of an IWW movement, Wobbly organizer Fred Heselwood stated, “In the matter of organization in the northwest for the coming year, I believe the most effective work can be done among the lumber workers, both in the woods and in the saw mills. The Pacific coast especially offers the greatest inducement, owing to the great number of Finnish workers employed, and as a great majority of these men are revolutionarily inclined, they are very susceptible to industrial unionism.”²⁶

Between 1900 and 1910 Finns grew to become the largest foreign-born group in Chehalis (Grays Harbor) County. They remained as such for decades thereafter. Finns were undoubtedly “new immigrants,” the great majority of whom traveled to the US after 1890.²⁷ Only 165 Finnish Americans lived in Chehalis (Grays Harbor) County in 1900, while a ten-fold increase had occurred by the end of the next decade.²⁸ The Harbor’s Finns were clustered in several ethnic enclaves known as “Finn Towns.” The enclaves consisted of four roughly defined sections of the twin cities, with three located along the Chehalis and Wishkah rivers in Aberdeen and one between Eighth and Eleventh Streets

²⁵ *Aberdeen Herald*, 24 July 1905.

²⁶ *Industrial Union Bulletin* (Chicago), 28 September 1907.

²⁷ Reino Kero, “Migration Traditions from Finland to North America,” in *A Century of European Migrations, 1830-1930*, ed. Rudolph J. Vecoli and Suzanne M. Sinke (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 111-133; Hummasti, *Finnish Radicals*, 15-16; A. William Høglund, *Finnish Immigrants in America, 1880-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), 121-123.

²⁸ Smits, “The Finns in Hoquiam,” 2.

in Hoquiam.²⁹ The largest concentrations of Finns lived in east and south Aberdeen in the vicinity of numerous sawmills.³⁰ This placed most in Aberdeen's first and second city wards, where Finns constituted twenty-four and nine percent of the population respectively in 1910.³¹ Most of the Harbor's Finnish men worked in the lumber industry as loggers and mill hands. Domestic service was the largest occupation for wage-earning Finnish women: thirty-three female Finns cleaned Aberdeen boarding houses, hotels, and single family residences in 1910. Many of these women worked in the homes of the Harbor's wealthiest residents, including lumbermen A. J. West and Robert Lytle, and attorney W. H. Abel.³² Each of the Finnish enclaves also contained several small businesses where Finnish was the main language spoken.³³

Despite their relevance to the local economy, few Finnish-American workers belonged to labor unions before 1910. This was not due to any explicit ban on Finnish membership in unions, but because most Finns labored in so-called unskilled jobs such as mill hands and loggers, and workers in these occupations rarely belonged to unions. For instance, in Aberdeen's First Ward, which contained the highest concentration of Finnish immigrants in Chehalis (Grays Harbor) County, 243 out of the 383 Finnish immigrants who worked outside of the home listed their occupation as "laborer," and practically all of these laborers listed their workplace as a "saw mill." With the sole exception of those

²⁹ Smits, "The Finns in Hoquiam"; Charette, "The Finns in Aberdeen Before 1915."

³⁰ *Aberdeen Herald*, 16 May 1910; Sanborn Map Company, *Aberdeen 1906*, Proquest Sanborn Map Collection, presented in the Digital Sanborn Maps Collection, 1867-1970.

³¹ United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County, City of Aberdeen.

³² Julianna Niemim Tipton, "Bits and Pieces of My Childhoods," *East Aberdeen Finns: Grays Harbor County, Washington*, Published by Finnish-American Historical Society of the West 25:1 (December 1998): 29; United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County, City of Aberdeen; Smits, Fisher, and Kari, "The Finns in Hoquiam"; Goings, "Hall Syndicalism," 25.

³³ Charette, "Finns in Aberdeen"; Smits, Fisher, and Kari, "The Finns in Hoquiam."

who belonged to the IWW's revolutionary lumber unions, no lumber mill hands belonged to labor unions before 1912. Additionally, the next two most common sources of income for First Ward Finns were logging and fishing, neither of which were represented by craft unions during the early twentieth century on the Harbor.³⁴

Like most lumber workers, Finnish-American mill hands worked long hours in treacherous conditions for low wages. Until strikes led by the IWW forced Pacific Northwest lumber employers to grant the eight-hour day, lumber workers worked ten hours per day as a rule. For example, a 1906 survey by the Washington State Bureau of Labor revealed that workers at the twenty-nine lumber manufacturing firms in Grays Harbor worked an average of ten hours per day.³⁵ The men who worked these jobs were in constant danger from various workplace hazards, such as swirling saws and falling boards of lumber. The dangers were made all too clear to Anvit Sidiy, a Greek-American mill hand, who was killed when an edgerman at the mill "placed a board in position, which caught in the saw, and was hurled over the saws, a distance of forty feet, striking the unfortunate man in the abdomen."³⁶ Despite the long hours and dangerous working conditions, mill laborers such as Sidiy received only a paltry compensation for their work. Aberdeen mill hands earned an average of between \$1.75 and \$2 per day in the decade between 1900 and 1910.³⁷ By comparison, the daily wages earned by Grays Harbor hod carriers, carpenters, and printers were \$3.50, \$3.60, and 4.50 respectively.³⁸

Dr. Herman Titus, a prominent Washington State socialist, visited the Harbor and

³⁴ United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County, City of Aberdeen, First Ward.

³⁵ State of Washington, *Fifth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 239.

³⁶ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 16 September 1905.

³⁷ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 18 July 1905; *Aberdeen Herald*, 22 July 1905; *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 May 1909.

³⁸ State of Washington, *Seventh Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 47, 55, 72.

described the living conditions of the lumber workers' families. He wrote, "I have seen children -- sons and daughters of the working mill hands -- come to the back yard of the hotel and pick old scraps of meat and bread from the garbage cans."³⁹ Many male immigrants lived in large boardinghouses alongside their fellow countrymen. One such structure belonged to the Johnsons, a Finnish-American family, on Marion Street in south Aberdeen. Evret Johnson, the father and "head" of the family, worked as a sawmill laborer, as did the seven adult male Finnish-American boarders who lived in the Johnson household.⁴⁰ An even larger Finnish boardinghouse was built in Hoquiam during the early twentieth century, and in a commonly reproduced image, the three-story building is featured with its several dozen residents posing on its porch and balcony.⁴¹ The bare subsistence wages earned by Finnish mill hands even made an impression on employers and their allies in the press. During a lumber strike in May 1909, W. B. Mack, manager of the Slade mill, admitted that "it is practically impossible to live on \$1.75 a day."⁴²

Few Finnish laborers found prosperity in the Grays Harbor mills, but many did find themselves drawn to the radical socialist politics that shaped their worldviews. Representative of this large body of radical Finnish workers was Leonard Turi, a first-generation Finnish-American mill laborer who lived in an east Aberdeen boardinghouse.⁴³ Turi was a working-class radical, but like most politically active Harbor immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, he was not a member of a craft union and he did not utilize the mainstream labor movement to advance his political

³⁹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 15 March 1912.

⁴⁰ United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County, City of Aberdeen.

⁴¹ *Tyomies-Eteenpain, 1903-1973: Seventieth Anniversary Souvenir Journal* (Superior, WI: Tyomies Society, n.d.), 10.

⁴² *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 May 1909.

⁴³ United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County, City of Aberdeen.

aims. Instead, Turi served as one of the leaders of the Aberdeen socialist movement during the first two decades of the twentieth century.⁴⁴ Erkkio (Erik) Himango, an east Aberdeen Finn and yardman at a local sawmill, followed a path similar to Turi's. Himango was one of five founding trustees for the Finnish Socialist Sick and Funeral Benefit Association of America, a leftist insurance organization based in Aberdeen. One of the association's stated purposes was "to unite fraternally for mutual benefit, protection, improvement, education, and for the promotion of friendship and social intercourse, the male and female membership of the Finnish Socialist organization of America."⁴⁵ Like Turi, there is no evidence that Himango belonged to or acted under the auspices of a craft union, but instead operated in a political sphere that he and his fellow immigrants could mold to their own talents and interests.

Some Finns did work in unionized trades and of these no doubt some paid their union dues and attended meetings of their local. In Washington State, for example, in 1912, at the peak of state SPA strength, 121 of Washington's 1,062 Finnish socialists -- roughly 11 percent -- were union members.⁴⁶ Forty-four Finns living in Aberdeen's First Ward in 1910 worked as longshoremen, sailors, carpenters, teamsters, painters, and bartenders, all of which were highly unionized trades on the Harbor during the early twentieth century, while two of the eighty-two Hoquiam shingle weavers in 1910 were likewise born in Finland.⁴⁷ Although the presence of nonunion firms such as the Grays Harbor Stevedore Corporation, which hired nonunion longshoremen, makes it impossible

⁴⁴ Elis Sulkanen, ed., *Amerikan Suomalaisen Työväenliikkeen historia* (Fitchburg, MA: Amerikan Suomalainen Kansanvallen Liitto ja Raivaaja Publishing Company, 1951), 467.

⁴⁵ Articles of Incorporation of the Finnish Socialist Sick and Funeral Benefit Association of America.

⁴⁶ Aku Rissanen, *Suomalaisten Sosialistiosastojen ja Työväenyhdistysten viidennen: Pöytäkirja, 1-5, 7-10 p. kesäkuuta, 1912* (Fitchburg, MA: Suomalainen Sosialisti Kustannus Yhtiö, 1912), 51-52.

⁴⁷ United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County, Cities of Hoquiam and Aberdeen.

to determine who of this group belonged to unions and who instead worked in partially unionized industries for non-union firms, membership lists for certain Aberdeen unions do reveal a small minority of unionists with Finnish surnames. A 1906 list of the sixty-eight members of the Aberdeen longshoremen's union reveals the names of Finnish Americans John Hegg and Gust Letonen.⁴⁸ Ida Kanppa, an Aberdeen Finn, belonged to the local laundry workers' union until her "hand [was] crushed in machinery," forcing her to retire from laundry work and subsist on insurance funds provided by the union.⁴⁹

Mere inclusion in a heavily unionized trade or even membership in a craft union did not guarantee that immigrant workers shared any great affinity for that union. Craft unions were dominated by an entrenched leadership of white men born in the US who generally pursued policies that favored the interests of those union brothers who shared their ethnic backgrounds. Union leaders on the Harbor, as across the nation, were mostly of native-born Americans and men from northern and western Europe.⁵⁰ For the year 1908, only one of eighty-three Grays Harbor union officials had a surname of Finnish origin, Swan Lilja of the Pacific Coast Maritime Federation.⁵¹ While there is no evidence that Harbor unions officially barred immigrants from joining their unions, certain of the unionists' actions were bound to make foreign-born laborers feel unwelcome. For

⁴⁸ *C. F. Drake and H. Van Tassel, Partners, doing business as Grays Harbor Stevedore Company v. Aberdeen Branch Sailors Union of the Pacific, and Wm. Gohl, Agent, and each and all of the members of the said union, also, Longshoremen's Union Local No. 2, Charles Larsen, President thereof; A. Jonas, Recording Secretary; M. Ingebrigtsen, Walking Delegate, and Andrew Nelsen, Pete Wilson, Emil Anderson, H.L. Green, members of said union, also all other members of said Longshoremen's Union Local No. 2, whose names are unknown to plaintiffs*, No. 6431, Superior Court of the State of Washington, for Chehalis County (1906), SWA. A list of members in the Aberdeen laundry workers' union appeared in the *Grays Harbor Post* and included the names of Lizzie Lomoma and Josephine Mononen, two women whose surnames indicate that they were most likely Finns. Neither of these two women's names appeared in the 1910 census.

⁴⁹ State of Washington, *Sixth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Factory Inspection, 1907-1908* (Olympia: C. W. Gorham, Public Printer, 1908), 42.

⁵⁰ See Chapters 4 and 5. See also Warren R. Van Tine, *Making of the Labor Bureaucrat: Union Leadership in the United States, 1870-1920* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1973), 10-14.

⁵¹ *Polk's Cities Directory for Grays Harbor*, 1908, 43-44, 304-305;

example, the *Coast Seamen's Journal* and the *Shingle Weaver*, official organs of the SUP and ISWUA, were both printed solely in English. Additionally, speeches made at Harbor trade union meetings and celebrations were occasionally reproduced in the local labor press, as when "Brother C. O. Young . . . a fluent speaker," addressed the HTLC in February 1906 or "J. G. Brown delivered the oration of the day to an appreciative audience in front of the Hotel Hoquiam" during the 1906 Labor Day festivities.⁵² However, not once in the entire labor coverage reported by the pro-union *Grays Harbor Post* prior to 1910 were non-English speeches reported. Furthermore, the Washington State Bureau of Labor, presided over by avid union supporter William Blackman, referred to Finns and Greeks as separate "races," ones distinct from races such as "Scandinavian" and "English."⁵³ In short, at least some members and leaders of Washington State unions considered "new" immigrants to be an "other" and these same unionists made little to no accommodations for the benefit for their fellow Finnish unionists and potential recruits.

By marginalizing the large body of working-class Finns, the local labor movement reflected the dominant racial ideology of their era. Finns, while light-haired and light-skinned, were not Nordic peoples and were widely perceived by early twentieth century social scientists to be of a different race. Through the mainstream press and eugenicist propagandists, dominant ideas of the "essential Finn" were able to be transmitted throughout the US, repeated by local elites and intellectuals, and judging from Finns' lack of acceptance in unions and non-Finn neighborhoods, at least partly accepted by the native-born working class. As historian Gary Kaunonen noted, "Finns

⁵² *Grays Harbor Post*, 17 February; 8 September 1906.

⁵³ State of Washington, *Fifth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 259.

became well known for their knife fighting skills, especially after a long day of binge drinking at the local saloon,” while sociologist Peter Kivisto remarked that Finns were widely perceived as “violence prone revolutionaries.”⁵⁴ Eschewing stories on the rich cultural production going on at the Finn halls, in their cooperatives, and among local Finnish entrepreneurs, the four major Aberdeen and Hoquiam newspapers stuck to stories praising when Finnish “Foreigners Go Home” and referring to the numerous, radically inclined Finns as “undesirables.”⁵⁵ Indeed, Finns appeared in the press most often as the perpetrators of stabbings, the hapless victims of industrial violence, or as drunken laborers who wandered off one of the Harbor’s docks to their watery deaths. To Grays Harbor elites, Finnish-American men appeared as “angry,” “wild eyed,” and strongly associated with alcoholism and drunkenness.⁵⁶ One news piece illustrated the treatment afforded Finnish Americans, whose individual traits were swallowed up inside the “essential Finn” caricature. It read, “Julius Lehtonen cut the throat of a Finn. . . . Of four men arrested on suspicion in connection with the knifing of a Finn early yesterday morning, one has been positively identified by the victim as his assailant, and other evidence held by the officers makes the case complete.”⁵⁷ The *Grays Harbor Post* mostly confined its discussions of Finnish Americans to “Fighting Finns” such as Otto

⁵⁴ Gary Kaunonen, *The Finns of Michigan* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2009), 15-16; Peter Kivisto, “The Decline of the Finnish American Left, 1925-1945,” *International Migration Review* 17:1 (Spring 1983): 68.

⁵⁵ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 30 April 1913.

⁵⁶ Cited in *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 4 May; 5 July 1906; 4 February 1913. Considering that they were the largest European ethnic group in Grays Harbor during the early twentieth century, the utter silence the mainstream newspapers handed Finnish-American residents of the county is truly astounding. Along with the dearth of feature articles about the Finns -- excepting death notices and stories about drunken rampages -- there were practically no notices listed in the *Daily World*, *Herald*, *Post*, or *Washingtonian* for Finnish church or fraternal services during the first decade of the twentieth century.

⁵⁷ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 6 July 1906. See also John Ilmari Kolehmainen, *A History of the Finns in Ohio, Western Pennsylvania, and West Virginia* (Painesville: Ohio Finnish-American Historical Society, 1977).

Satro, who made front-page news for attacking an Aberdeen police officer, smashing his nose “into a jelly.”⁵⁸

While Finnish-American workers were lumped together as a single “type” of person, Finnish leftists were singled out as a separate race. Finnish-American radicals, in fact, offer the clearest example of the relationship in the US between political radicalism and the racialization process. Across the nation Finnish socialists were known as “Red Finns,” a reference to the color red in socialist flags, but also to the connection made in the minds of American elites between Finnish and Indian “savages.”⁵⁹ Indeed, before 1910 it was common for social scientists to refer to Finns as a separate race, part of “Homo Mongolicus” and the Finno-Tatar “family.”⁶⁰ After leading a strike at the Mesabi iron range of Minnesota, Finnish miners were castigated as “a race that tries to take advantage of the companies at every opportunity and are not to be trusted.”⁶¹ Finnish Americans were referred to as “Jackpine savages” and Mongolians. The latter identification was so strong, in fact, that in 1907 nativist employers attempted to halt Finnish immigration into the US by invoking Asian exclusion legislation.⁶² Furthermore, when these restrictions failed to bar Finnish entry into the US, in the words of historian David Roediger, “looser and more local racializations of Finnish labor militants did matter, even at the level of governmental policies toward them.”⁶³ Such policies clearly mattered in Grays Harbor, where, following a mass strike of lumber workers led by the

⁵⁸ *Grays Harbor Post*, 6 May 1911.

⁵⁹ Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*, 64.

⁶⁰ Rudler and Chisholm, *Europe*, 576; Keane, *Ethnology*, 295, 301, 308.

⁶¹ Cited in Wayne Gudmundson and Suzanne Winckler, *Testaments in Wood: Finnish Log Structures at Embarrass, Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1991), 22.

⁶² Kivisto, “The Decline of the Finnish American Left,” 68.

⁶³ Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*, 63.

IWW in the spring of 1912, the Aberdeen “Red” Finns had their hall closed by the Aberdeen municipal government because of the Finns’ support of the strike.⁶⁴

Indeed, in Grays Harbor, to be a “Red” Finn was to be the target of special abuse by local employers and some members of the middle class. In one especially poignant example of the relationship between radicalism and otherness, Aberdeen Reverend Charles McDermoth, linked the socialist Finns to “beer drinking” and even child molestation. When in 1906 the socialist Finns planned to break off from the Aberdeen Finnish temperance society to build their own hall, what eventually became the “Red” Finn hall, the Reverend, with full support of the Aberdeen city council, protested that the hall would “become a pitfall for young girls,” who might “be led astray at a place of this kind.”⁶⁵ After an indignant response from Finnish-American residents, who argued that the new hall was to be used for political and social functions, they were permitted to build Aberdeen’s socialist Finn hall, thus applying the stamp of political radicalism and racial otherness to the space occupied by the immigrant socialists.⁶⁶

McDermoth’s campaign against the “Red” Finn hall did not only reflect his concern with the plight of Harbor youth. Instead, McDermoth knew full well that the members of the group he opposed were the Finnish socialists of Aberdeen, the largest and best-organized group of radicals in the region. The threat posed by the radical Finns was so acute because no group in American history has been more strongly attracted to socialist and syndicalist ideas, joined radical organizations in greater numbers, and

⁶⁴ Rissanen, *Suomalaisten Sosialistiosastojen ja Työväenyhdistysten viidennen*, 51-52; *Grays Harbor Post*, 6 April 1912.

⁶⁵ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 3, 4 May 1906. For more information on McDermoth, see Van Syckle, *River Pioneers*, 186, 221, 235; Hunt and Kaylor, *Washington, West of the Cascades*, 215.

⁶⁶ “Finns of Hoquiam and Aberdeen, Grays Harbor County, Washington,” *Published by the Finnish-American Historical Society of the West* 15:1 (October 1987): 18.

refused to cower before the boss as often as the Finns.⁶⁷ Finnish immigrants, although one of the smaller immigrant groups in the US, comprised one of the largest blocs of immigrant socialists in the nation. They formed the Finnish Socialist Federation (FSF) in 1906, one of the many language federations of the SPA. By 1913 the FSF was comprised of 260 local branches and more than 12,000 members. In fact, at their height in membership, Finns represented a full twelve percent of SPA members, making them the largest ethnic group in the party. Their great numbers enabled the FSF to publish three daily newspapers, manage eighty libraries, and own at least seventy-six meeting halls.⁶⁸

“Red” Finns were also a threat to employers’ interests in Grays Harbor because the radical immigrants established a strong base in the community through their political activism, clubs, publications, and halls. Indeed, by supporting and running socialist candidates for local elected office, making their own literature and material culture, staking their claim to public space by building halls and holding street meetings, and striking regularly, these radicals mounted a large and public challenge to employer hegemony in Grays Harbor.

In Aberdeen, the first meeting of Finnish American socialists came on 25 July 1904, when fifteen members came together to form their own Finn socialist club. By that time, Hoquiam’s Finnish socialist local was already more than a year old. The Hoquiam local had a band of its own that played at group functions and hosted prominent

⁶⁷ Some of the best work on Finnish-American radicalism and working-class culture are Kaunonen, *Finns in Michigan*; Karni, “The Founding of the Finnish Socialist Federation and the Minnesota Strike of 1907,” in *For the Common Good: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America* (Superior: Tyomies Society, 1977), 65-86; Hummasti, *Finnish Radicals in Astoria, Oregon*; Reino Nikolai Hannula, *Blueberry God: The Education of a Finnish-American* (San Luis Obispo, CA: Quality Hill Books, 1979).

⁶⁸ Michael M. Passi, “Introduction: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America,” in *For the Common Good: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America*, ed. Michael G. Karni and Douglas J. Ollila, Jr., (Superior, WI: Tyomies Society, 1977), 12.

American radicals, including Eugene Debs and William “Big Bill” Haywood.⁶⁹ Both groups eagerly joined the FSF after its August 1906 formation, a year that also witnessed the construction of the Harbor’s first socialist hall in Aberdeen.⁷⁰ A “Red” Finn hall in Hoquiam followed three years later. Membership in both socialist branches was high. Within two years of its founding the Aberdeen local reported 116 members, and the Hoquiam branch had more than one hundred at its peak between 1912 and 1914.⁷¹

Peak membership for the national FSF came in 1912 when the federation reported 167 locals; four newspapers, three of which were dailies, and none of which registered under two thousand subscribers; ownership of the Work People’s College, a radical workers’ college in Duluth, Minnesota; and thirteen thousand members, a full twelve percent of the entire SPA’s membership.⁷² That same year the Aberdeen local counted 301 members, while those in Hoquiam had 120, making the Grays Harbor locals the first and fifth largest FSF branches in Washington State.⁷³ Showing that their community presence extended well beyond even these impressive figures, a photograph prominently displayed in one national FSF publication of an outdoor gathering of the Aberdeen FSF from 1911, showed no fewer than 242 picnickers seated on a hillside beside a banner

⁶⁹ *Tyomies Kymmenvuotias, 1903-1913* (Hancock, MI: Tyomies Kustannusyhtio, 1913), 147. Hoquiam’s English SPA local was formed in 1900-1901. See *Grays Harbor Post*, 25 February 1905; Sulkanen, *Amerikan Suomalaisen Työväenliikkeen historia*, 466-469; *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 October 1910; *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 May 1909; *Industrial Worker*, 16 November 1911; *Daily Washingtonian*, 7, 11 July 1911; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 24 May 1911.

⁷⁰ Karni, “The Founding of the Finnish Socialist Federation and the Minnesota Strike of 1907,” 66.

⁷¹ Sulkanen, *Amerikan Suomalaisen Työväenliikkeen historia*, 486, 493; Rissanen, *Suomalaisten Sosialistiosastojen ja Työväenyhdistysten viidennen*, 51-52.

⁷² Passi, “Introduction,” 12.

⁷³ *Amerikan S. S. Jarjeston Lansipiirin ensimmäisen piirikokouksen Pöytäkirja, Pidety Astoriassa, OR, huhtik, 21-23, 1911*, 4, 20-25, 34-35, FAA; Rissanen, *Suomalaisten Sosialistiosastojen ja Työväenyhdistysten viidennen: Pöytäkirja, 1-5, 7-10 June 1912* (Fitchburg, Mass.: Suomalainen Sosialisti Kustannus Yhtiö, 1912), 51-52. Significantly, the Seattle FSF counted only 170 members, less than one-half of those in the Harbor towns.

reading “Raiku, Aberdeen, Wash.”⁷⁴ Grays Harbor’s Finnish socialists also gained prestige in the regional and national FSF. They wrote letters and articles, submitted photographs to socialist periodicals like *Toveri* and *Toveritar* in Astoria and *Tyomies* in Hancock, Michigan, and attended the annual conventions of the language section of their political party.⁷⁵

The term “hall socialism” is often used synonymously for Finnish-American socialism, indicating the importance of the group’s cultural and social activities that were held at the so-called “Red” Finn halls. Like halls used by other groups of Finns and Finnish-Americans, including temperance societies and churches, “Red” Finn halls functioned as community centers.⁷⁶ In the Finnish-American communities that dotted the Upper Midwest and Pacific Northwest, these halls were great intellectual centers, housing libraries and reading rooms, theater and scenery, and providing the much needed space for large audiences eager to hear socialist speakers.⁷⁷ Organizations build halls to house meetings, provide space for social events, and store the group’s property. But they also build the structures as symbols of their presence and investment in the community. The desire to appear as permanent, invested members of the community was clearly in the

⁷⁴ Sulkanen, *Amerikan Suomalaisen Tyovaenliikkeen Historia*, 170.

⁷⁵ *Toveri* (Astoria, OR), 8, 15, 21, 25 June 1917; *Toveritar* (Astoria, OR), 15, 22 February; 21 March; 25 April; 23, 30 May; 18 July; 1 August; 12, 26 September 1916; J. F. Maki, “The Finnish Socialist Federation” in *The American Labor Year-Book, 1916*. (NY: Rand School Press, 1916), 130-132; Passi, “Introduction,” 12. Gust Kinnunen and Emil Hendrickson, Finnish-American socialists from Grays Harbor, attended the 1911 convention of western locals of the FSF, held in Astoria, Oregon during 1911. See *Amerikan Suomalainen Kansanvallen Liitto ja Raivaaja Publishing Company*, 1951), 466-469; *Amerikan S. S. Jarjeston Lansipiirin ensimmäisen piirikokouksen Poytakrja, Pidety Astoriassa, OR, huhtik, 21-23, 1911*, 4, 20-25, 34-35, Finnish-American Historical Archives, Finlandia University, Hancock, Michigan (Hereafter FAA); Prominent local socialists like Simon Arra and Lee Liimatainen also gained election to leadership posts. Both men were listed as important socialist leaders in a commemorative edition issued by the FSF in 1951; Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County, City of Aberdeen.

⁷⁶ On the significance of Finnish halls in Finland, see Pekka Gronow, “Popular Music in Finland: A Preliminary Survey,” *Ethnomusicology* 17:1 (January 1973): 52-71.

⁷⁷ On Finn halls, see Kaunonen, *Finns in Michigan*, 67-71; Goings, “Hall Syndicalism,” 18-28.

aim of the “Red” Finns of Aberdeen. The first Grays Harbor Finn hall was built in Hoquiam during 1903 by members of a local Finnish temperance society who rented it to the socialists until Hoquiam “Reds” purchased the hall six years later. Not formed until 1904, the Aberdeen Finnish socialist club built their own “Red” Finn hall in 1906 and enlarged it in 1909.⁷⁸ In these radical spaces Finnish workers met several times per week, discussed jobs, community events, and politics, and formulated the varied responses to a political and socioeconomic system that did not work in their interests. Each time Finnish laborers struck, the men met at their socialist halls to discuss and debate tactics, coordinate picket assignments and negotiation teams, and establish soup kitchens and commissaries. In fact, between 1905 and 1939, practically every group of striking lumber workers -- regardless of ethnicity -- used the friendly confines of the socialist Finn halls as their primary strike headquarters.⁷⁹

The halls, too, were sites of intense cultural production, where working men and women sang, danced, sewed, ate, performed gymnastics, played basketball, practiced for the upcoming theater production, and shared reading materials.⁸⁰ The Aberdeen Finnish socialist hall contained an auditorium complete with a balcony, along with a kitchen, stage, and lodging facilities, so a worker could drink, eat, sleep, play, dance, and listen to a speaker or join in a debate all without leaving his or her hall in the heart of east

⁷⁸ Elis Sulkanen, ed., *Amerikan Suomalaisen Tyovaenliikkeen historia* (Fitchburg, MA: Amerikan Suomalainen Kansanvallen Liitto ja Raivaaja Publishing Company, 1951), 466-469; Charette, “Finns in Aberdeen”; Smits, “The Finns in Hoquiam.”

⁷⁹ On the use of Finn halls as strike headquarters during Grays Harbor labor conflicts, see *Aberdeen Daily World*, 24 March 1912; 9 October 1925; 26 July 1933; *Grays Harbor Post*, 10 October 1925; *Daily Washingtonian*, 26 July 1933. Vigilantes destroyed the Aberdeen Finn hall in December 1939. See Hughes and Saltvig, 104.

⁸⁰ *Amerikan S.S. Jarjeston Lansipiirin ensimmäisen piirikokouksen Poytakrja, Pidety Astoriassa, OR, huhtik, 21-23, 1911*, 4, 20-25, 34-35, FAA.

Aberdeen's Finn Town.⁸¹ One "Red" Finn recalled that the Aberdeen socialist club included "their band, choir, a gymnastics club and a theatrical group with a European-trained director on salary."⁸² When the "Red" Finn hall in Aberdeen was closed by city officials during the 1912 IWW lumber strike, Harbor socialists requested a court injunction against the city, claiming that "two Socialist orders, a Finnish Sunday school, the Finnish band, the women's committee of the Socialist party, and diverse other organizations are in the habit of meeting regularly in the "Red" Finnish hall, and that great mental, moral, and spiritual 'suffering' has been caused by the act of the city administration in nailing up the doors of the resort."⁸³

Women were full partners to their male comrades in the Finnish-American left on the Harbor. Of the 421 Grays Harbor FSF members in 1912, 103 -- roughly one in four -- were women. Female Finns participated in and led socialist auxiliaries, such as sewing clubs, theater groups, and women's committees.⁸⁴ One significant site of women's leadership in the movement was their work with *Toveritar*, women's newspaper of the FSF published in Astoria, Oregon, only a short distance away from the Harbor. Founded in 1911, *Toveritar* had by 1915 boosted its subscription list to five thousand, and in the words of historian Mari Jo Buhle, the "publication [was] not merely one for women but women's own paper."⁸⁵ As Buhle's statement indicated, female Finns were not ancillary to the "real" socialist movement, but integral parts of the whole. Photographic evidence indicates the great presence of Finnish women at socialist gatherings, including at hall

⁸¹ Charette, "The Finns in Aberdeen."

⁸² Charette, "The Finns in Aberdeen."

⁸³ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 17 April 1912.

⁸⁴ Aku, *Suomalaisten Sosialistiosastojen ja Työväenyhdistysten viidennen: Pöytäkirja*, 51-52.

⁸⁵ Mari Jo Buhle, *Women and American Socialism, 1870-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 303-304; Hilja Karvonen, "Three Proponents of Women's Rights," in *Women Who Dared: The History of Finnish-American Women*, ed. Carl Ross and K. Marianne Wargelin Brown (St. Paul, MN: Immigration History Research Center, 1986), 126-128.

meetings and picnics.⁸⁶ “Red” Finn women also emerged as outspoken, militant strike supporters and picketers. During the 1912 IWW lumber strike on the Harbor, Finnish women were, in the words of the pro-striker *Seattle Star*, bearing the “brunt of mill strike” by performing the majority of the picketing and receiving the majority of beatings from local police and vigilantes.⁸⁷

Workplace militancy and inter-ethnic solidarity were no less important to immigrant workers than was their activism within socialist organizations. Indeed, worker tactics such as strikes and refusing to perform undesirable tasks on the job were all practiced by the Harbor’s “new” immigrants with some regularity in the first decade of the twentieth century.⁸⁸ Between 1905 and 1914, the center of immigrant militancy was the S. E. Slade Lumber Company, Aberdeen’s largest mill and one that relied heavily on the “unskilled” labor of Finnish mill hands.⁸⁹ Whether because of low wages, Slade manager Mack’s notorious austerity, or the presence of Finnish ethnic solidarity complementing their shared class experiences, Slade’s mill hands were the most assertive group of non-union workers on the Harbor, leading strikes at their own plant in 1905, 1909, 1910, and 1912, all of which escalated into wider conflicts at other mills.⁹⁰

On 18 July 1905, the nonunion mill hands at the West and Slade Lumber Company mill in Aberdeen struck for a return to the \$2 minimum wage that had been lowered to

⁸⁶ Sulkanen, *Amerikan Suomalaisen Työväenliikkeen Historia*, 170; Photograph of Aberdeen, Washington Finnish Socialist Club members, Finnish American Socialist Photograph Collection, FAA.

⁸⁷ *Seattle Star*, 13 April 1912. See also Chapter 7.

⁸⁸ *Hoquiam Sawyer*, 12 May 1905. See below, pp. 179-188.

⁸⁹ Evidence for this argument comes from my analysis of the surnames of Slade workers collected from the *Polk’s Cities Directory of Grays Harbor*, 1910, which listed 347 employees of the S. E. Slade Lumber Company mill in Aberdeen for the year 1910, many of whom had Finnish surnames.

⁹⁰ *Aberdeen Herald*, 20, 24 July 1905; 15 May 1910; *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 May; 3 July 1909; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 18 May 1910; Chapter 7.

\$1.75 two years earlier.⁹¹ From the West and Slade, the mill strike spread throughout Aberdeen, eventually stopping production at six mills, as well as the Lindstrom shipyard, which was forced to close for want of lumber.⁹² The conflict had implications far beyond a simple wage demand. Strikers held mass meetings and strike parades formed “in replica of a miniature Chicago teamsters’ strike,” cooperated with other immigrant groups, and insisted that their demands also include a nine-hour day, then unheard of in lumber production.⁹³ The strike also necessitated a great deal of coordination, as targeted mills were rushed by flying squadrons formed by strikers, and meetings were held at the Aberdeen Finn hall.⁹⁴

Finnish Americans constituted a militant wing of the strike force. Employers were fully aware of this fact, and did their best to eliminate the Finnish militants from their workplaces. On 22 July, Manager Mack, speaking on behalf of the united mill owners of Aberdeen, offered to the strikers their proposed \$2 wage settlement. However, he also took time to hang a sign reading, “WANTED. 100 Men @ \$2.00 and up per day. Only those who understand and speak the English language need apply. West & Slade Mill CO. W. B. Mack, Mgr.”⁹⁵ The candidly discriminatory nature of this offer and the ethnic composition of the strike force indicated that few in the strikers’ ranks would accept the

⁹¹ Aberdeen mills had promised a return to the \$2 wage when the price of lumber advanced. However, when those conditions were met, most of the mill owners refused to keep their promise unless forced to do so. Notably, the Wilson Brothers mill, which was not struck, maintained the \$2 wage “all along.” *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 18 July 1905; *Aberdeen Herald*, 22 July 1905; *Hoquiam Sawyer*, 21 July 1905.

⁹² *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 20, 22 July 1905. The strikers also tried to spread the strike further, to Aberdeen’s Market mill and several Hoquiam mills. At the former mill, the strike force was repelled by police officers, while other plants, strikers were rebuffed by Hoquiam mill hands who refused to join the strike.

⁹³ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 19 July 1905; *Hoquiam Sawyer*, 21 July 1905; State of Washington, *Fifth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 239; State of Washington, *Eighth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Factory Inspection, 1911-1912* (Olympia: E. L. Boardman, Public Printer, 1912), 112.

⁹⁴ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 19 July 1905. Meetings were held at the Aberdeen Finnish temperance hall, not the “Red” Finn hall, which was not built until 1906.

⁹⁵ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 24 July 1905.

offer. Practically no men showed up for work at the West and Slade, Anderson and Middleton, Western, and Hart and Wood mills, even after an agreement had been reached, and in a meeting of some of the strikers, an 86 to 38 vote repudiated the discriminatory agreement.⁹⁶ Indeed, angered by receiving only the promise of future raises, as well as bosses' harangues against "a handful of irresponsible agitators, ignorant of the country and its language," the mostly Finnish-immigrant strikers repudiated the agreement, demanding an immediate wage hike.⁹⁷ The workers' refusal to compromise was blamed on "a few agitators" by one newspaper, and the work of "hotheads who became intoxicated with their Saturday's success" by another.⁹⁸ The *Aberdeen Herald* attacked the Finns for their intransigence, writing that the lone holdouts in a compromise settlement reached came from mills that "employ the greatest number of yardmen, a majority of whom are Finns, unable to speak the English language."⁹⁹ Nonetheless, the settlement held and the strikers returned to their jobs beginning 29 July under the \$2 minimum wage. Unfortunately for Mack, who intended to use language restrictions to exclude the "agitators" and "hotheads" who he and the local press believed were responsible for the strike, he and his fellow employers were unable to replace the cheap labor of immigrants and thus the requirements for English-only workers had little impact on the composition of the Harbor's workforce.¹⁰⁰

Like the 1905 strike, the inter-ethnic lumber mill strikes of 1909 and 1910 were brought about by lumber workers who rose up and demanded higher wages. In June 1909, a strike wave initiated by Aberdeen mill hands swept through the city's entire

⁹⁶ *Aberdeen Herald*, 24 July 1905; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 24 July 1905.

⁹⁷ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 22 July 1909; *Aberdeen Herald*, 24 July 1909.

⁹⁸ *Aberdeen Herald*, 24 July 1905. *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 24 July 1905.

⁹⁹ *Aberdeen Herald*, 24 July 1905.

¹⁰⁰ *Polk's Cities Directory of Grays Harbor*, 1910.

lumber industry, shutting down twelve mills and bringing 2,500 workers out on strike. In this case, wages were a paltry \$1.75 a day for “common” labor at the Slade, American, and several other Aberdeen mills. This was twenty-five cents lower than at Hoquiam mills. Workers targeted only the five mills that had recently reduced the minimum wage from \$2; those that maintained the previous \$2 minimum, notably the Wilson, Aberdeen Lumber and Shingle, and Hart Wood Lumber Company, were spared the initial walkout.¹⁰¹ On 26 May, mill hands walked off the job at the S. E. Slade Lumber Company mill. Pickets marched from mill to mill in Aberdeen, discussing conditions and urging their fellow workers to join the work stoppage. Within two days the Slade and American mills were forced to close, and by Monday, 31 May, the two largest south Aberdeen mills, the Aberdeen Lumber and Shingle Company and Union mills, were closed as well.¹⁰²

From the opening walkout at the strike-plagued Slade mill, this appeared to be much more than an isolated protest against low wages. After stopping production at Mack’s mill, strikers, many of whom were Finnish radicals, swept to the American and Western mills, forming roving pickets and encouraging a city-wide mill strike. The high level of inter-ethnic solidarity also registered with the public. The union newspaper the *Grays Harbor Post* observed that “the Finnish workers of the north side were joined by the Austrian workers of the south side Monday and Tuesday when the men went out at the Union mill and Aberdeen Lumber & Shingle Co.’s plant,” in what was widely seen as

¹⁰¹ Wilson, *From Boats to Board Feet*, 160-161; *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 May; 5 June 1909; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 1, 4 June 1909.

¹⁰² *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 May; 5 June 1909; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 31 May; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 June 1909.

a “sympathetic” strike.¹⁰³ While the historical record on the strike is slim and there is no evidence of the planning that preceded the strike, it was evident that by the opening days of the conflict the strike force was thoroughly organized. Shortly after the first walkout at the Slade mill, strikers had formed a bargaining committee that met with local and state officials, carried out regular meetings at the “Red” Finn hall, and voted as a body on the mill owners’ proposed settlements.¹⁰⁴

Ethnic and craft lines were challenged by the strikers, a multi-ethnic force who worked together to challenge their bosses. Croatian Americans, a second group of “new” immigrants on the Harbor, joined their Finnish fellow workers in this display of independent working-class activism. Croatians began arriving on the Harbor in the 1880s and 1890s. At the turn of the century, they settled in large numbers in South Aberdeen, where many were employed at the Aberdeen Lumber and Shingle Company and Union mills.¹⁰⁵ Croatian Americans had a strong historical identification with left-wing activism in the US. Radical Croatian immigrants formed socialist clubs across the US during the first years of the twentieth century, and along with other South Slavs, formed the South Slavic Socialistic Federation in 1909. Socialist Croatians likewise participated heavily in the inter-ethnic McKees Rock strike of 1909 and Mesabi range strike of 1916, and published at least three Croatian-language IWW newspapers between 1919 and 1925.¹⁰⁶ Grays Harbor Croatians incorporated the Croatian Workingman’s Company in

¹⁰³ *Grays Harbor Post*, 5 June 1909; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 1 June 1909.

¹⁰⁴ *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 May; 5 June 1909.

¹⁰⁵ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 4 June 1909; *Grays Harbor Post*, 5 June 1909; Randich, “Austria-Hungary,” in “Chehalis County Nationality Survey.”

¹⁰⁶ Ivan Cizmic, “Yugoslav Immigrants in the US Labor Movement, 1880-1920,” in *American Labor and Immigration History, 1877-1920s: Recent European Research*, Dirk Hoerder, ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 184-189; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 495, 499; Brissenden, *The IWW*, 396; Kenyon Zimmer, “Anarchist Newspaper Circulation,”

1910 and ran a “Workingman’s store” from its confines.¹⁰⁷ The leftist politics of the Company were revealed during a 1912 lumber strike when it allowed the Grays Harbor Wobblies to use their hall for meetings, a valuable asset considering its location in south Aberdeen amid a heavily working-class immigrant population, composed largely of Finns and Croats.¹⁰⁸

Emboldened by their successes in 1909, a coalition of “new” immigrants again struck Grays Harbor’s lumber mills again less than a year later. In May 1910, Greek and Finnish Americans at the Wilson Brothers mill in Aberdeen walked off the job and issued demands for a twenty-five-cent raise to the daily minimum. The walkout began a concerted effort to, in the words of one reporter, “begin a strike for a raise that is to extend to all the mills if this proves successful.”¹⁰⁹ Each of the mills paid between a \$2 and \$2.50 minimum wage, and in each case strikers demanded a raise of 25 cents per day. The strike began at the Wilson mill, and strikers soon spread their strike to the nearby Slade plant.¹¹⁰ In addition, dock workers at the Slade mill halted loading ships, and the strikers received support from the Aberdeen local of the IWW. W. A. Thorn, secretary of the Aberdeen IWW and a longshoreman, wrote to the *Industrial Worker*, “Keep away

<http://katesharpleylibrary.pbworks.com/Anarchist%20newspaper%20circulation>. Accessed 6 November 2009.

¹⁰⁷ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 5 April 1915; Articles of Incorporation for the Croatian Workingman’s Company, 4 March 1910. Grays Harbor County Auditor, Articles of Incorporation, Box 7, Acc. 99-SW-245, File 561, SWA; Randich, “Austria-Hungary,” in “Chehalis County Nationality Survey.”

¹⁰⁸ *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 May 1909; 6 April 1912; Articles of Incorporation for the Croatian Workingman’s Company, 4 March 1910. Grays Harbor County Auditor, Articles of Incorporation, Box 7, Acc. 99-SW-245, File 561, SWA; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 31 May; 1, 2 June 1909; 5 April 1915. Croatian workers in Aberdeen also institutionalized their ethnic and class solidarity by founding the Croatian Workingmen’s Association in 1910 and operating a Croatian Workingmen’s Store in 1915

¹⁰⁹ *Aberdeen Herald*, 16, 19 May 1910.

¹¹⁰ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 18 May 1910.

form Grays Harbor if you believe in better conditions. Saw mill men are on strike at several mills.”¹¹¹

The 1910 strike ended in defeat for the mill workers. Writing “present market conditions will not permit of any raise” and “there is nothing to warrant an increase,” Harbor lumbermen refused to grant the increase and by 23 May enough of the strikers had returned to their jobs for the plants to restart.¹¹² But, their defeat in 1910 proved to be more of a temporary setback than a decisive defeat for the immigrant strikers, and both the militancy and inter-ethnic solidarity of 1910 was manifested in a far larger conflict two years later. In the spring of 1912, during a strike initialized by Greek-American mill hands in Hoquiam, one Wobbly confirmed that the Greeks had firmly established themselves in the militant wing of the Harbor’s immigrant working class:

The Northwestern was the first mill to bring Greeks to Hoquiam and now they want them to leave. Greeks are too revolutionary. Not one of them is scabbing. They repudiate the idea with scorn.

The bosses think they can use the scissorbill to scab on the Greeks and then use the Greeks to scab the scissorbill out of existence, but there is nothing doing. All the strikers realize that the only foreigner they have to fight is the boss.

Yesterday morning four of our pickets were arrested at the Northwestern and the captain, a Greek, had his head split with a hammer in the hands of a scab.¹¹³

The quotation lauding the Greeks’ militancy came during the well-known “War of Grays Harbor,” the month-long strike of lumber and maritime workers and their allies led by the IWW that shut down practically every mill operation and dock in Grays Harbor and nearby Pacific County.¹¹⁴ These alternate currents of radicalism forged by immigrant laborers, rather than the “official” labor movement of craft unions, provided the

¹¹¹ *Industrial Worker*, 4 June 1910. On Thorn, see Chapter 7.

¹¹² *Aberdeen Daily World*, 19, 20, 23 May 1910.

¹¹³ *Industrial Worker*, 28 March 1912.

¹¹⁴ Bruce Rogers, “The War of Gray’s [sic] Harbor,” *International Socialist Review* 12:11 (May 1912): 749-753. Reprint in *The Agitator* (15 January 1912): 1.

foundations upon which the IWW movement was built. Indeed, the immigrants' socialist organizations, hall culture, and inter-ethnic, "mass" militancy each contributed to the Wobbly movement as it developed on the Harbor during the early 1910s. While inter-ethnic radicalism and militancy are commonly associated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations, or, at the earliest, the strikes of the syndicalist IWW in 1912-1913, its roots, as historian Salvatore Salerno has argued, reside much deeper within the world of the immigrant worker.¹¹⁵ In the years following the 1910 mill strike, members of the IWW interacted with and built upon the radical movements and militant traditions forged by immigrant laborers on the Harbor during the previous decade.

¹¹⁵ Salerno, "No God, No Master," 171-188.

CHAPTER VII

WOBBLIES IN THE COMMUNITY

In the spring of 1912, near the close of what had been the largest lumber strike in Pacific Northwest history, Wobbly and Socialist Party of America (SPA) activist Bruce Rogers wrote a personal account of the strike entitled “The War of Gray’s [sic] Harbor.” The article reported many of the travesties committed by the Aberdeen and Hoquiam citizens’ committees, writing that the innumerable abuses looked like “Cripple Creek over again, and growing worse.” But the main subject of the article was the solidarity displayed by the workers, solidarity that Rogers attributed to the presence of an ideology brought to the region by an enlightened group of radical workers:

Came the foreign worker from the three hundred and sixty marks on the compass dial. By night they drank and fought in the saloons of the evil smells, each bellowing his patriot folk song. By day as the barons so wished they worked to excel, in the fool pride of race.

But came a pay day when Ole asked Pierre and Zwobrowski and Garibaldi to have a drink with him down at “The Greek’s.” The night brawls ceased. Arms upon shoulders in a new emotion and that their rough voices might better chord they tried singing the Marselleise together and found the hymn of revolt sounded even better. . . .

. . . Over the Chehalis came One Big Union. It spoke in harsh, unpitying tones in every tongue in Aberdeen. It massed, it solidified and the International was born. Began the strike which is more than a strike and it can’t be settled. It is a mutiny in industry.¹

If Rogers’ account of mass, practically spontaneous conversions to the tenets of syndicalism seem implausible, then the reader has been spared from reading most of the existing scholarship on the IWW. In fact, scholars from many intellectual traditions have agreed with Rogers about the nature of the conversions brought about by the Wobblies.² Typically, accounts of IWW strikes read as follows: itinerant IWW organizers led rank-

¹ Rogers, “The War of Gray’s [sic] Harbor,” 749-753.

² See, for instance, Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*; Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 4, 178; Conlin, *Bread and Roses Too*.

and-file workers into rebellion; IWWs and supporters were subjected to a variety of repressive measures; after the Wobblies departed town, these same workers were left hapless, forced to return to their jobs on unfavorable terms with no leaders to guide them elsewhere; the Wobbly organizers, as out of touch with local circumstances as ever, lick their wounds and move on to their next battle. Historian Robert L. Tyler boiled down the IWW activities in the towns of the Pacific Northwest to a single example he used to minimize the significance of the union. In Coos Bay, Oregon, during May 1913, an IWW strike began “as usual, in a spontaneous protest over a particular grievance, the laying-off of a number of IWW agitators.” A day later, “for good measure,” the Wobblies extended the strike to a number of logging camps in the region and as Tyler explained, “the IWW designated their protest a strike and listed a number of demands such as higher wages and better living conditions in the logging camps.” Within a few short weeks, however, the strike had ended, the Wobblies left town, and with their “rude and heathenish doctrine of class division” removed, labor relations in the town returned to their traditional level of harmony.³ Similar observations have been made about Wobbly actions throughout much of the Pacific Northwest.⁴ Consider how Philip S. Foner depicted the conclusion to the 1912 Grays Harbor lumber strike. “The IWW did not officially call off the strike until May 7. Although the strikers’ wage demands were partially met, hours of work remained the same. But the IWW had been thrown out of

³ Robert L. Tyler, “Comment,” in *Failure of A Dream? Essays in the History of American Socialism* (revised edition, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), ed. John H. M. Laslett and Seymour Martin Lipset, 208; and *Rebels of the Woods*, 59-60. See also, Conlin, ed., *At the Point of Production*. For a history of the Coos Bay, Oregon, region, see William G. Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise: Coos Bay, Oregon* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988).

⁴ Tyler himself was an early proponent of this view, extending his conclusions north and east from the coastal town of Coos Bay, Oregon, to Pacific Northwest towns like Aberdeen, Hoquiam, Raymond, Spokane, Everett, and Centralia.

Grays Harbor.”⁵ As Tyler and Foner saw it, these radicals entered a town where they felt a strike was at hand, broke laws and made outlandish demands, then rode the rails to the next town after having contributed nothing to the locality or its residents. According to this view, the Wobblies were composed primarily of migratory male laborers who lived in a “culture of poverty,” one where families, stability, and “normal sex” were all lacking. In the extreme, the Wobblies were alleged to be composed of a “disproportionate number of feeble-minded, neurotic runaways from middle-class homes, wife-deserters, unattached aliens, and the variously deracinated,” a viewpoint widely propagated by early twentieth century social scientists.⁶ This view was exemplified by historian Elizabeth Faue, who argued unequivocally that, “as a member of the lumpenproletariat, the Wobbly neither respected nor engaged in the building of community.”⁷

The view of the IWWs as but a handful of radical, relatively ineffectual rabble-rousers fails to explain the presence of the Wobblies on at least four main counts. First, it does not account for any long-term movement building accomplished by the IWW. Second, this methodology looks at only the so-called leaders, those well-known activists for whom the migratory agitator study fits best. Third, it ignores fifty-plus years of social history, and nearly fifty years of Marxist historiography, which has conclusively demonstrated that, in E. P. Thompson’s words, “We cannot understand class unless we

⁵ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol., 4, 224. Writing nearly forty years later, Philip Dreyfus repeated Foner’s conclusions, “In 1911 and 1912, the IWW conducted an ultimately disastrous series of free speech fights and a strike in Grays Harbor, Washington, which forced the much maligned and defeated organization to withdraw to Centralia.” Philip Dreyfus, “Nature, Militancy, and the Western Worker: Socialist Shingles, Syndicalist Spruce,” *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 1:3 (Fall 2004): 85.

⁶ Dubofsky, *Hard Work: The Making of Labor History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 69; Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 25. The most complete illustration of the psychological explanation of the IWW came from Carleton Parker, *The Casual Laborer: And Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920). See also Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 148-149; Howd, 46-49.

⁷ Faue, *Community of Suffering and Struggle*, 11.

see it as a social and cultural formation, arising from processes which can only be studied as they work themselves out over a considerable historical period.”⁸ To drop in on the Grays Harbor workers in 1911, 1912, 1917, or any one of several points, amid the clamor of a major strike, is to lose sight of the fact that class is a social relationship, and strikes -- as with other overt forms of class conflict -- cannot be understood without the historically grounded study of those relationships as they built towards the climactic struggle in question. Fourth, it ignores the importance of workers’ indigenous radical traditions that they contributed to the Wobbly movement. In Grays Harbor, as in localities across the nation, the IWW was made through a fusion of indigenous and external radical traditions that collectively challenged early twentieth century industrial capitalism. The Harbor was an ethnically and occupationally diverse area and by drawing members from a wide range of ethnic groups and jobs -- “all nationalities from Greek to American,” in the words of the *Industrial Worker* -- the IWW was reflective of the Harbor’s working-class community unity at large.⁹ Thus by minimizing the community-centeredness and the movement building of the Wobblies, scholars have been able to minimize the radicals’ long-term importance in the Pacific Northwest labor movement.

This problem in the historiography of the IWW stems from the inability or unwillingness of historians to pay close attention to the links between syndicalism and community. Instead of analyzing the communities that embraced the Wobbly movement, studies of the IWW have focused on the workplace to the near exclusion of all other spheres of working-class activity, arguing that the job site was the most significant sphere of action for syndicalist movements. Thus historians David Montgomery, Howard

⁸ E. P. Thompson, *The Making*, 11.

⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 21 March 1912. For the ethnic diversity of Grays Harbor’s working class, see Chapter 6.

Kimmeldorf, and Bruce Nelson connected the revolutionary syndicalism of the IWW to trade unions of the AFL, stressing that both forms of unionism privilege the use of direct over parliamentary action and eschew direct collaboration with politicians.¹⁰

Syndicalism is a workers' movement, but only a fraction of workers' lives are spent on the job and the workplace is only one of many sites of class struggle. As a result, syndicalists, like trade unionists, socialists, communists, and other radicals, have rarely confined their program to the shop floor.¹¹ Wobblies themselves are partly to blame for scholars' confusion on this matter. After all, a central tenet of syndicalism is that because of their central role in the means of production, "the workers themselves" must serve as agents of the revolution. In fact, syndicalists argue that a general strike will be the central event bringing about a working-class revolution. Speaking on this topic, Wobbly Big Bill Haywood argued, "If I didn't think that the general strike was leading on to the great revolution which will emancipate the working class I wouldn't be here. I am with you because I believe that in this little meeting there is a nucleus here that will carry on the work and propagate the seed that will grow into the great revolution that will overthrow the capitalist class."¹²

However, historians of syndicalism in regions outside of North America have reappraised the links between syndicalists and their communities, arguing that syndicalist movements were most successful when tailored to the needs of community and enjoyed wide community support. For example, in *Anarchism and the City*, Chris Ealham

¹⁰ Montgomery, *Workers' Control*, 91-112; Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront*; Kimmeldorf, *Battling for American Labor*.

¹¹ The title of Wayne Thorpe's book on revolutionary syndicalism, "*The Workers Themselves*," is illustrative of the focus by scholars of syndicalism on the workplace. See Thorpe, "*The Workers Themselves*": *Revolutionary Syndicalism and International Labour, 1913-1923* (Amsterdam: Kluwer Academic/International Institute of Social History, 1990).

¹² William Haywood, "The General Strike," in *Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology*, New and Expanded ed., ed. Joyce Kornbluh (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Press, 1998), 51.

demonstrated that early twentieth century anarcho-syndicalists in Barcelona wove their organizations into the community and culture of their city. This book explores not only strikes and shop floor struggles, but what Ealham described as “the myriad tensions and energies outside the workplace” as anarchists and syndicalists established “new fronts in the struggle against oppression and new spaces of resistance.”¹³ Likewise, Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt sampled the community-based movements of syndicalists in Europe and Latin America, concluding that “as part of the project of building counterpower, mass anarchists built dense and overlapping networks of popular, associational life.”¹⁴

Building on the work of Ealham, Schmidt, and van der Linden, this chapter will explore the connections made between the IWW and their community during the Aberdeen free speech fight of 1911-1912 and Grays Harbor lumber strike of 1912. It will flesh out three of the most visible links between the Wobblies and the Grays Harbor community during the period 1907 to 1912. The first was the union’s large public presence, visible in its halls, public displays such as mass meetings and parades, and the publication and distribution of its own newspapers and literature. The second was the alliances Harbor Wobblies formed with other groups within the community that gave the OBU both local connections and sources of membership. The third was the hundreds of community members who joined the IWW between 1907 and 1912. Many of these workers retained their affiliation for years after initially joining the movement. Because of the IWW’s great public presence, its alliances with community groups, and its large membership base, the group held up under the most trying of circumstances as Wobblies

¹³ Chris Ealham, *Anarchism and the City: Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Barcelona, 1898-1937* (Oakland: AK Press, 2010), 36.

¹⁴ Schmidt and van der Walt, *Black Flame*, 180, 190-193.

and their allies were subjected to mass violence on the part of employing-class vigilantes and their allies. That the Grays Harbor IWWs responded, persevered, and ultimately rebounded from the violent repression suffered in 1911-1912 was indicative of the movement's base in the community.

The early Wobblies established institutions on the Harbor signifying their public role and permanence in the community, forged and solidified alliances with community supporters, and added hundreds of new members to their organization. As a result, the community-centeredness of the movement cannot be understood apart from its early history from 1907 to 1912 when the group grew from a handful of workers reading radical literature at the local saloon to a mass movement capable of commanding the attention of thousands of community members at street and hall meetings.

Wobblies first emerged on the Harbor in 1907 when mixed IWW locals were formed in Aberdeen and Hoquiam. Mixed locals were comprised of workers from different industries, rather than a single trade or industry, and were, in historian Salvatore Salerno's words, "the IWW's standard organization form" for much of its early history, often serving more as "propaganda clubs" than industrial unions.¹⁵ Mixed local 354 in Aberdeen and 276 in Hoquiam both functioned throughout 1907. In March 1907 the Aberdeen branch paid \$11.25 in monthly membership dues while their fellow workers in Hoquiam paid \$5.40 in dues for the month of May. Similar dues amounts were recorded for the first eight months of 1907 at which point the *Industrial Union Bulletin* printed a record of the union's annual finances.¹⁶ Considering that IWW membership dues ranged between 25¢ and 50¢ per month, somewhere between 30 and 60 card-carrying Wobblies

¹⁵ Salerno, *Red November, Black November*, 34.

¹⁶ *Industrial Union Bulletin*, 24, 31 August 1907.

lived and worked on the Harbor in 1907. While these radicals attracted no attention in the mainstream press, left no manuscript collections, and had no activities mentioned in left-wing newspapers, the IWW's *Industrial Union Bulletin* did record the frequent orders locals 354 and 276 made for literature, dues stamps, bulletins, and buttons. For example, for May 1907 Hoquiam Wobblies paid \$5.40 in dues, \$4 in assessments, \$1.75 for subscriptions, \$2 for buttons, 50¢ in literature, and 85¢ for supplies.¹⁷ Thus, throughout 1907 the Grays Harbor IWW had small but consistent number of members who paid their dues, read IWW literature, and wore IWW buttons about town. Observing the dedication that this small group of radicals showed to the union in 1907, IWW executive board member Fred Heselwood stated that the Harbor IWW locals were “in a healthy condition and could with a little work be built up very strong.”¹⁸

The slim traces of membership records for Grays Harbor indicated that even at this early stage, maritime and lumber workers figured heavily in the organization. Early Harbor Wobblies included George C. Wertenbaker and William Thorn, who were both listed as longshoremen in the 1910 US Census, and W. I. Fisher, who, along with Thorn, spent ample time working as a logger in the region's woods.¹⁹ While there is little record of the Grays Harbor IWW's activities before 1910, local Wobblies were able to maintain their union branch. In December 1909 they managed to “fill the large hall” they had

¹⁷ *Industrial Union Bulletin*, 31 August 1907.

¹⁸ *Industrial Union Bulletin*, 28 September 1907.

¹⁹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 25 May 1912; *Polk and Co.'s Grays Harbor Cities and Chehalis County Directory*, 1909, 1911; United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census for the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County; *Industrial Worker*, 19 March; 16 April; 4 June 1910; *Grays Harbor Post*, 7 September 1907; *Industrial Union Bulletin*, 28 September; 5, 12 October 1907. The *Industrial Union Bulletin* lists donations to IWW causes coming from Stanley Kaitie of Hoquiam. Elsewhere, IWW General Executive Board member Fred Heslewood described the Aberdeen and Hoquiam IWW branches as “in a healthy condition and could with a little work be built up very strong.” The Club Saloon in Aberdeen carried a subscription to the *Industrial Union Bulletin*, giving a strong likelihood that its patrons were fond of that newspaper's contents.

rented to hear a speaker from Seattle. Unfortunately, their efforts to “secure a good lecturer,” so that “a considerable sum would have been raised to help in the [Spokane] free-speech fight” were foiled when the Seattle organizer failed to show.²⁰ Grays Harbor Wobblies remained within mixed local branches until 24 July 1911 when Aberdeen branch 354 of the National Industrial Union of Forest and Lumber Workers (NIUFLW) was formed with thirty-one names on the original charter.²¹

Wobbly organizers armed with radical literature found their way into the logging camps and lumber towns, carrying in 1910, for the first time, articles appealing to the specific hardships of the “slave of the woods and the mills.”²² With headlines like “Lumber Workers are the Goods,” and “Loggers and Mill Workers Ready for IWW,” and job reports from several camps gracing each edition of the *Industrial Worker*, the Wobblies went about educating their fellow workers about the need for industrial unionism.²³ Carrying the IWW message were a group of organizers, some of whom had graduated from the hard rock mines of the Rockies to organize in the deep, dark woods of the Northwest. Joining current and former Western Federation of Miners officials Fred Heslewood and W. I. Fisher in performing this difficult work were organizers like William Thorn, Fred A. Allison, and James Knust.²⁴ Resources were well used. By early 1910, Bellingham shingle weavers had abandoned their craft union and formed an IWW local, Seattle loggers banded together into IWW Loggers’ Union No. 432, and in Grays

²⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 8 January 1910. Charles Bonet of Aberdeen wrote a telegram to the *Industrial Worker* admonishing the Seattle Wobblies for their failure to show as promised at the Aberdeen meeting. Bonet was listed as a representative of Aberdeen branch no. 354 during early 1910. See *Industrial Worker*, 22 January 1910. Bonet was not listed in the 1910 census for Chehalis County.

²¹ *Industrial Worker*, 14 May 1910; 3 August 1911.

²² *Industrial Worker*, 5 February 1910.

²³ *Industrial Worker*, 18, 25 June 1910.

²⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 19 March; 16 April; 4, 18, 25 June 1910.

Harbor a Marine Transport Workers' Industrial Union (MTWIU) local of the IWW was "in the process of formation."²⁵

Prominent itinerant Wobblies also made stops in Grays Harbor, particularly in 1911-1912, when the region was among the most important sites on the national IWW's map. These "leaders," including lumber workers' organizer John Pancner, Wobbly journalist C. E. "Stumpy" Payne, and well-known activists F. H. Allison, George Speed, J. S. Biscay, Bruce Rogers, Joe Ettor, E. F. Doree, and Walter T. Nef, were significant to the early growth of the movement as the experienced organizers raised money for the union, wrote articles for the *Industrial Worker*, published the local strike bulletin, and gave stirring addresses to supportive crowds.²⁶ Moreover, these prominent radicals were professional communicators well-versed in revolutionary ideologies such as syndicalism and Marxism, and thus served as revolutionary agents, delivering powerful addresses on "changing the shape of the world" to large crowds of eager Harbor workers.²⁷

For all of the support rendered from outside, the Grays Harbor IWW movement was not simply exported into the region by outside radicals, but was instead the product of a complex mixture of external and indigenous workers, that included local radicals experienced in the Grays Harbor labor movement, recent immigrants, and itinerant Wobbly organizers. Several of the most active local leaders had arrived on the Harbor as the direct result of employers' exploitative practices. George C. Wertenbaker, one of the first Aberdeen IWW secretaries, was "imported" to work as a low wage longshoreman by the Grays Harbor Stevedore company, as were prominent Wobblies W. I. Fisher, W. A.

²⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 5, 12, 19, 25 February 1910.

²⁶ *Industrial Worker*, 30 November 1911; 15, 29 February; 28 March; 4, 11 April 1912. Bruce Rogers was a member and supporter of both the SPA and IWW. See Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 47.

²⁷ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 22 November 1911.

Thorn, and James M. Train.²⁸ Additionally, immigrant laborers, particularly those from Finland and Greece, joined the IWW in great numbers, forming the largest ethnic groups within the Grays Harbor branches of the union. Many of these immigrants, including the Finnish-American laborer August Niemi, joined the IWW during the early 1910s and went on to comprise the membership base for the Grays Harbor IWW movement throughout the remainder of the decade. Niemi, born in Finland in 1884, emigrated to the US in 1906, moved to the Harbor shortly thereafter, joined the Finnish Socialist Federation (FSF), and worked at the Grays Harbor Workers' Cooperative Mercantile Association.²⁹ Labeled a "radical" by Finnish socialists, meaning he favored syndicalism over parliamentary socialism, August joined his wife Helen in bolting the FSF for the IWW in the mid-1910s and both remained committed Wobblies for decades thereafter.³⁰

Still other IWW recruits hailed from North American or "old" immigrant backgrounds. A list of Aberdeen IWWs published in June 1912 by the *Industrial Worker* was comprised almost entirely of men whose surnames indicated they were native-born Americans, Canadians, or from northern and western European nations, including Dixon, Brown, Hammond, and VonLonberg.³¹ Commenting on the composition of the local IWW movement, the *Industrial Worker* ran an article stating that "nearly all of the

²⁸ *Grays Harbor Post*, 25 May 1912; *Polk and Co.'s Grays Harbor Cities and Chehalis County Directory*, 1909, 1911; United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census for the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County.

²⁹ Smits, "The Finns in Hoquiam," 8.

³⁰ United States Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census for the Year 1920*, Washington State, Grays Harbor County; Sulkanen, *Amerikan Suomalaisen Tyovaenliikkeen historia*, 466-469. August Niemi's obituary appeared in the *Aberdeen Daily World*, 29 October 1966. He was remembered as "a member of the Aberdeen Eagles and the Electrical Workers Union Local 76." No reference was made to his long association with the IWW; Charette, "Finns in Aberdeen."

³¹ *Industrial Worker*, 6 June 1912. The following names appeared in this list of Wobblies: Ed Renner, P. E. Hammond, A. Burke, E. Jennings, C. F. Luke, G. Rush, G. Brown, John A. VonLonberg, W. Spicklemeier, Bud Dixon, N. Peterson, Paul Lambrick, Dan Hyatt, John Rosenthol.

workers are settled with families.”³² Indeed, even the *Seattle Union Record*, not a vocal supporter of the Wobbly movement, recognized that the Grays Harbor IWW included “men who have made their home in the city for many years.”³³

Nonetheless, prior to 1911, the IWW’s membership and influence were negligible in Grays Harbor, and local currents of class consciousness were expressed through socialist and “workingmen’s” clubs, socialist auxiliaries, trade unions, and non-union strikes. But the Grays Harbor IWW grew precipitously during the Aberdeen Free Speech Fight of November 1911-January 1912, when local and itinerant IWWs joined Harbor socialists in their successful efforts to overturn a municipal law banning left-wing political speeches in Aberdeen’s downtown.³⁴ In mid-1911 Harbor Wobblies implemented a program of delivering speeches on the highly trafficked streets of downtown Aberdeen, particularly in the working-class neighborhoods near to the waterfront.³⁵ The sole surviving photograph that I have been able to locate from the free speech fight shows an unidentified street corner in Aberdeen with hundreds of men gathered around an IWW sign.³⁶

Socialists also joined in the street speaking, and while they touched upon reformist topics such as the need to elect better leaders, their reformism was overshadowed by the IWW’s advocacy of revolutionary direct action.³⁷ In November 1911, for instance, William Thorn and James M. Train assailed a crowd with the need for radical change to

³² *Industrial Worker*, 18 April 1912.

³³ *Seattle Union Record*, 27 April 1912.

³⁴ LeWarne, “The Aberdeen”; Goings, “Free Speech and Industrial Unionism,” 102-155; *Industrial Worker*, 1 February 1912.

³⁵ Hughes and Beckwith, *On the Harbor*, 35; Lewarne, “The Aberdeen,” 3-4.

³⁶ Agnes C. Laut, “Revolution Yawns!” *Technical World Magazine* (October 1912): 139.

³⁷ Compared with the Wobblies, members of the SPA were notable for their moderation throughout the Aberdeen free speech fight. For example, after two months of heavy fighting between radicals and employing-class vigilantes, local socialist Adam Schubert declared that the free speech fight should be put on hold until “the weather gets warmer.” *Aberdeen Herald*, 8 January 1912.

the prevailing socioeconomic structure before launching into a denunciation of “the national administration, the local administration, the millowners, the business folk, the union officials, and the local police.”³⁸ The tactics employed by IWW speakers also spoke to their creative use of direct action to fluster and confuse their oppressors, a characteristic widely attributed to the Wobblies. Henry McGuckin, who joined the IWW during the Aberdeen Free Speech Fight, recalled his part in one meeting:

We began by singing “Solidarity Forever,” and the crowd started in our direction. Singing could also be heard from halfway up the next block. They had started, too. Some of the pickhandle boys and cops came our way, some went the other. While they were laying about them, hitting not only us Wobblies but people in the crowd as well, still another meeting began further up the street. We had them running back and forth, first one place, then the other.³⁹

The fight attracted publicity and funds to the IWW. For two months, news from Grays Harbor ran across the front page of the *Industrial Worker*. Allied organizations, including IWW locals across North America, socialist parties, and trade unions channeled hundreds of dollars and supportive resolutions to the Harbor free speech fighters.⁴⁰ By early January 1912, local IWWs had more than one hundred free speech fighters prepared

³⁸ Hughes and Beckwith, *On the Harbor*, 36; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 22 November 1911; Ben Weatherwax, “Hometown Scrapbook –No. 71—The Wobblies,” radio script for Station KBKW, Aberdeen, recorded in the 1950s, Pacific Northwest History Collection, APL.

³⁹ McGuckin, 38. On this point, McGuckin’s memory failed him. “Solidarity Forever” was not made public until 1915, three years after the end of the Aberdeen Free Speech Fight. See Kornbluh, *Rebel Voices*, 26. C. E. “Stumpy” Payne also recalled the street battle between Wobblies and police on 10 January 1912, noting “they now had sufficient numbers to keep the ball rolling in good shape, as they could have put ten men on the street every night for two weeks and by that time men would have arrived from more distant points. The speakers were arrested as fast as they appeared and immediately taken to jail.” See *Industrial Worker*, 1 January 1912.

⁴⁰ Ed Gilbert to Honorable Marion E. Hay, 18 December 1911, Washington State Governor’s Papers, Governor Marion E. Hay, Judiciary, 1911-Labor Conflicts/IWW, Box 2G-2-19, Labor Conflicts-Aberdeen, Raymond, Spokane, 1910-1912, WSA; *Industrial Worker*, 30 November; 7, 14, 21 December 1911; 11, 18 January 1912; McGuckin, *Memoirs of A Wobbly*, 36-38. The auditing committee’s report of free speech funds for Aberdeen showed receipts for \$970.60, including a \$250 donation from the Butte Miners’ Union. *Industrial Worker*, 11 January; 8 February 1912.

to violate the ordinance and go to jail and face other forms of punishment.⁴¹ Faced with this determined opposition, Aberdeen municipal officials compromised with the IWWs. The city council passed a new ordinance that allowed street speaking without a permit on most of Aberdeen's major city streets. In return, city officials and local employers asked only that the Wobblies "not crow and brag" over their victory, "owing to their sensitive feelings."⁴² Within a month of the successful repeal of the speaking ban, Grays Harbor workers had formed three Wobbly locals, which hosted nightly street meetings and weekly hall lectures.⁴³ These early Wobblies, who labored almost exclusively in the lumber and marine transport industries, struck alongside militant immigrant lumber mill laborers during the spring of 1912 in a conflict that Bruce Rogers appropriately called "The War of Gray's Harbor."⁴⁴

This strike began as a walkout of immigrant lumber mill hands in Hoquiam that rapidly escalated into a mass strike that closed down much of southwest Washington's lumber industry. The immediate cause of the conflict was the low wages paid at the Harbor's mills. On 14 March 1912, two hundred mill hands at the North Western Lumber Company struck, demanding an increased pay scale for all lumber workers, including a \$2.50 minimum wage and union recognition for the IWW by the mill owners.⁴⁵ On 18 March, the strike was extended into the Aberdeen mills.⁴⁶ There the

⁴¹ According to the "History of the Aberdeen Free Speech Fight," printed in the *Industrial Worker* and written by IWWs C. E. Payne, W. I. Fisher, and J. T. McCarthy, the local IWW "could have put ten men on the street every night for two weeks, and by that time men would have arrived from more distant points." *Industrial Worker*, 1 February 1912.

⁴² *Industrial Worker*, 25 January; 1 February 1912; Lewarne, "The Aberdeen, Washington, Free Speech Fight," 11.

⁴³ *Industrial Worker*, 14 March 1912.

⁴⁴ Rogers, "The War of Gray's [sic] Harbor."

⁴⁵ The 1912 Grays Harbor lumber strike has been the subject of several scholarly analyses. See, Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 220-224; Dreyfus, "Timber Workers," 113-173; Fred Thompson, *The IWW -- Its First Fifty Years* (Chicago: Industrial Workers of the World, 1955), 68; *Aberdeen Daily*

strike reached an equally receptive audience as three hundred non-union mill hands walked off the job at the Slade plant and workers at most other Aberdeen mills followed suit. On 20 March, four mills had shut down; by 22 March, nine Aberdeen mills were closed; six days later twenty mills sat idle.⁴⁷ Longshoremen, shingle weavers, sailors, and electrical workers all struck alongside the mill hands in what was rapidly escalating into a general strike.⁴⁸ One enthusiastic Wobbly captured the spirit of the strike, writing, “This struggle is no longer a Hoquiam strike, but a general tie-up of the Grays Harbor lumber industry. It’s catching and the longer it lasts the farther it spreads.”⁴⁹ It would become the largest Pacific Northwest lumber strike waged prior to World War I.⁵⁰

Efforts by Wobblies to establish a beachhead on the Harbor triggered a six-month-long coordinated attack on the radicals by Grays Harbor employers and agents of the state. Wobblies and their allies were subjected to intense and violent repression, most of which stemmed from the Aberdeen and Hoquiam citizens’ committees. In Aberdeen during both the free speech fight and strike, and in Hoquiam during the latter conflict, these groups were formed by employers -- affiliated with the chambers of commerce and

World, 14 March 1912; *Industrial Worker*, 4 April 1912. For the union’s demands, see *Aberdeen Herald*, 21 March 1912; *Oregonian*, 29 March 1912; *Industrial Worker*, 25 April 1912. The IWW cited the minimum wage for Harbor mills as \$1.80, and issued two wage scales in April 1912, one for logging camps and another for mill employees. These demands included “\$3.00 per day or \$50.00 per month and board shall be the minimum wage for all employees in the logging or shingle bolt camps,” and a \$2.50 minimum wage for the lowest-paid mill workers. See *Industrial Worker*, 25 April 1912.

⁴⁶ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 18, 20 March 1912.

⁴⁷ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 19, 20, 22, 23 March 1912; *Aberdeen Herald*, 28 March 1912. According to the *Industrial Worker*, 4 April 1912, at the time of writing, seventeen mills in Aberdeen and Hoquiam were closed.

⁴⁸ *Grays Harbor Post*, 6 April 1912; Rogers, “War of Gray’s Harbor.”

⁴⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 4 April 1912.

⁵⁰ For more detailed analyses of the 1912 lumber strike, see: Dreyfus, “Reds, Whites, and Greeks” and “Timber Workers,” 113-173; Goings, “Free Speech and Industrial Unionism”; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 220-224.

Elks' clubs -- to disrupt and remove the IWW presence on the Harbor.⁵¹ Like the IWW, these employers' associations were "mass" groups with large and devoted memberships. Each time the groups assembled they utilized diverse methods for attacking the Wobblies. These included arresting and jailing activists, using fire hoses to disperse their meetings, seeking to "starve out" strikers by refusing them credit at local merchants and imposing exorbitant fines for minor criminal offenses, deporting them from town, violently assaulting the activists with various types of weapons including clubs and firearms, raiding and closing their halls.⁵² To disrupt the IWW movement, the Hoquiam Citizens' Committee armed itself with shotguns and clubs, and formed a cavalry to ride down the strikers.⁵³ However much these violent actions resembled the work of vigilante bands, these citizens' committees operated with the full support of -- and in the name of -- the law. Members of the Aberdeen Citizens' Committee members were deputized by that city's chief of police.⁵⁴ Municipal police and local elected officials worked alongside the committees, while Washington State officials, including Governor Marion Hay, refused to intervene to stop the bloodshed. In fact, the governor even offered Harbor employers the assistance of the state militia to stamp out the IWW menace if necessary.⁵⁵

One tactic employed by the citizens' committees during the free speech fight and strike was deporting Wobblies and their allies from town, to, in the words of the local

⁵¹ Robert Walter Bruere, *Following the Trail of the IWW: A First-Hand Investigation into Labor Troubles in the West -- A Trip into the Copper and the Lumber Camps of the Inland Empire with the Views of the Men on the Job* (New York: New York Evening Post, 1918), 19. See also Chapter 3.

⁵² *Industrial Worker*, 1 February 1912; *Seattle Star*, 13 April 1912; *Oregonian*, 21 March 1912.

⁵³ *Oregonian*, 1 April 1912.

⁵⁴ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 24 November 1911.

⁵⁵ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 24 November 1911; *Oregonian*, 30 March 1912; Governor Marion E. Hay to Ed Gilbert, 11 January 1912, Governor's Papers, Governor Marion E. Hay, Judiciary, 1911-Labor Conflicts/IWW, Box 2G-2-19, Labor Conflicts-Aberdeen, Raymond, Spokane, 1910-1912, WSA.

press, “stamp out the agitation” and drive “the scum out.”⁵⁶ Wobbly history is littered with numerous deportations, including San Diego in 1912, Coos Bay in 1913, and the famous Bisbee deportations of 1917.⁵⁷ But according to historian Philip S. Foner, the “tactics of deputizing citizen police and deporting IWW members was first unfolded in Aberdeen, Washington.”⁵⁸ Mass deportation was, in fact, the official policy of Aberdeen officials and employers who acted to curb the Wobbly threat. The *Aberdeen Daily World* declared, “The city will not place them in jail, nor will meals be furnished them. They will be shipped out by the carload or train load, if necessary, and as soon as enough of them have been collected to ‘make up’ a shipment.”⁵⁹ Banker William J. Patterson, the head of the Aberdeen Citizens’ Committee, described the group’s actions:

we organized that night a vigilante committee – a Citizens’ Committee, I think we called it – to put down the strike by intimidation and force. . . . we got hundreds of heavy clubs of the weight and size of pick-handles, armed our vigilantes with them, and that night raided all the IWW headquarters, rounded up as many of them as we could find, and escorted them out of town.⁶⁰

In Aberdeen, between November 1911 and May 1912, hundreds of IWWs were forcibly deported from town; a group of 150 more only narrowly escaped being shipped out of town in a boxcar by the timely intervention of workers from the Northern Pacific railroad.⁶¹ Deportees included well-known radicals, those appointed by the mainstream press and employers as “leaders,” including organizer William Thorn, long-time local secretary W. I. “Windy” Fisher, and NIUFLW official Fred Allison. The bulk of the

⁵⁶ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 24 November 1911; *Daily Washingtonian*, 24 November 1911.

⁵⁷ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 205-208, 225; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 385-391.

⁵⁸ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 124. Foner’s point referred only to the deportation of IWWs. However, deportations of labor activists occurred during earlier struggles such as the Cripple Creek, Colorado, mine wars of 1903-1904. See Jameson, *All that Glitters*, 220.

⁵⁹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 24 November 1911.

⁶⁰ Cited in Robert Walter Bruere, *Following the Trail of the IWW*, 19.

⁶¹ Fred Thompson, *The IWW*, 69; *Grays Harbor Post*, 4 May 1912; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 4, 222-223; *Industrial Worker*, 7, 14 December 1911; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 9 December 1911.

deportees, however, were rank-and-file workers, men like Gut Schultzer, “who had been a resident of that city [Aberdeen] for many years, had been run out of town,” and Tracy Newell, who while “conducting himself in an orderly manner, and having committed no crime whatsoever,” “was attacked by a body of men armed with clubs and guns . . . he was then taken from the said jail by an armed and irresponsible body of about 300 men armed with guns and clubs, forced to go with them beyond the city limits of said city.”⁶²

Since the act of deporting IWWs from urban spaces across the nation can be accepted as fact, then it becomes necessary to ask what effect these deportations had on the IWW, as well as, what, if anything, was left after the Wobblies had gone. Anarchist Jay Fox, writing specifically of the Aberdeen deportations, concluded that “the deported actionist did not forget his philosophy. He came back direct; and he was ten where he formerly was one.”⁶³ As Fox indicated, deported Wobblies did not remain deportees for long. From the moment the Harbor Wobblies were forcibly removed from Aberdeen during the free speech fight in November 1911 they planned to return with assistance from fellow workers and allies in the Harbor towns. In fact, as a committee tasked with writing the history of the Aberdeen free speech fight recalled, “The tactics of the bosses, however, did not deter the free speech fighters from coming to Aberdeen.”⁶⁴ Shortly after their deportations from Aberdeen, the radicals opened IWW headquarters in Tacoma, Montesano, and Hoquiam, where they issued calls for relief, recruited free speech fighters, and planned to re-enter Aberdeen.⁶⁵ Furthermore, only a small portion of the local IWW was deported from Aberdeen; others remained to sell IWW newspapers

⁶² *Daily Washingtonian*, 11 November 1911; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 25 November 1911; *Industrial Worker*, 1 February 1912; 9 May 1912.

⁶³ “Free Speech in Aberdeen,” *Agitator* 2:6 (1 February 1912).

⁶⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 1 February 1912.

⁶⁵ McGuckin, *Memoirs of A Wobbly*, 36-38; *Industrial Worker*, 1 February 1912.

and organize a boycott of businesses owned by Aberdeen Citizens' Committee members.⁶⁶ One group of Aberdeen Wobblies printed a handbill offering a five thousand dollar reward for information about the identities of "the parties who slugged" two IWWs on 7 December.⁶⁷ So great was the financial damage to Aberdeen business owners that one Wobbly quipped, "May the US bankruptcy courts soon have a good reason to make Aberdeen their general headquarters."⁶⁸

Employers' inability to remove the Wobblies from Aberdeen during the free speech fight was indicative of the struggle between bosses and radicals on the Harbor during the early 1910s. When "the IWWs" left voluntarily to join other struggles, as did John Pancner and C. E. "Stumpy" Payne, or left by force, as was the case with several of their fellow workers, the movement did not die, but continued to hold a significant stake in the community. Although IWW membership varied from one year to the next, and it is difficult to pinpoint exact figures, estimations of Grays Harbor IWW membership ranged from 1,060 in 1912, to between two thousand and four thousand in 1917-1918, to two thousand in 1919, to more than six hundred in 1923, and more than six hundred in 1935.⁶⁹ Several thousand Harbor workers hit the bricks during IWW strikes in 1912, 1917, and 1923. Even during the mid-1910s, which according to most scholars was a low

⁶⁶ *Industrial Worker*, 21 December 1911; 1 February 1912.

⁶⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 11 January 1912.

⁶⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 11 January 1912. A second boycott was declared by the IWW during the 1912 lumber strike. According to the *Daily World*, businesses being boycotted included "The *Washingtonian*, the *Sawyer*, several barber shops, and every physician in town with the exception of one," presumably because the proprietors of these businesses were members of one of the citizens' committees. *Aberdeen Daily World*, 10 April 1912.

⁶⁹ W. S. Seavey to E. G. Ames, 29 July 1912, Edwin Gardner Ames Papers, Accession No. 3820, Box 93, Folder 29, UW; Reports by Agent 31, Aberdeen, Wash., 15, 20 November 1917, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service. Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA; *Industrialist*, 16 June; 3, 23 July 1917; *New Unionist* (Los Angeles), 14 January 1928; *Industrial Worker*, 5 May 1923; *Industrialist*, 14 December 1935. Notably, even the viciously anti-labor *Aberdeen Daily World* referred to the IWW as a "movement." See *Aberdeen Daily World*, 26 November 1911; Ralph Chaplin, *Wobbly: The Rough-and-Tumble Story of an American Radical* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 291.

point for the IWW in the Pacific Northwest, Harbor Wobblies published newspapers, held meetings, and maintained a real, if limited, public presence.⁷⁰ When asked years later by an interviewer if he belonged to the IWW during the late 1910s, Maxwell Wilson, a Grays Harbor logger, emphatically replied, “Oh yeah. Everybody in the woods joined up then.”⁷¹ The key question is, then, what about the IWW movement on the Harbor gave it such staying power in the community?

Both the free speech fight and strike mobilized much of the Grays Harbor community behind the cause of the Wobblies. Free speech fighters were supported by a wide cross-section of the Harbor’s residents who turned out to street demonstrations, provided material assistance to the IWW, and boycotted merchants unfriendly to the radicals’ cause. The strike was an even more “mass” effort, which combined thousands of Harbor workers in a struggle against their employers. On 31 March eight thousand striking workers and supporters gathered at Electric Park on the border of Aberdeen and Hoquiam to hear radical speeches, sing songs, and present a united front against Harbor employers in what was shaping into a region-wide general strike. The park, however, could not contain this crowd, which spilled onto the surrounding streets. Near the crowd’s center, atop a large box, rose an illustrious lineup of “speakers in many different languages.”⁷² Workers listened to numerous speeches, sang and played “revolutionary music,” and carried signs reading “We Are Striking for Living Wages.”⁷³ The mass meeting itself followed two parades, one from Aberdeen, the other from Hoquiam, both a

⁷⁰ See Chapter 8.

⁷¹ Maxwell Wilson, interviewed by Donald L. Myers, 26 November 1975, Washington State Oral/Aural History Project, 30.

⁷² *Industrial Worker*, 4 April 1912.

⁷³ Rogers, “The War of Gray’s Harbor,” 752. The *Industrial Worker*, 4 April 1912, referenced “ANOTHER PARADE” led by the Finnish brass band, playing “revolutionary music.”

“half mile long,” which had descended upon the overflowing park. Both parades were led by “Red” Finn women and members of the Finnish socialist band. Marchers included a number of children, striking lumber and maritime workers, and supporters drawn from other sectors of the community.⁷⁴ Having been inspired by the militancy shown during the initial walkout and impressed with public presence of the strikers, workers from a diverse cross-section of ethnic and occupational groups flocked into the Harbor’s IWW branches.⁷⁵ Longshoremen, shingle weavers, sailors, and electrical workers all struck alongside the mill hands in what was rapidly escalating into a general strike.⁷⁶ Men and women remained on the picket lines for two months in Aberdeen and Hoquiam, often enduring brutal beatings for their efforts. More than 1,500 strikers crowded into the Hoquiam Finn hall during one meeting, and the workers required the use of the Aberdeen and Hoquiam Finn halls, south Aberdeen’s Croatian hall, as well as their own IWW hall in order to function effectively.⁷⁷ The strike also shut down a number of western Washington logging camps, drawing out more than five thousand loggers at fifty camps in the Grays Harbor and Puget Sound regions.⁷⁸ One enthusiastic Wobbly captured the spirit of the strike by writing, “This struggle is no longer a Hoquiam strike, but a general tie-up of the Grays’ Harbor lumber industry. It’s catching and the longer it lasts the farther it spreads.”⁷⁹

⁷⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 4, 25 April 1912.

⁷⁵ *Daily Washingtonian*, 15 March 1912.

⁷⁶ *Grays Harbor Post*, 6 April 1912; Rogers, “War of Gray’s Harbor”; *Industrial Worker*, 29 February 1912.

⁷⁷ *Oregonian*, 2 April 1912; *Industrial Worker*, 25 April 1912.

⁷⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 18 April 1912.

⁷⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 4 April 1912; W.S. Seavey to E.G. Ames, 29 July 1912, Edwin Gardner Ames Papers, Accession No. 3820, Box 93, Folder 29, UW; *Industrial Worker*, 4 April 1912. Even at an early point in the strike, the IWW claimed that in Hoquiam there were four hundred IWWs with “many others coming.” *Industrial Worker*, 28 March 1912.

The limited photographic evidence that survives from the strike likewise reveals its mass nature and the high level of community support for the strikers. One photograph, which was featured atop a caption stating “women took an important part in the disturbances at Aberdeen,” showed hundreds of mostly female strike supporters marching through the streets of Aberdeen.⁸⁰ Photographers from the *Seattle Star* and IWW captured strike parades and mass meetings held on the Harbor. In one photograph, a long line of men and women pushing baby carriages through downtown Hoquiam is featured atop an article stating, “With 61 strikers under arrest, halls used by the strikers closed and a bulletin issued by Mayor Parks calling on citizens to restore law and order, the lumber strike situation on Grays Harbor today is critical.”⁸¹ Three other photographs show large groupings of people at Electric Park calling for “better conditions,” “living wages,” and asking longshoremen to “keep away from ships.”⁸² That these photographs made it into print was in itself a major accomplishment. Noticing that photographs were being taken of “the squad of special officers” guarding Aberdeen mills, local police arrested a photographer from the *Seattle Star* and held him in custody until he agreed “to keep his camera in his grip until he returned to Seattle.”⁸³ Elsewhere showing his need to shape the narrative emerging from the strike scene, the Aberdeen police chief told one *Star* reporter, “The less you people say about us the better it will be for you. You are forbidden to take pictures anywhere.”⁸⁴

The Wobblies’ presence in the local community was visible in their parades, street meetings, and picket lines, but the symbolic and strategic center of the Wobbly

⁸⁰ Laut, “Revolution,” 142.

⁸¹ *Seattle Star*, 2 April 1912.

⁸² *Seattle Star*, 1 April 1912; Rogers, “The War of Gray’s [sic] Harbor,” 752.

⁸³ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 11 April 1912.

⁸⁴ *Seattle Star*, 13 April 1912.

movement was the IWW hall. As with ethnic and socialist halls, those of the IWW signified the desire of its members to retain a permanent place in the community. Far less ostentatious than the halls owned by their union, fraternal, ethnic, or socialist counterparts, IWW halls were usually one or two-room spaces perched atop a tavern or restaurant in working-class districts of cities and towns. They were established, as historian Robert Tyler estimated, “in the low-rent districts of Western towns and cities, near the railroad stations, the missions, the brothels and the cheap saloons.” The halls, continued Tyler, contained the Wobblies’ “battered furniture, perhaps a piano that had seen previous service in a saloon, roll-top desk, some tables and chairs, and a few spittoons.”⁸⁵ Their shabby appearance and diminutive size, however, did not limit their importance, for Wobbly halls were the central sites of cultural production for the most wildly creative union in American history. Radical intellectual John Reed described IWW halls as intellectual centers, unrivaled during that era for the quality of culture being produced:

Wherever, in the West, there is an IWW local, you will find an intellectual center -- a place where men read philosophy, economics, the latest plays, novels; where art and poetry are discussed, and international politics. . . . In Portland the IWW local was the liveliest intellectual center in town. . . . There are playwrights in the IWW who write about life in the “jungle” and the “Wobblies” produce the plays for audiences of “Wobblies.”⁸⁶

The Wobblies had numerous halls in the Pacific Northwest during the early 1910s. For example, between 1910 and 1912 the Wobblies operated halls in Spokane, Seattle, Tacoma, Aberdeen, Raymond, Hoquiam, and Bellingham.⁸⁷ In Grays Harbor, beginning in April 1910, the first of what became a series of IWW halls was established

⁸⁵ Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 26-27.

⁸⁶ Cited in Salerno, *Red November, Black November*, 8.

⁸⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 14 May 1910; 26 October; 2 November 1911; McGuckin, *Memoirs of A Wobbly*, 36-38.

in a rented space at 120 West Wishkah Street, at the corner of Wishkah and K streets in downtown Aberdeen. A year later, Grays Harbor Wobblies had moved twice, settling into a semi-permanent headquarters on E. Heron Street above a cigar store.⁸⁸ According to C. E. “Stumpy” Payne, the IWW hall in Aberdeen “will comfortably seat about 100,” although the group was known to crowd “175 . . . into the hall.”⁸⁹ Housed within the halls were not only IWW members, but also the literature that explained Wobbly ideology to potential recruits, the typewriters and printing press that enabled them to communicate with fellow workers, the letters and resolutions that offered support and comfort to the beleaguered strikers, and the funds that sustained their efforts. During the November 1911 raid on their hall, Aberdeen Wobblies lost an estimated thirty dollars in literature, while after a raid in September 1917 Harbor IWWs reported the destruction of correspondence, financial reports, bulletins, buttons, pamphlets and newspapers.⁹⁰

As the symbolic and strategic center of the Wobbly movement, IWW halls became prime targets for Harbor employers and state officials. Grays Harbor employers were acutely aware of their importance of the IWW’s halls, a fact that no doubt contributed to their desire to remove them from their communities. The physical destruction visited upon IWW halls the world over was remarkable, matching in ferocity the violent treatment meted out to the Wobblies themselves.⁹¹ Aberdeen employers,

⁸⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 9 April; 10 July 1910; Hughes and Beckwith, *On the Harbor*, 36; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 25 November 1911. Before moving above the cigar store the IWW headquarters was at the Kendall Hotel in Aberdeen. See *Industrial Worker*, 27 April; 20 June 1911; 12 August 1911.

⁸⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 15 February 1912.

⁹⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 1 February 1912; J. F. Rhodes and W. H. Margason to George F. Vanderveer, 15 November 1917, Box 99, File 1, *United States v. Haywood, et al.* Papers, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Wayne State University Collections, Detroit, MI (Hereafter WSU).

⁹¹ Among the most famous raids of an IWW hall occurred in Centralia, Washington, located in Lewis County, a county adjacent to Chehalis (Grays Harbor) County. For information on the Centralia raid, see Ralph Chaplin, *The Centralia Conspiracy* (Chicago: Industrial Workers of the World, 1924); Copeland, *The Centralia Tragedy of 1919*.

vigilantes, and officials were at the vanguard of this pillaging, exacting brutal revenge on the “treason preachers” by destroying their hall and removing their occupants on no fewer than eleven occasions between 1911 and 1922.⁹² These acts of vandalism were the source of admiration of future imitators, including one of the men who planned the raiding of the Centralia IWW hall on Armistice Day 1919. He argued, “The only way to handle the IWWs in Centralia is to do the same thing done in Aberdeen. Clean ‘em up, burn ‘em out.”⁹³

The Wobblies responded to other hardships imposed on them by mobilizing allies and forming networks of mutual aid. Indeed, violence and other forms of repression by employers against workers forced the strikers to act creatively to prevent a crisis from occurring on the Harbor. Local lumbermen furnished “lists of the strikers to all of the grocers on the Harbor,” urging the merchants to refuse credit to the striking workers’ families.⁹⁴ This tactic was depicted by Wobblies as a cruel effort to “crush the little defenseless children with pangs of hunger.”⁹⁵ In addition, disproportionately high fines and jail terms were leveled on strikers and their families in an effort to exact further economic punishment upon the strikers. Boasting over their arrests of female picketers, the *Aberdeen Herald* informed the picketers’ “cowardly husbands” that they “will have the pleasure of rescuing wife and kiddie by paying a round fine” before their family

⁹² In his book *Fellow Workers and Friends*, Philip S. Foner argued that the Aberdeen Citizens’ Committee represented a new and dedicated unity among western employers to eradicate the IWW menace, at any cost. See Foner, ed., *Fellow Workers and Friends: IWW Free Speech Fight as Told by Participants* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 123-124; *Industrial Worker*, 1 February 1912; 24 November 1917; 13 April 1918; 4 September 1921; 10 June 1922; *Solidarity*, 23 December 1911; 13 April 1912; *Grays Harbor Post*, 6 April 1912; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 25, 26 November 1911; 3, 4 April 1912; 16 September 1917; 12 November 1919; 5 August 1921. For further analysis of the raids of Grays Harbor IWW halls, see Chapters 9 and 10.

⁹³ Cited in McClelland, *Wobbly War*, 60.

⁹⁴ *Oregonian*, 21 March 1912.

⁹⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 4 April 1912.

members would be freed from jail.⁹⁶ During the free speech fight, Aberdeen city officials took steps to prevent the workers from obtaining food and lodgment from rural families outside of Aberdeen. These officials contacted Grays Harbor farmers and asked them to not feed or house the deported radicals.⁹⁷

With no means of securing food individually, strikers turned to the local community for support. “Red” Finns and other pro-strike groups formed soup kitchens and commissaries in Aberdeen and Hoquiam, “feeding the unmarried men, while provisions are being given out to men of families.”⁹⁸ Recognizing the importance of these relief societies, the *Daily World* ran the headline: “Soup Lines Flourish,” and noted that “hundreds of hungry men were fed yesterday” at “two eating houses.”⁹⁹ Aggrieved by workers’ ability to feed themselves, employers targeted the soup kitchens. In early April 1912, a “citizens mob” raided one of the Aberdeen soup kitchens, throwing “stoves and utensils into the alleys, after wrecking the place.”¹⁰⁰ Later that day shots were fired “through the kitchen . . . as soon as darkness set in,” providing an ominous warning to the activists who were attempting to feed their fellow workers.¹⁰¹ Capturing the urgency of the emergency created by this attack, one Wobbly implored the local movement, “Don’t let the lumber barons squeeze the hearts of the brave men by starving their loved ones.”¹⁰²

⁹⁶ *Aberdeen Herald*, 11 April 1912.

⁹⁷ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 25 November 1911.

⁹⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 4, 18 April 1912. Cited in *Aberdeen Herald*, 28 March 1912.

⁹⁹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 27 March 1912.

¹⁰⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 11 April 1912.

¹⁰¹ *Industrial Worker*, 4, 11 April 1912. Despite the actions of these vigilantes, even the explicitly anti-IWW *Aberdeen Daily World* acknowledged the importance of the soup kitchens in “doing a thriving business as . . . hundreds of hungry men were fed.” See *Aberdeen Daily World*, 24, 27 March 1912.

¹⁰² *Industrial Worker*, 18 April 1912.

Strikers and union organizers are commonly tasked with securing adequate food and other provisions to assist their fellow workers for the duration of strikes; they too are frequently forced to treat strikers, sympathizers, and bystanders injured in the conflict. IWW halls and those of their allies filled much of the void created by scant public services and necessitated by their frequent injuries on the picket lines. These services included temporary housing, food, and medical services for ill or injured workers, a place to rest, heal, and prepare for future struggles. To Henry McGuckin, one of the free speech fighters, the hall was where IWW fighters gathered to await the next street battle, nursed their wounds, and where the Wobblies could stay nourished on “coffee and stale donuts for breakfast and not enough beans and bread for supper.”¹⁰³ Throughout the open conflicts of the 1910s, IWW halls continued these same functions, as fellow workers’ duties extended from street-corner agitations and fighting the boss to nursing one another’s wounds and collecting donations for strikers’ families. Mainstream papers reported that when scabs were assaulted during the numerous confrontations that marked the 1912 Grays Harbor lumber strike their wounds were treated at a hospital. Meanwhile, the dozens of strikers injured each day with “broken heads” or those who had “been hit on the head with a pick-handle” were treated at their halls by amateur medical personnel.¹⁰⁴

The local mainstream press did not take the strikers’ injuries and deportations to be serious matters. Instead, these news organs ignored the violence, downplayed its impact, or openly mocked the injured parties, suggesting that the babies carried “in tote” by the picketing women who were drenched by fire hoses were actually “only

¹⁰³ McGuckin, *Memoirs of a Wobbly*, 36-38.

¹⁰⁴ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 26 April 1912; McGuckin, *Memoirs of a Wobbly*, 38.

dummies.”¹⁰⁵ The coverage given to the strikers’ sufferings was characteristic of the mainstream press coverage given the Wobblies by each of the Harbor’s four large mainstream newspapers: the *Aberdeen Daily World*, *Aberdeen Herald*, *Daily Washingtonian*, and *Grays Harbor Post*. In fact, Albert Johnson, editor of the *Washingtonian* and after 1912 a congressman from Washington State, found the attacks provided by the mainstream organs against the “IWW hordes” to be too infrequent and too tame, and thus formed a second newspaper of his own, the *Home Defender*, which as its editorial policy stated, was “devoted to a denunciation of radical, revolutionary socialism.”¹⁰⁶

Attacked by the mainstream press, Wobblies formed a string of locally based newspapers and wrote articles to the national IWW press.¹⁰⁷ The first of these organs was the *Workingmen’s Bulletin*, a daily strike bulletin edited initially by Herman Titus and later J. S. Biscay and published by the Grays Harbor IWW during the 1912 strike.¹⁰⁸ The bulletin, which was “issued by the mill workers at Aberdeen,” was delivered to workers’ homes by Aberdeen Wobbly George Decker.¹⁰⁹ As befitting a local strike bulletin editor Biscay employed the language of community to describe his movement. He wrote, “Nearly all of the workers are settled with families. . . . Kitchens are being established in both towns to feed the strikers and to dispense food to the needy. . . . In this

¹⁰⁵ *Aberdeen Herald*, 11 April 1912; *Industrial Worker*, 18 April 1912.

¹⁰⁶ *Home Defender* (Hoquiam, WA), 15 May 1912.

¹⁰⁷ The IWW conflicts in Grays Harbor were also heavily covered by the anarchist newspaper *Agitator*, published in Home, Washington, by Jay Fox. See, *Agitator*, 15 December 1911; 15 January; 1 February 1912.

¹⁰⁸ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 2 April 1912; *Industrial Worker*, 18 April 1912; *Oregonian*, 2 April 1912; *Solidarity*, 13 April 1912.

¹⁰⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 1, 9 May 1912.

struggle there are trade unionists, socialists, industrials, and unorganized working hand in hand for a common interest. Even girls and children are striking.”¹¹⁰ Biscay wrote:

In the meantime the mill owners have been trying to fill the mills with scabs. These are not usually gotten through the employment offices, which are watched, but through advertisements inserted in the prominent papers all over the country calling for mill hands. All the scabs coming here are brought in this way. Their baggage is taken from them, and if the unfortunate refuses to scab he does not get his clothes. Then these persons become an extra burden on the strikers.¹¹¹

Biscay joined fellow workers F. H. Allison, William Thorn, and Ira O. Anderson in keeping the Wobblies from around the world apprised of the situation on Grays Harbor by writing weekly updates in the Spokane-based *Industrial Worker* and *Solidarity*, which was published in Chicago.¹¹² In fact, no fewer than ninety-six articles and notices from Grays Harbor appeared in these two newspapers between 30 November 1911 and 11 May 1912.¹¹³

Harbor Wobblies also published their own leaflets during the 1912 lumber strike. One of these was a satirical advertisement for a fictional employment agency called “Catchem, Fakeum, Skinum, and Shipum Employment Assassination,” which specialized in providing “hungry slaves” and “men to break strikes.” Like most IWW literature written locally during the strike, this leaflet described the actions of anti-union employers as causing harm to the community. It satirically called for employers to “Send all your orders for men to us, to break the Millmen’s Strike at Aberdeen, Raymond, Tacoma, and elsewhere. We are in the business, to help you break the Strike, and overflow the Country with lots of hungry men, so you can get them to work for almost nothing.”¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 4 April 1912.

¹¹¹ *Solidarity*, 20 April 1912.

¹¹² *Solidarity*, 23 March; 6 April 1912; *Industrial Worker*, 28 March; 4, 11, 18 April 1912.

¹¹³ *Industrial Worker*, 30 November 1911 - 9 May 1912; *Solidarity*, 2 December 1911 - 11 May 1912.

¹¹⁴ A copy of the leaflet appeared in Laut, “Revolution,” 143.

Regardless of their sizeable public presence, visibility in parades, halls, and newspapers, and leaflets, the Wobblies were always a minority of the local population, one lacking resources and requiring the assistance of community groups such as socialists, trade unionists, and progressive elements of the bourgeoisie. However, as the Wobblies' many alliances with unions, socialists, professionals, and small business owners demonstrated, much of the community supported the IWW-led strike and opposed the violent treatment strikers received at the hands of local police and vigilantes.

One type of support rendered to the IWW came in the use of halls owned by other local organizations. Indeed, when the small IWW halls could not accommodate the group's members and supporters, the Wobblies turned to halls owned by their supporters among the "Red" Finns of Aberdeen and Hoquiam, as well as the Aberdeen Croatian Workingmen's Association, which allowed the Wobblies to use their halls during the free speech fight and strike. While the IWW had its own hall in Aberdeen, this small structure paled in comparison with the grandiose spaces owned by immigrant socialists and workers' associations. At any of the three ethnic halls, crowds of several hundred could and did assemble to hear speakers, cook meals to use for events, and provided space for the busy work of signing up new members. On the first day of the lumber strike in March 1912, after closing down the North Western and Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle Company mills in Hoquiam, striking workers held, according to the *Daily Washingtonian*, "a big mass meeting of the IWW at which the IWW leaders were the central figures and the Greeks prominent factors, was held last night at the Finnish hall on Tenth street."¹¹⁵ One Wobbly agreed that this was a successful meeting, writing that

¹¹⁵ *Daily Washingtonian*, 15 March 1912.

“one hundred and forty seven men joined the IWW at once.”¹¹⁶ Aberdeen Mayor James Parks even issued a resolution asserting that the growth of the IWW was “brought about by agitation carried on at the Red Finnish Hall on First Street, the IWW hall on Heron street, and the Croatian hall in South Aberdeen.”¹¹⁷

Socialists waged the free speech fight alongside the Wobblies, using their prominent positions in Aberdeen to lobby city officials and arrange compromises with municipal officials. From the time Aberdeen city officials passed the first ordinance prohibiting street speaking on 2 August 1911, socialists attended that city’s council meetings to lobby for the right to “address the larger crowds which congregate on the principal streets.”¹¹⁸ In early January 1912, a group of prominent members of the English-speaking branch of the Aberdeen SPA that included Max Korn, Adam Schubert, and E. V. Harvey met with Aberdeen municipal officials to arrange a compromise ending the conflict.¹¹⁹ Only a few days earlier, approximately seven hundred people attended a meeting at the Aberdeen “Red” Finn hall where socialists attacked the citizens’ committee as a “pick handle brigade” and “tools of the capitalists,” and argued that the “IWW was the advanced guard” of the working class in the contemporary class struggle.¹²⁰ Harbor socialists also turned to their typewriters, writing letters and resolutions, “unreservedly commend[ing] the attitude of the IWW in its fight for free speech and the essentials of civil liberty.”¹²¹ They too committed their local newspaper,

¹¹⁶ *Industrial Worker*, 28 March 1912.

¹¹⁷ *Grays Harbor Post*, 6 April 1912.

¹¹⁸ The full text of the first street speaking ordinance, number 1084 appeared in the *Grays Harbor Post*, 5 August 1911. For socialist efforts to challenge the ordinance by attending Aberdeen city council meetings, see *Daily Washingtonian*, 5 October 1911; *Grays Harbor Post*, 7 October 1911.

¹¹⁹ *Aberdeen Herald*, 11 January 1912; *Grays Harbor Post*, 13 January 1912.

¹²⁰ *Aberdeen Herald*, 8 January 1912; *Industrial Worker*, 11 January 1912.

¹²¹ Resolution of Hoquiam Local No. 1, SPA, adopted at its regular meeting in the Finnish Hall, 26 November 1911, printed in the *Industrial Worker*, 14 December 1911.

the *New Era*, to the cause of the strikers.¹²² One issue of the *New Era* attacked the employers for forming a “mob” that took “possession of the city,” and urged local unionists to more vocally support the free speech fight. It read, “Do you think, Mr. Union Man, that you would be safe from mob rule if you should object to any treatment your employer should wish to impose upon you while this citizens’ committee is in charge? Think it over and remember that if there isn’t a law to fit your case, mob law can be made to cover many things.”¹²³

Women aided in the free speech fight by taking to the streets demonstrating alongside their male comrades. Women, most of whom were members of the FSF, were front and center during Harbor labor struggles, bearing much of class anger directed from employers and police. “All of the women participating in the picketing of the mills are said to be Finlanders,” wrote the *Daily World* on 10 April, which continued, “18 women pickets who were on duty” at the Donovan mill, “were driven from the mill when the fire hose was trained on them, as they attempted to enter the mill property.”¹²⁴ On 23 November 1911, “an immense throng” of men, women, and children marched to the Aberdeen city hall to demand repeal of the speaking prohibition. To disperse the crowd, Aberdeen police chief L. D. Templeman turned the city fire hose on free speech fighters, assaulting women pushing baby carriages and children standing beside their parents. The *Industrial Worker* reported, “The fire hose was brought into play and thousands . . . were

¹²² The *New Era* was published in Aberdeen beginning in 1911. *R. L. Polk and Company’s Grays Harbor Cities Directory* (1911), 18, 173; (1912), 46, 133, 147. The *Industrial Worker* noted the assistance of Evans’ *New Era* as “the only paper on Grays Harbor that is disposed to give us fair treatment.” See LeWarne, 7; *Industrial Worker*, 11 January 1912. A resolution supporting the free speech fighters written by the Puyallup, Washington local of the SPA was reprinted in the *Industrial Worker*, 21 December 1911.

¹²³ Article entitled “Stop and Think” from the *New Era* (Aberdeen, WA) reprinted in the *Industrial Worker*, 14 December 1911.

¹²⁴ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 10 April 1912.

drenched for being ‘rioters.’”¹²⁵ The *Seattle Star*, a mainstream newspaper supportive of the strikers’ cause, cast Finnish-American women picketers Anna Kaakinen, Fannie Kaarinen, and Sophy Sipela in a heroic light for standing their ground as “imported bullies” and “gunmen” sprayed them and their fellow picketers with a fire hose. The article reported,

A fire hose was run out and the water turned on. The stream struck the ground with terrific force at the women’s feet, dashing mud and water on their bodies and in their faces.

The imported bullies roared with laughter at the excellent joke.

And the line wavered.

Back and back they fell, half drowned and strangling. Many were knocked down by the force of the stream. The men at the nozzle played it up and down the line.

The line broke.

But one woman -- Mrs. Kaakinen -- did not retreat. Instead, she advanced upon the men at the nozzle -- advanced until the inch stream was hitting her full in the breast. She staggered under the force of it.

And she laughed in the faces of the bullies -- laughed sturdily, good-naturedly and called upon the quaking “scabs” to quit work and call the strike.

Then came Miss Kaarinen and Mrs. Sipela and stood by her side; and they, too, laughed.¹²⁶

Like Kaakinen, Kaarinen, and Sipela, many of the female pickets refused to back down from the citizens’ committees, and began, in the words of the *Industrial Worker*, “bearing the brunt of the picketing” by late March.¹²⁷ According to IWW J. S. Biscay, “the women began to help picket the mills. This sudden move on the part of the women practically tied up all the mills which opened Monday, and put the Slade mill in such bad shape that slabs had to be hauled from the outside to keep the fires going.”¹²⁸ Carrie Walker, the proprietor of an Aberdeen barber shop, was among those arrested for

¹²⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 1 February 1912.

¹²⁶ *Seattle Star*, 13 April 1912.

¹²⁷ *Aberdeen Herald*, 11 April 1912.

¹²⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 18 April 1912.

“inciting to riot” for her leading role on the picket lines.¹²⁹ For her actions, Walker was tossed in a jail while her shop was closed by the police, all because, in the words of Bruce Rogers, “she stood up for the boys.”¹³⁰ On 9 April, twenty-five Aberdeen women “laid hold” of scabs trying to enter the Slade mill and “persuaded several not” to cross the line.¹³¹ On 10 April, women picketers traveled into the woods that surrounded the Harbor towns and cut “500 long whips in the woods . . . and it was rumored this noon [11 April] that they would use these in a demonstration to be made at the Slade and Wilson mills when the workmen quit at 6 o’clock tonight.”¹³² For their militancy the female picketers were physically attacked by local authorities. Mrs. Lundgren, one of the female picketers, was beaten with a club in “the hands of a burly deputy.”¹³³ The situation was even worse in the Aberdeen and Hoquiam jails, where women were “roughly handled by the deputies” and beaten with blackjacks. One new mother “with a three month’s old nursing baby at her breast” was tossed into a “foul, unsanitary” jail cell.¹³⁴

During the free speech fight women also served prominently as politicized consumers, using their purchasing power to punish members of the Aberdeen Citizens’ Committee. Wobblies declared a boycott against members of the “merchant police” who fought them in the free speech fight.¹³⁵ A “do not patronize list” was printed in the *Industrial Worker* with a long list of Harbor merchants, lumbermen, city officials, and

¹²⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 18 April 1912; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 2 April 1912; *Aberdeen Herald*, 1 April 1912.

¹³⁰ On Carrie Walker, see *Aberdeen Herald*, 1 April 1912; *Oregonian*, 2 April 1912; United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County, City of Aberdeen. Walker’s activism also gained her some notoriety in radical circles. Her photograph was prominently featured in the *International Socialist Review*, the caption reading “jailed because she stood up for ‘the boys.’” Bruce Rogers, “The War of Gray’s [sic] Harbor,” 753.

¹³¹ *Industrial Worker*, 18 April 1912.

¹³² *Aberdeen Daily World*, 11 April 1912.

¹³³ *Industrial Worker*, 18 April 1912.

¹³⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 18 April 1912; *Solidarity*, 20 April 1912.

¹³⁵ “An Inquirer Answered,” *Agitator* 2:5, (15 January 1912): 1.

local newspaper editors. George J. Wolff, owner of a large Aberdeen department store, was singled out for his actions as part of the “ax handle brigade”:

The proprietor of a large department store here was asked to carry a club on November 24, but he said, “Nothing doing, I make my living off the working people, and I won’t help drive them out of town.” A few days before Christmas a lady went into this department store for some goods, and found all the clerks jumping sideways to wait on customers, while the shelves had been stripped almost bare by the holiday shoppers. Presently she crossed the street to the store of George J. Wolf, one of the ax handle merchants, but there the clerks were standing with folded arms and the shelves were piled with goods as if they had hardly been touched.¹³⁶

Certain progressive trade unions were likewise active, both in support of the IWWs during the free speech fight and striking alongside the Wobblies in 1912. High-ranking officials with the Washington State Federation of Labor (WSFL), including federation president C. R. Case and International Shingle Weavers’ Union of America (ISWUA) president J. G. Brown, visited the Harbor during both conflicts, spoke in support of the strikers, and issued resolutions condemning the “damnable un-American and unenduring conditions of employment” at the Harbor mills, as well as the violent methods employers used to break the strike.¹³⁷ The Everett, Washington, Trades Council was likewise supportive of the Wobblies, arguing through its journal that “skilled workmen, members of the A.F. of L. unions, and common laborers affiliated with the IWW are alike engaged in the strike.”¹³⁸ The Hoquiam Labor Council supported the strikers and applauded WSFL president Case for his support of the strike.¹³⁹ Socialist and syndicalist members of Harbor unions, including V. T. Evans, an official in the

¹³⁶ *Industrial Worker*, 11 January 1912. The Aberdeen Citizens’ Committee was referred to as the “ax handle brigade” in the *Industrial Worker*, 11 January 1912.

¹³⁷ *Labor Journal* (Everett, Washington), 26 April; 31 May 1912; *Grays Harbor Post*, 20 January; 4 May 1912.

¹³⁸ *Labor Journal*, 29 March; 26 April 1912. The *Seattle Union Record* was also supportive of the strikers’ demands. See *Seattle Union Record*, 6, 27 April; 25 May 1912.

¹³⁹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 28, 29 March 1912; Dreyfus, “Timber Workers,” 129; *Seattle Union Record*, 25 May 1912.

WSFL, strongly supported the Wobblies through the *New Era*, an Aberdeen socialist newspaper he edited.¹⁴⁰ Allied most closely with the IWW were the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and ISWUA, both of which had joined the 1912 lumber strike alongside the Wobblies within a week of its start.¹⁴¹ Summarizing the relationship between the IWW and other unions engaged in the strike, the *Industrial Worker* wrote:

The shingle weavers are pledged to give their support in this strike and the strikers have all agreed not to return to work until their demands are granted and no discrimination shown.

The Longshoremen in Aberdeen, both of the IWW and ILA, are standing with the strikers and in Hoquiam they will do the same.¹⁴²

Support for the Wobblies even extended outside of the working class as some local merchants, professionals, and farmers came to the radicals' assistance. Small business owners such as barber Carrie Walker, merchant tailor Adam Schubert, newspaper editor V. T. Evans, and the proprietors of the Hefron Tavern and Red Theater supported the Wobblies by picketing, writing positively of the movement in the leftist press, advertising in the socialist press, and refusing to join the "merchant police" during the conflict.¹⁴³ Some of these employers, including V. T. Evans, were former members of the working class, while merchants such as Carrie Walker served a predominantly working-class clientele and thus had an interest in her customers receiving high wages.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census for the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County, City of Aberdeen; *R. L. Polk and Company's Grays Harbor Cities Directory* (1908).

¹⁴⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 18 April 1912; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 2 April 1912.

¹⁴¹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 23 March 1912; *Industrial Worker*, 28 March; 4 April 1912; Dreyfus, "Timber Workers," 124-126.

¹⁴² *Industrial Worker*, 28 March 1912.

¹⁴³ *Industrial Worker*, 11 January 1912. On Schubert's involvement in the IWW movement, see *Grays Harbor Post*, 14 August 1915.

¹⁴⁴ On Evans, see United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census for the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County, City of Aberdeen; *R. L. Polk and Company's Grays Harbor Cities Directory*

The *Industrial Worker* praised the “business men who were manly enough to refuse to line up with the Lumber Barons in suppressing the IWW [who] are now reaping the benefit of their courage. Saturday night, the store of a clothing dealer was crowded far beyond its capacity. This dealer was one of the few merchants who refused to serve as special police.”¹⁴⁵ Members of the Elma Grange offered what was perhaps the most unequivocal support for the IWW in April 1912 when it issued a resolution printed in the local press that condemned the “parasitic mill owners and exploiters of labor,” and extended its sympathies to the strikers.¹⁴⁶

IWWs also actively recruited support from members of the Harbor clergy, and according to the *Daily Washingtonian*, one of their “leaders” was “formerly a Methodist preacher.”¹⁴⁷ Another source of church support for the Wobblies came from Hoquiam mayor and Baptist minister Harry Ferguson.¹⁴⁸ Elected in 1911 due to “a heavy vote from the working people” and because “the fair sex rallied to his support,” the mayor supported the 1912 lumber strike. He refused to stop strikers from going into Hoquiam mills that had not joined the strike to solicit support from workers.¹⁴⁹ Ferguson’s politics were a mixture of reformism and socialism, and he even asserted that he attended IWW meetings but did not join “because he is not a working man.” Using his connections within the church, Ferguson toured “churches and Salvation Army meetings,” where he

(1908); State of Washington, *Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor*, Eleventh Biennial Report, 1918 (Olympia: Public Printer, 1918), 79; *Grays Harbor Post*, 15 January 1910; 6 March 1915. This shows him as secretary of the Aberdeen TLC (ATLC) in 1915; *Southwest Washington Labor Press* (Hoquiam), 5 March 1915.

¹⁴⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 14 December 1911.

¹⁴⁶ *Aberdeen Herald*, 29 April 1912. The full text of the Elma Grange’s resolution was printed in Dreyfus, “Timber Workers,” 155.

¹⁴⁷ *Daily Washingtonian*, 27 December 1911; *Grays Harbor Post*, 13 April 1912.

¹⁴⁸ *Grays Harbor Post*, 13 April 1912.

¹⁴⁹ *Daily Washingtonian*, 1 August 1911; 16 March 1912.

“preaches and prays for arbitration and peace.”¹⁵⁰ Defeated in a recall election sponsored by the Hoquiam Citizens’ Committee in June 1912, Ferguson became closely affiliated with the SPA and delivered soapbox speeches, arguing that “capital should be rolled up and shipped out of the country and labor would be just as well off” around the Northwest.¹⁵¹ Thus Ferguson, a reformer who showed mild support for a strike in his community, was radicalized by his conflicts with the militantly anti-union employers of Grays Harbor.

Support for the IWW flowed from many parts of the community as a large number of individual workers, if not entire organizations, went beyond support to outright affiliation with the IWW. During the mass lumber strike of 1912, men and women, workers from several ethnic groups and trades joined the IWW. In this heated period of conflict, IWW influence and membership grew most dramatically. Between July 1911 and May 1912, membership in the revolutionary organization skyrocketed from thirty-one to more than one thousand members with “strikers . . . coming into the IWW at the rate of from 125 to 150 daily, in Aberdeen alone,” according to one IWW account.¹⁵² At least three locals were founded: Aberdeen and Hoquiam branches of the NIULW and the Aberdeen MTWIU.¹⁵³ According to one labor spy, there were more than one thousand IWWs “employed in the mills and logging camps of Grays Harbor” in late July 1912.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ *Seattle Star*, 16 April 1912.

¹⁵¹ *Oregonian*, 21 March 1912; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 1 August; 5 September 1912. Historian Philip J. Dreyfus stated that Ferguson was a “man of the political center,” a conclusion that is difficult to reconcile with the former mayor’s support for socialism. See Dreyfus, “Timber Workers,” 154.

¹⁵² W. S. Seavey to E. G. Ames, 29 July 1912, Edwin Gardner Ames Papers, Accession No. 3820, Box 93, Folder 29, UW; *Industrial Worker*, 28 March; 4 April 1912.

¹⁵³ *Industrial Worker*, 29 February 1912.

¹⁵⁴ W. S. Seavey to E. G. Ames, 29 July 1912, Edwin Gardner Ames Papers, Accession No. 3820, Box 93, Folder 29, UW.

Immigrant laborers also flocked into the folds of the IWW. In fact, Greek-American laborers at the North Western mill were the first to walk off the job, and numerous commentators labeled the conflict the “Greek strike.”¹⁵⁵ Writing of the militancy of Greek workers and the degree of inter-ethnic solidarity, the *Industrial Worker* declared, “The lumber barons are at their wits ends and are circulating the most absurd stories. First they were not going to employ any more Greeks, but were to hire nothing but Americans. . . . Every one of the nationalities is standing firm as the rock of Gibraltar and amid tremendous enthusiasm and loud cheers it was declared that all or none must go back to work.”¹⁵⁶

Immigrant laborers were not merely the instigators of the 1912 strike and rank-and-file members of the IWW, but were also among the movement’s leaders. Strike meetings were addressed in several languages, as was the eight-thousand-person-strong demonstration at Electric Park on 31 March, where “there were speakers in many different languages, in fact more speakers than time would permit to hear.”¹⁵⁷ The women who took over picket duties in April 1912 were “almost all the wives of ‘Red’ Finns,” according to the *Aberdeen Herald*, a likely possibility considering the large number of female Finnish socialists on the Harbor.¹⁵⁸ Within a day of the strike’s onset, Grays Harbor IWWs formed an eight-man inter-ethnic strike committee composed of two Finns, two Greeks, two Scandinavians, and two English-speakers.¹⁵⁹ The committee had more than token importance. With the rank and file in control of their own affairs,

¹⁵⁵ *Oregonian*, 19, 20, 29 March 1912.

¹⁵⁶ *Industrial Worker*, 28 March 1912.

¹⁵⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 4 April 1912.

¹⁵⁸ *Aberdeen Herald*, 11 April 1912. On the composition of the Grays Harbor locals of the FSF, see Chapter 6.

¹⁵⁹ *Daily Washingtonian*, 15 March 1912.

immigrant workers became more active in the conflict, giving speeches in their own languages, guiding fellow workers along picket lines, and physically fighting the boss. Nor was this a top-down operation, where orders were shouted down from a top heavy, if multi-lingual, leadership group. Instead, leadership was decentralized into strike captains, writers, boycott organizers, and a seemingly infinite number of “leaders” that the mainstream press had difficulty comprehending. Even the conservative labor newspaper *Grays Harbor Post* admitted, although not flatteringly, that “They [the IWW] lack head. They have no center to work from.”¹⁶⁰ Indeed, while the local mainstream press declared that “IWW Leaders Work Up Strike” and “Greeks Are Leaders,” each of the local mainstream organs related several stories referring to a vast number of “leaders,” which forces us to ask who was leading and who was being led.¹⁶¹

Greek strikers occupied important positions within the organization, helping to devise and implement the tactics necessary to coordinate a strike across a vast geographic area, and keep scabs out of the twenty struck mills. In what the *Daily World* admitted was a “cleverly planned” operation, two hundred strikers surrounded the Aberdeen Lumber and Shingle mill in south Aberdeen.¹⁶² When scabs tried to enter the plant, “strikers closed in on them,” and sought to keep them away from entering the mill. Strikebreaker W. V. Leavitt was pulled off his bike and “badly beaten,” William Oldaker was “attacked from behind and hit several blows on the head,” while W. Johnson was beat up by “a score of Greeks.”¹⁶³ Earlier in the strike, before Harbor longshoremen had joined the picket lines, “a number of Greeks” took the initiative of persuading the dock

¹⁶⁰ *Grays Harbor Post*, 6 April 1912.

¹⁶¹ *Daily Washingtonian*, 15 March 1912; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 26 March 1912.

¹⁶² *Aberdeen Daily World*, 27 March 1912.

¹⁶³ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 27 March 1912.

workers to join the strike, traveling to the docks to ask them to stop working and carrying signs “warning all longshoremen to keep away from the Aberdeen mills.”¹⁶⁴

As the efforts of the Greek strikers to bring about a strike at the Aberdeen Lumber and Shingle mill showed, the IWW was not a “cult of spontaneity,” the deprecatory term later employed by Communists to refer to the group.¹⁶⁵ Instead, Wobblies could be careful planners, capable of coordinating a large group of activists who were engaged in varied types of actions. This was true during free speech fight when Wobblies devised an elaborate scheme for sneaking into Aberdeen, which was under martial law at the time, and during the 1912 lumber strike in which IWWs coordinated a strike among seventeen mills spread across two counties.¹⁶⁶ William J. Patterson, head of the Aberdeen Citizens’ Committee, explained how the geography of Aberdeen and the surrounding forests helped the Wobblies to thwart his organization’s efforts to permanently remove the radicals from Aberdeen, as “our town lies open along its entire circumference in the forest, except for the open stretch of the harbor, and every morning hundreds seemed to have filtered in to take the place of the tens we had filtered out.”¹⁶⁷ Fortunately for the Wobblies, many of their members had knowledge of the terrain surrounding Aberdeen, a fact that aided their efforts to sneak back into town after their expulsion.

The great size of the IWW movement, its base in the community, and its self-activated membership could not stave off defeat at the hands of an equally activist employing class operating with the support of the state. After two months of advertising

¹⁶⁴ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 20 March 1912.

¹⁶⁵ J. Peter Campbell, “The Cult of Spontaneity: Finnish-Canadian Bushworkers and the Industrial Workers of the World in Northern Ontario, 1919-1934,” *Labour/Le Travail* 41 (Spring 1998): 117.

¹⁶⁶ For early examples of Wobblies’ coordinated organizational activities in Grays Harbor, see Mark Reed to E. G. Ames, 1 December 1911, Edwin Gardner Ames Papers, Accession No. 3820, Box 16, Folder 22, UW; McGuckin, *Memoirs of A Wobbly*, 35-39; *Industrial Worker*, 1 February; 4 April 1912; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 1 April 1912.

¹⁶⁷ Bruere, *Following the Trail of the IWW*, 19.

for scabs “from the Atlantic coast as well as from near by,” constructing housing and finding permanent homes for the replacement workers, and guarding the scabs’ every move, Aberdeen and Hoquiam employers finally broke the strike at the end of April, offering “white labor” a new minimum wage of \$2.25 per day.¹⁶⁸ By making the offer only to whites, Harbor employers consciously sought to root out their “black” and “foreign” workers, especially the Greek-American mill hands who were active in the strike and were believed to be guilty of “idleness and mooching” by local lumbermen.¹⁶⁹ Various press outlets warmly greeted the lumbermen’s victory, declaring that the “Revolution On Harbor Fails” and proclaiming that the “IWW strike is Broken in Harbor Country.”¹⁷⁰ The *Industrial Worker* picked up on this fact, scorning “the press of the plutocracy united in their exclamations of glee over the defeat of the IWW.”¹⁷¹ Much of the crowing came not over breaking the strike, but of the removal from town of several undesirable radicals, including stayed harbor residents W. I. Fisher and William Thorn, as well as itinerant agitators like Bruce Rogers and Dr. Herman Titus.¹⁷²

Grays Harbor Wobblies declared the strike at an end on 27 April 1912.¹⁷³ The strike had brought little in the way of improvement for Harbor workers, especially the militant lumber and maritime workers who first brought it about. But contrary to the arguments of many historians, the IWW movement did not die when the workers returned

¹⁶⁸ Dreyfus, *The IWW and the Limits*,” 462.

¹⁶⁹ From the start of the strike, lumbermen and their allies in the press sought to depict the strike as the product of agitations by foreign workers. *Oregonian*, 16 March 1912; *Aberdeen Herald*, 1 April 1912; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 15, 22, 23 March; 6 April 1912.

¹⁷⁰ *Grays Harbor Post*, 13 April 1912; *Aberdeen Herald*, 11 April 1912.

¹⁷¹ *Industrial Worker*, 18 April; 23 May 1912.

¹⁷² *Aberdeen Daily World*, 26 April 1912; *Industrial Worker*, 25 April; 1 May 1912.

¹⁷³ Dreyfus, “*Timber Workers*,” 152.

to their jobs.¹⁷⁴ While mill owners, small businessmen, and editors did their best to deport the Wobblies, physically abuse them, and blacklist them from jobs on the Harbor, many IWWs retained their affiliation with the organization for years after the conclusion to the strike.¹⁷⁵ Additionally, one thing the strike did accomplish was to deepen the links between the Grays Harbor IWWs and their community. An IWW-led coalition of radical working men and women had sustained the strikers and their families throughout the struggle. The rank-and-file strike committee established commissaries, soup kitchens, a newspaper, and primitive medical facilities for families suffering from the repressive acts of local employers and state agents. These important acts knitted the IWW to local workers. Formerly non-union laborers were acutely aware that the only reason they were able to sustain the strike as long as they did, amid local merchants' refusals to issue credit, the destruction of the strikers' soup kitchens, and the imposition of heavy legal fines for picket duty offenses, was through the organized efforts of the IWW, who provided food, shelter, news, and emergency medical care during a humanitarian crisis created by their employers.¹⁷⁶ As subsequent chapters will illustrate, the Wobblies' links in the community were far deeper than most scholars have observed, and certainly deep enough to carry on after their defeat in the 1912 lumber strike.

¹⁷⁴ This has been the contention made by all earlier historians of the Grays Harbor IWW. For example, see Dreyfus, "Reds, Whites, and Greeks"; *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 4; LeWarne, "The Aberdeen."

¹⁷⁵ On employers' concerted attacks on the Grays Harbor IWW, see Chapter 3.

¹⁷⁶ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 29 March 1912; *Industrial Worker*, 4, 11 April; 1, 9 May 1912.

CHAPTER VIII
WOBBLY PERSEVERANCE,
COMMUNITY PRESENCE, AND MILITANCY, 1912-1917

The Wobblies were defeated in the 1912 lumber strike. Many local activists were driven from the Harbor through acts of violence, deportations, the blacklist, and attempts to replace “foreign” labor with “All American” crews.¹ However, neither their defeat in the strike nor the loss of their best-known organizers signaled an end to the IWW movement on the Harbor. Instead, by 1912 the Wobblies had developed deep roots in Grays Harbor’s working-class community, particularly among radical immigrants. These workers continued to meet, write, publish, and agitate for better working conditions under IWW auspices throughout the mid-1910s before re-emerging as part of a mass Wobbly movement during the latter part of 1916.

The IWW-led struggles of 1911 and 1912 on the Harbor were made possible by the support given to the strikers by numerous segments of the community. Working-class women and immigrants, trade unionists, socialists, as well as some members of the middle class worked alongside the IWW in community-wide struggles against local lumber employers. These struggles cemented local workers’ identifications with the IWW. Some of these men and women retained their institutional affiliations with the IWW after the 1912 strike, while still more retained a supportive or sympathetic view of the One Big Union during the mid-1910s. As this chapter will argue, Grays Harbor workers’ identification with the IWW was not extinguished during the lean years of IWW organizing during the recession of 1913-1915, but was instead maintained by groups of workers who joined and supported the IWW during their first major strike on the Harbor.

¹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 23 March 1912.

Indeed, the number of workers who struck under an IWW banner in 1917 and the amount of support the strikers received in the community were indications of the degree of community support enjoyed by the Wobblies during the years of World War I.

Community support had many sources, including the socialist elected officials who refused to allow the Grays Harbor IWW to be violently repressed, and local merchants who delivered financial and moral support to the radicals.

By June 1917, the Grays Harbor IWW again had a major presence in Grays Harbor. With more than one thousand members, networks of support throughout the community, and members throughout the Harbor's large manufacturing and transportation industries, the IWW was easily the largest and most influential union in the region. But Harbor IWWs were not content with union membership; instead, they sought to harness that organization into a mass organization capable of challenging their employers on the job and in the community. Indeed, while many scholars have recorded the events of the 1917 IWW lumber strike, few have taken note of two of its outstanding characteristics: its beginnings as a local strike in Grays Harbor and the fact that it was a wildcat strike that was initiated by the rank and file against the wishes of IWW officials. That Grays Harbor workers sparked the 1917 lumber strike, and struck in defiance of their elected officials' directives, contradict arguments made by earlier historians of the IWW such as Melvyn Dubofsky, who argued that, "It was in response to the IWW's strike call that thousands of men left their jobs and partially paralyzed the lumber industry."² In this claim Dubofsky puts the figurative cart before the horse. In fact, Grays Harbor IWWs, men and women experienced with Wobbly strikes and the day-to-day realities of class struggle, were well out in front of their so-called leaders in Seattle

² Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 362.

and Chicago. Indeed, in 1917 the Wobbly rank and file struck in defiance of IWW bureaucrats who urged a more cautious path.

Throughout the mid-1910s, as repression and recession decimated the IWW's ranks across the Pacific Northwest, small groups of Wobblies continued to meet in Grays Harbor, write for the Wobbly press, publish newspapers of their own, and organize their fellow workers. These seasoned IWW veterans formed the core of an IWW movement that expanded rapidly in late 1916 and 1917, recruited thousands of Harbor workers into its ranks, and reached its peak in size and influence during the great IWW lumber strike of 1917.³ However, the IWW organizing that led up to that seminal event in labor history remains largely untouched. Thus, this chapter traces the history of the Grays Harbor IWW from the defeat of their union and physical removal of several of their activists at the close of the 1912 lumber strike to the mass lumber strike of July 1917 when thousands of Grays Harbor mill workers and loggers joined their fellow workers across the Pacific Northwest in conducting the largest strike in the region's history. As I argue, the great strike wave of 1917 was brought about by the self-activated rank and file of the Grays Harbor IWW, who had been organizing themselves into Wobbly locals for months, and sometimes years, prior to the strike.

At no point during the 1910s was the IWW removed from Grays Harbor, even if many of its well-known agitators remained at a safe distance from a region called "ax handleville" by Wobbly activists.⁴ For example, in July 1912, three months after the collapse of the IWW strike, the head of the Thiel Detective Agency estimated that there

³ Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 341; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 551-553.

⁴ *Solidarity*, 2 March 1912.

were still more than one thousand IWWs working in Grays Harbor.⁵ In September 1912, Big Bill Haywood wrote that “the filthy jails of Hoquiam and Aberdeen are filled with our men.”⁶ During late 1912, mainstream and trade publications issued hurried notices ranging from the Wobblies’ efforts to sign up mill hands at Blagen mill in Hoquiam to their hanging of a “headquarters” sign on a “conspicuous” street corner, and calling for a follow-up strike to begin on 1 August.⁷ Fearing that the IWW “would be much in evidence” at the 1912 Labor Day parade, conservative labor unionists took the unusual step of banning the syndicalist organization from their celebration, declaring there would be “no IWW banner” in Grays Harbor on Labor Day.⁸ In January 1913 Harbor Wobbly I. O. Anderson implored his fellow workers to “Bump Grays Harbor Bosses Again.”⁹ As late as July 1913, Wobblies issued calls “To Grays Harbor Loggers” in the *Industrial Worker* and *Voice of the People*, and Finnish-speaking radicals on the Harbor were so attracted to the syndicalism of the IWW that they broke with their comrades in the FSF and joined the IWW.¹⁰

Another indication of the IWW’s presence on the Harbor can be found in the writings of Wobbly journalists, who continued to publish papers in Grays Harbor and write to national Wobbly organs such as the *Industrial Worker* and *Voice of the People* even after the defeat of the 1912 strike. Though the *Industrial Worker*, primary organ of the western IWW, halted circulation on 4 September 1913 and was not revived until three

⁵ W. S. Seavey to E. G. Ames, 29 July 1912, Edwin Gardner Ames Papers, Accession No. 3820, Box 93, Folder 29, UW.

⁶ William D. Haywood, “The Fighting IWW,” *International Socialist Review* 8:3 (September 1912): 247.

⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 30 May 1912; *Pacific Lumber Trade Journal*, (19 April 1912): 24.

⁸ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 12 August 1912.

⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 30 January 1913.

¹⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 3 July 1913; *Voice of the People* (New Orleans), 23 April; 11 September 1913; 19 March 1914. Wobbly organizer F. H. Allison also noted the presence of IWW activity on the Harbor in *Industrial Worker*, 13 March 1913.

years later on 1 April 1916, two short-run Grays Harbor Wobbly papers helped to fill its void.¹¹ The first, called the *Greek*, was a short sheet printed briefly by a group of Wobblies expelled from the town of Raymond during the 1912 lumber strike. These radicals settled at the site of a boys' reformatory camp along Grays Harbor's south beach, took over the camp, and published the organ to satisfy their need for intellectual discourse.¹² Two years later, a second Wobbly newspaper of an unknown name was printed in Aberdeen and written by the Hoquiam local of the IWW, which by one account was operating throughout 1914 and 1915. While no copies of the paper exist, and no previous scholar has mentioned the sheet, the *Grays Harbor Post* editor J. W. Clarke argued that the newspaper and its "Hoquiam IWW" publishers were determined "to destroy stable government or reputations."¹³ Harbor Wobblies also wrote articles for and letters to the *Lumberjack* and *Voice of the People*, two southern publications edited by Covington Hall.¹⁴ If few in number, these writings nonetheless indicated the persistent presence of Harbor Wobblies. Such was the case with "A LOGGER," from Hoquiam, who complained that "Only a very small per cent of the IWW members I meet are taking the IWW papers. . . . There are always some men around who are anxious to see them, but as there are usually two to four bunkhouses in a camp, three papers do not go very far. Suppose that there are one to three members in each bunkhouse, all taking the three

¹¹ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 4, 150.

¹² *Aberdeen Daily World*, 24 August 1912.

¹³ *Grays Harbor Post*, 1 March 1913; 28 November 1914.

¹⁴ Covington Hall, *Labor Struggles in the Deep South and Other Writings*, ed. David Roediger (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1999), 195; *Voice of the People* (New Orleans), 23 April; 11 September 1913; 19 March 1914.

papers, could there be any better education than the SILENT AGITATOR will give them?”¹⁵

During the mid-1910s, the largest source of IWW membership on the Harbor came from disaffected members of the Finnish Socialist Federation (FSF), who departed the Finnish socialist organization for the IWW. In fact, radical members of the FSF across the nation left that organization in droves during the middle part of the 1910s. The schism on the Finnish left broke wide open in 1914-1915 when fifty-five FSF branches, and three thousand members left the FSF to join the IWW. The breakaway Finn branches included three of Washington State’s largest FSF locals: Seattle, Spokane, and Aberdeen, the last of which brought upwards of two hundred socialists into the IWW to form a long-standing Finnish-American syndicalist core on the Harbor.¹⁶ According to a history of the Aberdeen FSF, the two groups of radicals were divided by ideology. The “radical” syndicalist side was composed of Anselm Nurmi, Victor Lampi, Antti and Hellen Vitikainen, Sakarias Kankaanpaa, Otto Manttari, William Vuoti, Antti Korhonen, and August and Hellen Niemi. A significant minority of “moderates” included socialists William Ketola, Leonard Tuuri, and Hipila and Albert Carlson who remained within the Aberdeen FSF throughout the 1910s.¹⁷ Elsewhere, as in Astoria and Hoquiam, leftist Finns quit the FSF to form Finnish Marxist Clubs. These clubs withdrew support for *Toveri*, then under control of parliamentarians in Astoria, and invested in the *Sosialisti*, a

¹⁵ *Lumberjack* (Alexandria, LA), 23 April 1913. This was the only copy of the *Lumberjack* that I was able to recover with news from Grays Harbor. The newspaper’s predecessor *The Voice of the People* also ran an article from an Aberdeen IWW on 11 September 1913.

¹⁶ Sulkanen, ed., *Amerikan Suomalaisen Työväenliikkeen historia*, 466-469; Aku Rissanen, *Suomalaisten Sosialistiosastojen ja Työväenyhdistysten*, 51-52.

¹⁷ Sulkanen, *Amerikan Suomalaisen*, 466-467.

Duluth-based newspaper printed by socialists with IWW support.¹⁸ Grays Harbor radicals eagerly embraced this new Finnish-language IWW newspaper, and in a special December 1916 of the organ, 225 Aberdeen and Hoquiam residents were listed as supporters of the radical sheet.¹⁹ The *Sosialisti* specifically addressed Grays Harbor's Finnish lumber workers, urging them to join the IWW.²⁰ Even those "Red" Finns who remained within the Grays Harbor FSF lent support to their Wobbly comrades, contributing to IWW subscription lists for the Mesabi iron range strike in Minnesota in 1916.²¹ One itinerant Wobbly asked for a Finnish-speaking organizer to come to the Harbor to help sway more workers in the direction of the IWW by describing the repression experienced by the radicals during the Minnesota conflict.²²

In spite of the IWW's perseverance on the Harbor during the mid-1910s, the group failed to mobilize into a mass movement. This failure was caused in part by the recession of 1913-1915. In fact, while historians have argued that the violent repression of 1911-1912 destroyed the Grays Harbor IWW, these years of high unemployment made union organizing of any type difficult.²³ Between late 1912 and mid-1916, as the lumber industry contracted, labor produced, in the words of Cloice R. Howd, "little profits for any of the mills."²⁴ The recession fell especially hard upon working families. Across Washington State the economy worsened as businesses folded and workers were tossed

¹⁸ Auvo Kostiainen, "A Dissenting Voice of Finnish Radicals in America: The Formative Years of *Sosialisti-Industrialisti* in the 1910s," *American Studies in Scandinavia* 23 (1991): 83-94. Notably, the *Toveri*, the largest Finnish socialist publication in the West, did not support the IWW strike in Grays Harbor, a fact that surely disaffected the large number of Finnish American strikers and strike supporters on the Harbor. See Hummasti, 98-101.

¹⁹ *Sosialisti* (Duluth, MN), 21 December 1916.

²⁰ *Sosialisti*, 8 January; 25 November 1916.

²¹ *Industrial Worker*, 5 August 1916.

²² *Industrial Worker*, 3 July 1913; 5 August 1916.

²³ For general information about the 1913-1915 recession, see Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 435-436.

²⁴ Howd, 24.

out of their jobs. Many of those jobs that were available provided only part-time work. In fact, the Washington State Bureau of Labor Statistics admitted in 1914 that at least twenty percent of the state's employees consisted of a "transient mass of workmen who constantly patronize the employment agencies and form this state's 'army of the unemployed.'"²⁵ The year 1914 provided especially tough with lumber and shingle prices bottoming out from mid-1914 to late 1915. On the Harbor, the closures of the Slade Lumber Company and Bay City mill only added to the workers' troubles.²⁶ The Slade mill was Aberdeen's largest plant and its closure forced more than three hundred workers onto the skids and public wood yards.²⁷ These were also years of a major lumbermen's offensive against unions, especially the shingle weavers, who faced dozens of lockouts during the year 1915 alone, and lost much of its membership in the process.²⁸ Wobblies were also the targets of repression. Labor spies tailed the rebel workers and intercepted their mail, dutifully forwarding it to their patron lumbermen. W. S. Seavey, spy for the Seattle branch of the Thiel Detective Service, informed major employers that the "'Wont [sic] Work' gang has guilty knowledge of the burning of the seven sawmills the last three months on Puget Sound," and maintained a file on Wobbly John Pancner, who remained locked in the Aberdeen jail throughout much of late 1912.²⁹

²⁵ State of Washington, *Ninth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 51.

²⁶ Howd, 18-19. The Slade Lumber Company closed its large Aberdeen mill in August 1914. *Aberdeen Daily World*, 16 April 1917. The Bay City Mill in South Aberdeen, with its approximately one hundred workers, was closed down from August 1913 through May 1914. *Aberdeen Daily World*, 1 May 1914.

²⁷ During the mid-1910s, the city of Aberdeen regularly housed homeless workers in the city jail. One sign of the return of relative prosperity appeared in 1916 when only fifteen persons applied for lodging in the jail during the month of April. That was a tremendous drop from the more than two hundred people who slept in the jail during the winter months. See *Aberdeen Daily World*, 3 May 1916.

²⁸ Howd, 60.

²⁹ W. S. Seavey to E. G. Ames, 17 September 1912, Edwin Gardner Ames Papers, Accession 3820, Box 93, Folder 30, UW; W. S. Seavey to E. G. Ames, 29 July 1912, Edwin Gardner Ames Papers, Accession 3820, Box 93, Folder 29, UW. A blacklist used by logging corporations was utilized as early as February 1912. There is no reason to believe that its use was discontinued during or shortly after the 1912 IWW lumber strike. *Industrial Worker*, 4 January 1912.

Sustained by a small group of activists during the depression of 1913-1915, the IWW gained new life during the economic recovery of 1916. The Washington State Bureau of Labor described how the demands of war improved labor market conditions for workers in the state, writing, that “general industry, accentuated by war demands, has expanded to an unlimited extent . . . creating demands for labor far beyond supply of available workers remaining unmolested by national draft call.”³⁰ With little in the way of job competition preventing union organization, the “labor movement in this state,” continued the Bureau of Labor, is “in the possession of the largest measure of prosperity which it has ever enjoyed.”³¹

Economic conditions during the 1916 recovery boded well for the IWW’s organizing activities, but a second reason why the Wobblies grew during this period was the changing composition of the state. Unlike 1911-1912, when the full arsenal of the state was arrayed in lockstep with employers against the IWW movement, during the war years, some parts of the state apparatus had become contested terrain. This was most visible in the composition of the city council of Aberdeen, which included a contingent of working-class socialists who enjoyed strong support from local ethnic and labor organizations. With this sympathetic, often supportive, block of elected officials in Aberdeen, the IWW was freer to operate between 1916 and 1918 than a half-decade earlier. In fact, while the Wobblies of the war years were certainly harassed by police, vigilantes, the military, and employers, the full weight of repression was not brought down upon the Grays Harbor IWW until after the Great War, 1919-1920 specifically, when all socialist -- and thus pro-labor -- council members were removed from office.

³⁰ State of Washington, *Eleventh Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor, 1917-1918* (Olympia: C. H. Younger, Public Printer, 1918), 122. See also Chapter 3.

³¹ State of Washington, *Eleventh Biennial Report*, 76.

Grays Harbor was one of the communities where both the SPA and IWW organized large numbers of workers and enjoyed a great deal of support. As historian Joseph Robert Conlin argued, there was a strong correlation between socialist and IWW strength in specific cities and regions throughout the nation. Moreover, local SPA movements frequently grew during and shortly after periods of IWW strike and other organizational activity. For example, local socialist parties in Lawrence, Massachusetts, and Paterson, New Jersey, flourished in the aftermath of the Wobblies' famous textile strikes in 1912-1913, even though the state-wide SPA vote totals were lower after the strikes than before. Indeed, while there were numerous important ideological and tactical distinctions between the SPA and IWW, these differences were sometimes blurred at the local level where socialists and Wobblies were one another's greatest -- and sometimes only -- supporters.³² There was also a significant overlap in the two organizations' memberships. This was most visible in the person of "Big" Bill Haywood, who belonged to and held office in the SPA and IWW, spoke on behalf of both organizations during his lecture tours, and was wildly popular among large sections of both the SPA and IWW rank and file.³³ Haywood enjoyed appearing before audiences and telling them that he was "a two-gun man from the West" as he pulled a SPA card out of one pocket and an IWW card out of the other.³⁴ Despite the support Haywood and other syndicalists gave to

³² Conlin, *Bread and Roses Too*, 128-129.

³³ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 4, 395-398; *Daily Washingtonian*, 7-11 July 1911.

³⁴ Melvyn Dubofsky, *"Big Bill" Haywood* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 4; Lucas, *Big Trouble*, 204.

the SPA, they were purged from the organization in 1913 in part because of the ideological and tactical differences between the two groups.³⁵

As in many parts of the US, Grays Harbor Wobblies received a great deal of support from local socialists. During the Aberdeen free speech fight of 1911-1912, Harbor socialists were the IWW's strongest supporters. Members of both organizations demanded that the city council overturn the prohibition on street speaking, delivered street speeches in violation of the ban, were sent to jail for breaking the law, and were physically punished by the employers' citizens' committee during the conflict. In addition, Aberdeen and Hoquiam socialists allowed the Wobblies to use their large halls when large IWW crowds could not be contained within their own headquarters. Noticing the close relationship between the two groups, Aberdeen city officials closed both the Wobbly and SPA halls during the IWW-led lumber strike in 1912. Bands sponsored by local socialist organizations led large parades through the streets of Aberdeen and Hoquiam during the strike.³⁶ In addition, Grays Harbor socialists endorsed IWW actions in their press and occasionally functioned as IWW organizers, urging workers to join the One Big Union. For example, after hearing socialist organizer Herman Titus address a meeting of Grays Harbor lumber strikers in March 1912, "one hundred and forty-seven men joined the IWW at once," according to the *Industrial Worker*.³⁷ Thus, as in many communities across the nation, in Grays Harbor the Wobblies and socialists were most

³⁵ Conlin, *Bread and Roses Too*, 124-125; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 4, 408-409. See also William D. Haywood, *The Autobiography of Big Bill Haywood* (New York: International Publishers, 1929), 257-260.

³⁶ See Chapter 7. For specific examples of socialists' involvement in the free speech fight, see *Daily Washingtonian*, 5 October 1911; *Grays Harbor Post*, 7 October 1911; 13 January 1912; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 24 November 1911.

³⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 28 March 1912.

successful when they stood side by side. And, when the SPA experienced success at the polls, the IWW stood to benefit as well.

The SPA's initial breakthroughs in Grays Harbor came in April 1912 during the lumber strike when, in a protest against the collusion between employers and the state, socialist candidates for Aberdeen city council seats captured thirty-four percent of the total votes, and won two out of six races.³⁸ From 1912, when the SPA captured their first Aberdeen city council seats until 1919, socialists controlled either two or three seats in the twelve-member council.³⁹ In other elections, socialists used their votes strategically, as during the 1915 Aberdeen primary election, when a large, if indeterminate, number of socialists voted for Republican mayoral candidate Phillips, pushing him over the top in his race against the incumbent mayor Eugene France, who, "because of the position he holds among men of wealth, has been inclined to favor the interest of business, sometimes to the great detriment of the workers."⁴⁰

The local SPA was comprised of a working-class constituency. I was able to identify the occupations of forty-five of sixty-seven SPA candidates who ran for local office in Grays Harbor and whose names were listed in mainstream newspapers between 1904 and 1917. Significantly, all were either wage laborers or farmers, with only three falling into the latter category.⁴¹ Most were working men, including the four socialists elected to the council during this stretch: E. A. Milette, a cigar maker and local union official; Anton Pista, a tailor; John Strommer, a logger; and E. E. Weiland who worked as

³⁸ *Aberdeen Herald*, 4 April 1912.

³⁹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 4 April 1912; 7 April 1917. E. E. Weiland, the last of the socialist city council members to lose his seat, was defeated in April 1919. See *Grays Harbor Post*, 12 April 1919.

⁴⁰ "Resolution Adopted by Aberdeen Central Labor Council Friday, February 12, without any dissenting vote," printed in the *Grays Harbor Post*, 6 March 1915.

⁴¹ In this, the Grays Harbor socialists can be clearly differentiated from Socialist Party members in other metropolitan centers. Mark Leier drew out the middle class and skilled worker origins of the Socialist Party of Canada in Vancouver, British Columbia. See, Leier, *Where the Fraser River Flows*, 97-105.

an edgerman at a sawmill and was a founder and president of the International Union of Timberworkers.⁴²

SPA candidates also supported working-class aims. After the Aberdeen City Council endorsed the enactment of an occupational tax in March 1917, “Brother Joe Thomas,” many-time SPA candidate, wrote a letter to Mayor James Phillips opposing the occupation tax. In part the letter read:

Who pays a real occupation tax? All you shingle weavers raise your hands so Mr. Phillips can see the two or three remaining fingers you have left on them. Breathe, so he can hear your cedar asthma choking lungs. Come forward you mill workers. Show the mayor your torn flesh, your broken bones, your crippled hands, your smashed legs, your bent backs, your dust-filled joint. Every foot of land in the lumber industry is blood covered and all the machinery is blood stained with your arms and legs, your fingers and toes. Yes! If the blood and flesh of our workers be the price for an occupation, then by the gods, we have paid the occupation tax in full!⁴³

Less than a month later, following the annual city council election, one shingle weaver wrote to his union newspaper inspired by the council’s opposition to workers’ demands. He wrote, “Out of three candidates they had in the field, two socialist councilmen were recently elected in Aberdeen. V. T. Evans, socialist, was defeated in the sixth ward by Ben Moore, an ex-member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, but now belonging to the jitney drivers’ association. This looks like a complete victory for labor and is just what the shingle weavers promised in our protest against the occupational tax. Hooray! We have them on the run.”⁴⁴

⁴² *Grays Harbor Cities Directory*, 1914-1915. *Grays Harbor Post*, 7 April 1917; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 4 April 1914; 7 April 1915; United States Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census for the Year 1920*, Washington State, Grays Harbor County, City of Aberdeen.

⁴³ Among Joe Thomas’ candidacies included a December 1913 run for the Aberdeen School Board and a campaign for the position of Aberdeen City Clerk two years later. See, *Aberdeen Daily World*, 6 December 1913; 7 April 1915; *Shingle Weaver*, 17 March 1917.

⁴⁴ *Shingle Weaver*, 14 April 1917; *Aberdeen Herald*, 1, 4 April 1912; *Grays Harbor Post*, 6 April 1912; United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Grays Harbor County, City of Aberdeen. Voting returns for the 1912 Aberdeen city

The election of pro-labor socialists to municipal positions presented a heavy bulwark against the forms of state-employer cooperation that resulted in the citizens' committee's terrorist acts against the IWW in 1911-1912. With control of over twenty-five percent of the Aberdeen council for nearly the entire period between April 1912 and April 1918, and with occasional allies like Councilman Ben Moore and Mayor Phillips, workers exercised a de-facto check on employers' violent actions by occupying positions within the town's ruling bureaucracy. Socialists held strategic positions on several important council committees. Most vital of these, for the 1914-1915 session, E. A. Milette served as chairman of the ways and means committee, E. E. Wieland as chair for the buildings and grounds committees, while in other years socialists held positions on the police and judiciary committees, which gave them some power over who patrolled the streets.⁴⁵

Socialist city council members also delivered tangible results for Harbor radicals. In particular, Wobblies and other strikers were allowed to operate in public during the war years, a statement that could not be said of their actions in 1911-1912. In 1917-1918, Grays Harbor Wobblies had at least four halls: two in Aberdeen and one each in Hoquiam and Copalis Beach.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the first of these halls opened in October 1916, and none of the structures was raided, destroyed, or otherwise attacked before

council election were run in the *Grays Harbor Post*, 6 April 1912. In this race, Republican candidates emerged with a strong plurality of 949 out of 2074 votes. They were, however, closely trailed by the Socialist Party, which won 702 votes. A variety of other party's standard bearers gained the remaining 423 votes.

⁴⁵ The Aberdeen city administration included socialist E.E. Wieland serving on the License, Buildings and Public Grounds, and Judiciary committees, while E. A. Milette served on the Buildings and Public Grounds, Sewers and Public Health, and Ways and Means committees. For the composition of this body, see *Grays Harbor Post*, 9 May 1914.

⁴⁶ H. D. McKenney to F. B. Stansbury, 5 May 1918, Record Group 165, Box 2, File 563, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA. *Industrial Worker*, 16 June 1917.

September 1917 when the Aberdeen and Hoquiam halls were swept up in the federal raids of most Wobbly offices across the US.⁴⁷ The absence of attacks on the IWW structures indicated at least a grudging acceptance of the Wobblies' presence in the community from state actors, one that was lacking in 1911-1912. Wobblies likewise recognized that some city officials could be counted on as allies. Writing to IWW lawyer George Vanderveer, two Aberdeen Wobblies noted that they had "a talk to one of the Aldermen here and he said he is at the command of the defense [for the United States v. Haywood, et al. trial] and would furnish a statement outlining the condition here prior and during the strike."⁴⁸ At least one labor spy expressed his frustration at what he viewed as a local politician's support for labor. In a letter written to Colonel Bryce P. Disque, Plant Protection Section official F. B. Stansbury expressed his belief that Grays Harbor County Sheriff Jeff Bartell was "an alleged German-American," who made sure that those in charge of prosecuting "alien enemies, Pro-Germans, IWWs, etc." were intimidated and "departed the County Seat (Montesano)."⁴⁹ Even Aberdeen Police Chief George Dean publicly thanked the IWW for their efforts to shut down bootleggers during the 1917 lumber strike.⁵⁰

Although industrial conditions and supportive or sympathetic politicians opened the door for greater organization, it would require both the self-activity of working people and a union capable of advancing workers' real interests to actually make such organization a reality. Among lumber workers, the labor institution of choice was the

⁴⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 7 October 1916; 24 November 1917; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 6 September 1917.

⁴⁸ J. F. Rhodes and W. H. Margason to George F. Vanderveer, 15 November 1917, Box 99, File 1, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, Folder 3, 5713, WSU.

⁴⁹ F. B. Stansbury to Colonel Bryce P. Disque, 22 November 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1065, NRA. A brief explanation of Stansbury's activities within the Plant Protection Section can be found in Joan M. Jensen, *Army Surveillance in America, 1775-1980* (New Haven, Yale University, 1991), 147-153.

⁵⁰ Testimony of Walter Horace Margason, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, Folder 3, 5721, WSU.

IWW. In Spring 1916 the *Industrial Worker* returned to print. By June 1916 the radical newspaper recorded the presence of several IWW organizers working among the mill hands, loggers, and ship carpenters in Aberdeen, Hoquiam, the surrounding “jungles,” and in the adjacent mill communities of Pacific County.⁵¹ Several battle-hardened Wobblies, including John Downing and W. I. Fisher, planted themselves in the Harbor towns and camps.⁵² In September 1916, Aberdeen Wobblies organized a local of National Industrial Union of Forest and Lumber Workers (NIUFLW).⁵³ The industrial union had been organized in early February 1912, and reorganized with the assistance of the Agricultural Workers’ Organization in July 1916 by a “bunch of rebel lumberjacks” during the “loggers holiday, one of the two times in the year when the workers in the lumber industry leave the job and are not driven out by bad conditions.” The 3 July meeting established district headquarters at Seattle, Portland, Spokane, and Aberdeen, the four district hubs of lumber activity in the Pacific Northwest.⁵⁴ The Forest and Lumber Workers was succeeded by the far more successful and well-known Lumber Workers’ Industrial Union (LWIU), founded in Spokane during a March 1917 convention by seventeen delegates representing ten thousand lumber workers.⁵⁵ During the summer of 1916, Wobblies established a new hall at 111 South F Street in Aberdeen. The radicals achieved some early successes, immediately certifying six credentialed delegates and “more of the fellow workers are waiting only till blanks [delegate credentials] arrive.”⁵⁶

⁵¹ *Industrial Worker*, 13 May; 3 June; 5 August 1916.

⁵² *Industrial Worker*, 13 May; 3 June; 5 August; 14 October 1916.

⁵³ *Industrial Worker*, 16 September 1916.

⁵⁴ *Solidarity*, 15 July 1916. See also “The Lumber Workers’ Conference,” *International Socialist Review* 17:2 (August 1916): 119; C. E. Payne, “The Spring Drive of the Lumber Jacks,” *International Socialist Review* 17:12 (June 1917): 729-730.

⁵⁵ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 4, 220; *Industrial Worker*, 1, 15, 29 July 1916; Rowan, *The IWW in the Lumber Industry*, 30.

⁵⁶ *Industrial Worker*, 7, 14 October 1916.

Still, IWW growth during the first ten months of 1916 paled in comparison to the meteoric rise in the union's popularity that fell close on the heels of the Everett Massacre on 5 November 1916.⁵⁷

On 5 November 1916, in the midst of a free speech fight held during a shingle weavers' strike in Everett, Washington, 250 Puget Sound Wobblies boarded the steamship *Verona* in Seattle and sailed north on the Puget Sound in hopes of storming the city and confronting that city's law enforcement officers and vigilantes, the men responsible for brutalizing IWWs and supporters for weeks prior to the *Verona* sailing. The scene that followed is as well-known as any in the history of the Wobblies. As the boat neared the shore, Snohomish County Sheriff Donald McRae called out to the IWWs, "Who's your leader?" The workers replied, "We are all leaders."⁵⁸ For their audacity, the invading Wobblies were met with a flurry of gunfire from the shore. At least five IWWs were shot dead, dozens other were critically wounded, and perhaps a dozen others fell or jumped off the ship in terror and were drowned. Forced to retreat to Seattle, seventy-four IWWs were arrested and put on trial for murder.⁵⁹

The Wobblies' response to tragic events in Everett helped to generate enthusiasm for their movement. Workers gathered together on the Harbor, as around the nation, to collect money on behalf of their imprisoned fellow workers' defense. Mass meetings were held in major metropolitan centers like New York, Chicago, and Seattle; mill towns like Aberdeen and Hoquiam; as well as company towns and work camps. IWW orators Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and James Thompson both visited Aberdeen and Hoquiam during

⁵⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 25 November 1916.

⁵⁸ Lynd, "We Are All Leaders," 7.

⁵⁹ Walker Smith, *The Everett Massacre* (Chicago: Industrial Workers of the World, 1917), 84-109; Clark, *Mill Town*, 205-209; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 339-343.

their nation-wide speaking tours to collect money for the legal defense, which was ably handled by George Vanderveer.⁶⁰ The Everett Prisoners' Defense Committee campaign mobilized Pacific Northwest workers like few other events, as thousands of workers mobilized to raise money on behalf of the prisoners and swing support of the masses behind the workers.⁶¹

With the economy rebounding and Wobbly organizers and periodicals spreading throughout the region's cities and woods, the Wobbly movement of the war years eclipsed anything in Harbor history, as literally thousands of workers from numerous crafts followed the call into the One Big Union. They came from many walks of life: skilled and unskilled, men and women, native and foreign-born. By early June 1917, it appeared that nearly everyone was joining, as one IWW Marine Transport Workers' Industrial Union (MTWIU) official declared that Aberdeen was "now generally regarded as the strongest wobbly town for its size on the coast."⁶² The rush to join the IWW demonstrated that the Harbor's militant workforce required an institutional base that was willing to help, capable of articulating their politics, and one whose rebel yells sounded a familiar note.

The Grays Harbor IWW began to grow in October 1916 when W. I. Fisher reported "No Sentiment against Union in Aberdeen."⁶³ In the cities, socialists, former

⁶⁰ *Everett Prisoners' Defense Fund*, Industrial Workers of the World Papers, Accession No. 544, Box 3, Folder 9, UW; Smith, *The Everett Massacre*, 289-296. James P. Thompson delivered street speeches on August 19 in Aberdeen and August 20, 1916. *Industrial Worker*, 19 August 1916. He returned on several occasions during 1917, as did Flynn, whose May 1917 meetings in Aberdeen and Hoquiam brought in sixty dollars for the Everett defense fund. See, *Industrial Worker*, 12 May 1917; *Industrialist*, 15 May 1917; Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, *The Rebel Girl: An Autobiography, My First Life (1906-1926)* (Masses and Mainstream, 1955, New Edition, New York: International Publishers, Third Printing, 1973), 224.

⁶¹ Todes, *Lumber and Labor*, 163; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 4, 539-548.

⁶² *Industrial Worker*, 9 June 1917.

⁶³ *Industrial Worker*, 14 October 1916.

IWWs, trade unionists, the previously unorganized, and workers too young to recall the earlier struggles, turned out to IWW street and hall meetings, picnics, and camp meetings as the entire county was swept up in the Wobbly movement. By July 1917, the Wobblies were organizing along all lines of industry. They had no fewer than six local unions in Grays Harbor, encompassing clam cannery workers, fishermen, construction workers, domestic workers, along with the core membership of lumber and maritime workers.⁶⁴ By the middle of 1917, literally thousands of Grays Harbor workers had flocked into the folds of the One Big Union.⁶⁵ According to a letter written to the Finnish-language IWW newspaper *Industrialisti* by Wobbly Jurnun Veli, five thousand people attended a single meeting in early July hosted by the IWW in Aberdeen.⁶⁶

Each of the groups who formed the constituencies of the resurgent IWW wove in their own distinct oppositional cultures into the movement. The IWW locals included restaurant workers and loggers, mill hands and sailors, longshoremen and ship carpenters, along with construction workers, shingle weavers, and clam canners. By early 1917, the Wobblies had become so firmly entrenched on the Harbor that many fellow workers patronized only those restaurants employing Wobblies, such as the “No Graft” Restaurant.”⁶⁷ IWWs also worked on the vast infrastructure projects undertaken by the city and county during the prosperous war years. On the job these radicals refused to work at anything other than a casual pace for eight hours per day.⁶⁸ When contractors with Haukeli, Hegg, and Company failed to raise their construction workers’ wages

⁶⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 5 May; 9, 23, 30 June; 7 July 1917; *Everett Prisoners’ Defense Fund*; Aberdeen, Wash, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 36, Folder 1, WSU. Thomas Burke, an Aberdeen member of IU 573, died in November 1917. *Industrial Worker*, 8 December 1917.

⁶⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 5, 12 May; 9, 16, 23, 30 June; 7 July 1917.

⁶⁶ *Industrialisti*, 3 July 1917.

⁶⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 20 October 1917.

⁶⁸ *Shingle Weaver*, 15 September 1917; *Industrial Worker*, 2 June 1917.

beyond the three-dollars paid in early July, a number of Wobblies at the company “called a meeting with the result that all men began to take out cards and turn the fight over to the Sure Winner.” Four hours later, the boss conceded to the demands, raising wages and agreeing to union control over hiring for his firm.⁶⁹

Maritime workers, with their well-known reputation for radicalism, ran their own IWW hiring hall in 1917. On the waterfront, the IWW exercised de-facto job control, as evidenced by Aberdeen IWW official T. J. Rhodes’ proud declaration that the Wobbly hall was where “the bosses are coming . . . now for help.”⁷⁰ At the four large shipyards in Grays Harbor, fifty red-card-carrying Wobs functioned as a militant minority, influencing the thousands of local shipyard workers.⁷¹ These ship builders were the first to walk off the job in the strike of July 1917, and even after settling their own strike, refused to handle ten-hour lumber from the struck mills operated by scabs.⁷² All told, between 1,500 and 4,000 Grays Harbor workers took out their red cards during 1917 and 1918.⁷³ Indeed, during those heady days of mid-1917, it is not too much of a stretch to imagine an IWW partisan coming to the Harbor, eating at an IWW restaurant, playing a game of pool at a pro-IWW hall, and watching IWWs working in the ship yards, on the docks, in the mills, or building roads out into the country. In all likelihood, our imaginary wanderer would spend his or her evening swapping stories with IWW loggers on holiday

⁶⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 7 July 1917.

⁷⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 12 May 1917.

⁷¹ Frank Waterhouse and Company, *Pacific Ports*, Volume 5 (Seattle: Pacific Ports, Inc., 1919), 403; Hughes and Beckwith, *On the Harbor*, 68-72; According to *Pacific Ports* a full 2,400 workers were employed at the Grays Harbor Motorship Yard, the largest of the four local shipyards.

⁷² Sandy Polishuk, ed., *Sticking to the Union: An Oral History of the Life and Times of Julia Ruutila* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 31; *Grays Harbor Post*, 4 August 1917; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 13 July 1917.

⁷³ Reports by Agent 31, Aberdeen, Wash., 15, 20 November 1917, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service. Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA; *Industrialist*, 16 June; 3, 23 July 1917; *New Unionist*, 14 January 1928.

or sailors on shore leave, perhaps while waiting for one of the nightly mass meetings, entertainments, or banquets to begin at one of the Harbor's several IWW or "Red" Finn halls. Indeed, few could fault Agent 31, a labor spy from the Washington State Secret Service, for worrying that Aberdeen might degenerate into a "W city."⁷⁴

A signal moment in the history of the Grays Harbor IWW came on 1 July 1917, when nearly one thousand workers traveled by boat to the beach city of Westport for a picnic organized by the IWW. The picnic was by design a massive affair, featuring food prepared by Wobbly domestic workers, music by the twenty-piece IWW band, and a keynote speech by *Industrial Worker* editor J. S. MacDonald. Like much of the IWW's activity, the planning and implementation of the picnic fell under heavy scrutiny from authorities and spies, and was only achieved due to the most careful and clever of operations. "The membership here is especially elated over the success as the Commercial Club fought the picnic committee in every possible way," noted MacDonald. He continued, "They chartered all boats they thought the IWW could use . . . But the methods used to circumvent these tactics remain a secret which we will leave to lumber trust detectives to discover."⁷⁵ The boats began leaving Aberdeen and Hoquiam at six in the morning and the Wobblies arrived on the scene wearing red tags and carrying large banners, one of which read, "Raise High the Blood Red Banner, the Only Flag We Know."⁷⁶ From the moment they first boarded their ships, until late into the night when the last boat left Westport, the air was filled with sounds of workers singing IWW songs and talk "of what was going to happen to the boss after the holidays." Through the

⁷⁴ Report by Agent 31, Aberdeen, Wash., 20 November 1917, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service. Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA.

⁷⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 7 July 1917; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 3 July 1917.

⁷⁶ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 3 July 1917.

feasting, festivities, and casual chats while “resting with their friends among the trees,” there resonated a sense of the greater purpose of the event, for this was not a picnic put on by the Oddfellows or Garden Club, but a revolutionary organization, whose members stood on the precipice, ready “to grapple with the lumber trust for an eight hour day.”⁷⁷

By all accounts it appeared that the Wobblies had re-emerged as a mighty force on the Harbor. The picnic alone drew one thousand IWWs who chose to spend their rare day of rest attending to a political meeting accessible only by boat. Between 3 and 5 July more than two thousand dollars in dues and initiation fees were collected from Grays Harbor IWWs; workers joined at such a rapid pace that the local required “five secretaries” to be “busy attending five different lines of men.”⁷⁸ Considering that membership fees were \$2 and monthly dues were only 50 cents, a minimum of several hundred workers joined the Harbor IWW over that three-day stretch.⁷⁹ The picnic was “the largest ever held on the Pacific Coast by the IWW,” noted MacDonald, who continued, “It is . . . certain that this picnic has broken all records for a single amount raised by any part of the IWW for the support of the press.”⁸⁰

Despite his enthusiasm for the growing movement, MacDonald and other IWW officials vigorously opposed the strike in the mills and woods that they anticipated would begin during the summer of 1917. The AFL’s Timber Workers’ Union had, in fact, publicly announced their intention to strike on 16 July.⁸¹ But on 9 July, the IWW issued typewritten statements in English and Finnish disowning the planned AFL timber strike,

⁷⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 7 July 1917. Another account of the picnic appeared in the *Aberdeen Daily World*, 3 July 1917.

⁷⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 7 July 1917.

⁷⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 1 April 1916; “The IWW on Trial: Special Correspondence,” *The Outlook*, 17 July 1918, 450-451. If the union collected exactly \$2,000 in membership fees and dues, and each new member paid dues for only one month, then eight hundred members would have joined during this period.

⁸⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 7 July 1917.

⁸¹ Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 362.

and asking workers to not “fall for that bunk.”⁸² MacDonald also believed that his fellow workers were unprepared for the strike, which is why he left his Seattle office and travelled to Grays Harbor to address the Westport meeting. Representing the views of much of the IWW’s elected officials, the Wobbly editor felt the “new men, as soon as they join the IWW want to strike.” This was a mistake that MacDonald was unalterably committed to stopping, and he wrote, “I went down with one purpose and that was this: To do my utmost to stop the lumber strike.”⁸³ Thus, by early July, it was the full intention of the IWW officials that the workers not tie up the Pacific Northwest lumber industry, and they hoped fully that the AFL unions would fall flat on their face when they attempted to carry out the strike.

The caution showed by MacDonald and other IWW leaders demonstrated that, at least in this instance, they were out of touch with the sentiments of their more militant counterparts in the union’s rank-and-file. Indeed, as bureaucrats, editors, and itinerant orators, the elected officials of the IWW remained at an occupational and spatial distance from rank-and-file IWWs, and thus had little direct contact with, or understanding of, the lives of Grays Harbor loggers, lumber mill workers, shipbuilders, domestic workers, longshoremen and other workers whose dues paid their salaries. These workers, the men and women who experienced the day-to-day realities of wage labor on Grays Harbor, had little patience for MacDonald and other so-called leaders’ directives. On 12 July, the

⁸² *Daily Washingtonian*, 10 July 1917.

⁸³ Testimony of J. S. MacDonald, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 114, Folder 6, 9520-9521, WSU. MacDonald’s opposition to the IWW strike was also recalled by Wobbly W. H. Margason, who stated that MacDonald believed “it was a premature strike; the time was not ripe for a strike. He did not think that we had sufficient organization in back of it.” See Testimony of Walter Horace Margason, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, Folder 3, 5748, WSU.

According to Philip S. Foner, by 4 July 1917, the Seattle district of the IWW employed thirty people. Most of them were tasked “with working day and night to take care of the ever increasing membership, especially the newly organized lumber workers.” See Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 547.

Aberdeen branch of the IWW's Shipbuilders' Industrial Union No. 325 working at the Aberdeen shipyards, walked off their job and held picket signs reading: "Don't Scab."⁸⁴ Labor activist Julia Ruutila proudly recalled that her father, one of the shipyard strikers, helped to "shut the shipyard down."⁸⁵ Although rarely mentioned in histories of the 1917 strike, Harbor shipbuilders were the first group to assemble on what soon became very crowded picket lines. Thus, while the Wobblies have been praised from one direction for their motto "we are all leaders" and condemned from another direction for their inability to plan and lead well-organized strikes, in this instance it was the rank-and-file Wobblies who initiated and led the early parts of the strike in defiance of their "leaders'" wishes

Well before IWW leaders had time to catch up with the rank and file, strikes at multiple lumber camps followed those waged by the ship carpenters. The center of strike activity was in North River, a logging section about twenty-five miles southeast of Aberdeen. Men walked out at the Anderson and Middleton camp and at least two of the North River Logging Company camps. Manager White of one of the North River camps remained adamant in his opposition to the union, noting "wages and hours would remain the same, and that if they cared to quit, they could do so." Loggers demanded fifty-cent raises for all camp employees, regardless of skill. But bosses at the Anderson and Middleton camp attempted to divide and conquer the strikers by offering the full increase only to buckers, a compromise twenty-five cent raise to chokermen, and nothing to "flunkys" and kitchen workers. Refusing this proposal, the loggers remained on strike,

⁸⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 21 July 1917; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 13 July 1917; Bruere, *Following the Trail of the IWW*, 20.

⁸⁵ Polishuk, ed., *Sticking to the Union*, 31.

the first of what would be hundreds of logging and lumber operations shut down across western Washington.⁸⁶

The strikers received a great deal of support from their allies in the community. Banker William J. Patterson, the man who had attacked the Wobblies as head of the vigilante citizens' committee in 1911-1912, was forced to concede that by 1917 the IWW had won widespread support on the Harbor. He noted that "there were men in Aberdeen, good, prosperous citizens, who wanted to go back to the old vigilante tactics. 'Run them out, kill the anarchistic traitors,' and all that. But the town was not with them. . . . it was a question of the justice of their more important immediate demands. And on this question the town was overwhelmingly with the strikers and against the operators."⁸⁷ Even the anti-IWW *Grays Harbor Post* acknowledged, "the great bulk of the strikers are members of the IWW."⁸⁸ At least one labor spy agreed that the Wobblies enjoyed widespread community support. After researching the Wobblies' presence in Aberdeen, Agent 31 of the Washington State Secret Service reported some disturbing findings to his superiors. "I learned that not only the IWW but other Unions as well are well organized in this section. No man in business here would openly declare against the Union, on account of business. In practically every store along the main streets in windows will be seen signs reading 'We are in favor of 8 hours,'" concluded the spy.⁸⁹ W. E. Hall, organizer for the AFL's Timber Workers' Union, concurred, stating that "in almost every window" of the "merchants and business people" were hung signs supporting the 8-hour

⁸⁶ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 13, 14 July 1917; *Industrial Worker*, 21 July 1917.

⁸⁷ Cited in Bruere, *Following the Trail*, 20.

⁸⁸ *Grays Harbor Post*, 21 July 1917.

⁸⁹ Report by Agent 31, Aberdeen, Wash., 16 November 1917, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service. Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA. The *Aberdeen Daily World*, 31 August 1917 also took note of the common site of the eight-hour-day signs seen in businesses throughout Aberdeen.

day.⁹⁰ Local business owners also gave material assistance directly to the IWW.

According to the *Industrial Worker*, Aberdeen businesses donated a “great number of prizes” to the IWW for the union’s use at a July 1917 mass meeting.⁹¹

The Wobbly-led strikes generated a great deal of enthusiasm among the community’s working class. As thousands of local workers and tens of thousands more from around the region joined the North River strikers, and IWW officials rushed to keep up with the loggers’ self-directed militancy, it was clear that a solid core of several hundred ship carpenters and loggers had merely lit the fuse for what was a seething ember of discontent among the Pacific Northwest working class at large.

The rank-and-file Wobblies’ surge of militancy caught the IWW’s top officials off guard. For many in the union’s upper echelon, like MacDonald, the strike was poorly timed and likely to fail. Yet pushed into action by rank-and-file woodsmen, Wobbly officials were forced to slowly accede to the demands of the workers themselves. On 13 July, after receiving messages from Aberdeen and Hoquiam indicating that it was “impossible” to arrest the strikers’ momentum, the IWW’s district office in Seattle wired back to its Harbor offices, “If You Can’t Hold Them. Let Her Go.” As the message was received, “twenty-five hundred loggers, three thousand mill men, two hundred ship yard men and one hundred tub makers” were already hitting the skids.⁹²

⁹⁰ Testimony of W. E. Hall, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 114, Folder 1, 8812, WSU.

⁹¹ *Industrial Worker*, 17 July 1917.

⁹² *Industrial Worker*, 21 July 1917; *Daily Washingtonian*, 14 July 1917; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 14 July 1917. It should be noted that even after the general lumber strike was declared by strike headquarters in Seattle, all strike materials were issued by Grays Harbor district headquarters, thereby guaranteeing local control over the strike.

The “Complete Close-Down [of] Grays Harbor” made state and national news.⁹³ Significantly, newspapers around Puget Sound carried news of the strike, thus bringing news of the Grays Harbor workers' actions to all the principal lumber regions in the state, penetrating even those mills and camps where Wobbly delegates could not carry their own information. Charles R. Griffin, an IWW logger employed two miles outside of Tacoma read, in his words, in “big black headlines the news of a big strike on the Harbor.”⁹⁴ The momentum generated from these early walkouts was obvious. News of it spread through strike bulletins, mainstream newspapers, and the mouths of the hundreds of rank-and-file IWW delegates whose travels took them into the deepest and darkest parts of the Washington woods. The news reached an eager audience among the loggers. Responding en masse, “practically every camp in the county” was shut down by the strike by 17 July, which brought upwards of three thousand workers out on strike.⁹⁵ The *Industrial Worker* said all that needed to be said about conditions in Grays Harbor, running a headline that declared: “All out except the bosses, and they are out of their heads.”⁹⁶

Throughout the summer of 1917, Grays Harbor’s IWW movement reached its greatest heights. Wobblies showed their strength both on the job and throughout the community. During its first week the strike wave closed dozens of camps and mills in quick succession, prompting the *Industrial Worker* to comment that “Strike Has Almost All Lumber Camps from Pacific Ocean to North Dakota Line Closed.”⁹⁷ The strategy

⁹³ *Industrial Worker*, 21 July 1917; *New York Times*, 13 July 1917; *Chicago Tribune*, 13 July 1917.

⁹⁴ Testimony of Charles R. Griffin, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, Folder 3, 5625, WSU.

⁹⁵ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 16, 17 July 1917.

⁹⁶ *Industrial Worker*, 21, 28 July 1917.

⁹⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 28 July 1917.

adopted by the Wobblies was a clear exposition of syndicalism in practice. The Wobblies focused primarily on mass direct action, a decentralized leadership structure, support from other sectors of the community, and the self-defense of strikers and their families. As the next two chapters illustrate, it was precisely these factors that enabled the IWW movement and its strike to spread rapidly throughout the region, all the while remaining relatively resistant to the repression leveled against it by capital and the state.

CHAPTER IX

EMPLOYERS, THE STATE, AND THE “W CITY,” 1917-1923

Conditions in Hoquiam are about equal to those in Aberdeen. The names of agitators would be hard to get as each man here is an active agitator and all are asking for credentials and lining up new members in the camps about. The names of those I obtained are ones who I've met and talked to: J. J. Connolly – Semple – O.Neva, J. Rhodes (Sec.) also learned that there are fully 2000 Wobs in Aberdeen section. Starting Wednesday a lot of new Wobs delegates are going into the camps and try and organize, and I've been asked to go and do my share. From Rhodes I learned that the majority of the business people are helping all they can, and he expects to make this a W city.¹

Report of Agent 31, Governor Lister's Secret Service, 20 November 1917.

As the quotation above indicated, labor spies who operated in Grays Harbor during and shortly after World War I recognized the difficulties of dislodging the IWW from the Harbor. Indeed, the findings of Agent 31 of Washington State Governor Ernest Lister's Secret Service revealed the problems inherent to levying top-down forms of repression on the IWW. According to the spy, the Wobblies were a mass movement with a large membership that was supported by its community, a community that threatened to become a “W city.” In addition, the IWW movement functioned primarily on the local level and was thus uniquely designed to resist top-down forms of repression such as attacks on the national union's elected officials and famous agitators. Thus, any strategy that focused on removing the group's so-called leaders and hoping that this caused a confused and hapless membership to quit the movement, did not understand the nature of the IWW.² Indeed, as the previous chapter indicated, Grays Harbor Wobblies were

¹ Report of 31, 20 November 1917, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA. For an analysis of the benefits and pitfalls of using labor spy reports as sources for labor history, see pages 273-275.

² For a more detailed discussion of rank-and-file Grays Harbor Wobblies' leadership abilities, see Chapters 8 and 10.

capable of self-organization and waging strikes on their own, even in defiance of their elected officials' wishes.

Despite the bottom-up leadership structure of the IWW, numerous scholars have argued that the IWW was destroyed by state and private repression directed at the movement's leaders. The view rests on false ideas about the IWW, associating the movement as a whole with its General Executive Board (GEB) in Chicago, editors of *Solidarity* and the *Industrial Worker*, and well-known agitators. Key to historians' dismissive analyses of the IWW has been their ideological commitment to a certain view of what constitutes a union or radical organization, or at least what aspects of unionism and radicalism deserve scholarly attention. Raised during the post-World War II era of the so-called liberal consensus, IWW historians such as Melvyn Dubofsky and Joseph Robert Conlin viewed the Wobblies as simply a left-wing industrial union, one that admittedly had more flair and better songs than Hoffa's Teamsters or Lewis's Mine Workers, but were ultimately a top-heavy bureaucracy that dissolved because their most-experienced leaders were imprisoned and their replacements endlessly disagreed with one another.³ This view is typified by Dubofsky who argued, "At a time [1918] when the Wobblies needed leaders as never before, and when the organization had to cope with new social and economic realities, there was no one with sufficient experience or talent to refashion the IWW in the radical manner required."⁴ It too received a voice from Conlin, who wrote that it "is accurate to say that it was World War I that did in the IWW. . . . the methodical prosecution destroyed, imprisoned, or dispersed the leadership of the union. The Wobblies had always taken great pride in their claim that 'we have no leaders . . . we

³ The most notable members of this group of IWW historians are Melvyn Dubofsky, Joseph Robert Conlin, Robert L. Tyler, and Patrick Renshaw.

⁴ Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 449.

are all leaders' but the wartime trials illustrated just how important to the union their leaders actually were."⁵

The tradition of top-down analysis within IWW historiography is especially curious because it defies the entire canon of anarcho-syndicalist thought. From Bakunin to twenty-first century Wobblies, anarcho-syndicalists have upheld the principles of federalism, decentralization, and localism as being of supreme importance to the history and structure of revolutionary industrial unionism.⁶ Writing in 1967, when a number of those works he labeled "academic fiction" were rolling off the presses, Wobbly historian Fred Thompson argued that when analyzing the IWW's post-war persistence, it was vital to consider the importance of the union's decentralized structure. "Had the IWW been a highly centralized organization the September 1917 raids and the arrests of its officers, staff members, editors, speakers, etc, would likely have knocked it out," argued Thompson. But, he continued, "They were replaced, so far as they were replaced at all, by men direct from the point of production, who can be assumed to have sensed the feeling of the man on the job somewhat more accurately than their predecessors. . . . They proved it is very practical to provide as much local autonomy as the needs for coordinated effort can permit."⁷ In agreement, anarchist Rudolf Rocker argued that an anarcho-syndicalist movement was one "whose very existence depends on prompt action at any favourable moment and on the independent thought and action of its supporters."⁸

James Rowan, one of the founders of the Lumber Workers' Industrial Union (LWIU) 120

⁵ Conlin, *Bread and Roses Too*, 140-141.

⁶ See, for instance, Mikhail Bakunin, "The Program of the Alliance," in *Bakunin on Anarchism*, ed. Sam Dolgoff (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2002), 243-258; "Principles of Revolutionary Syndicalism (Extracts)," *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review* 55 (Winter 2011): 2.

⁷ Fred Thompson, "They Didn't Suppress the Wobblies," *Radical America* 1:2 (September-October 1967): 3-4.

⁸ Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 92.

and the IWW Emergency Program (EP), argued that “branch, i.e. local, autonomy will inspire enthusiasm and initiative within the ranks of the IWW, and at the same time promote good feelings among the branches, the industrial unions, and throughout the union as a whole.”⁹ Principles of federalism and bottom-up democracy were of key importance to the Wobblies, not simply because of “flaws in their ideology,” “poor political analysis,” or “administrative incompetency,” as two scholars have written, but because many IWWs were and are connected to a program that functioned from the bottom-up and periphery-in.¹⁰

This chapter and the next seek to fill in a major gap in the historiography of the IWW by demonstrating the movement’s persistence and success in the face of employer and state repression in Grays Harbor. Indeed, as the previous chapter argued, the Wobblies had established a major community presence in Grays Harbor by mid-1917. Harbor branches of the union had somewhere between one thousand and four thousand members. These unionists were able to close down the entire local lumber industry. The depths of that support enabled the union to bear the brunt of employer attacks that are described in this chapter, and to persevere as a potent radical force even during the years of their most intense repression.

The Wobblies employed a wide array of tactics designed to thwart the efforts of employers and state agents. In one branch of the IWW, some members could be found

⁹ No Author, *More Power to You* (Los Angeles, n.d.), 41. In Renshaw, *The Wobblies*, 129, he cites this work as having been written by James Rowan. The copy of this work held in the IWW collections at the Reuther Collection at Wayne State University lists no author, although its site of publication (Los Angeles) and ideology (anarcho-syndicalist) reinforces the belief that Rowan was its author.

¹⁰ Philip Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 558; Joseph A. McCartin, “Introduction,” in *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World*, by Melvyn Dubofsky, abridged ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), ix. Written in 2000, McCartin’s assertion that the weakness of the IWW was due to its “administrative incompetency,” demonstrated the perseverance of this view among labor historians.

agitating for a general strike or performing community outreach in hopes of transforming a locality into a “W city,” while a few miles away IWWs might be “hoosiering up,” their term for playing dumb on the job, pouring emery dust into machinery, or humming “Solidarity Forever” just out of the boss’s earshot.¹¹ For good reason, the more overt, traditional types of resistance and protest have gained the most attention from scholars. One can easily read of free speech fights and strikes in most of the literature on the IWW, while each of the hundreds of issues of the *Industrial Worker* is a veritable catalog of open Wobbly activity. It is also easy to see the Wobblies as a heroic and radical body of workers, who like Marxist Paul Bunyans, blended courage with recklessness in open, defiant, and revolutionary activity bent on overturning the capitalist state.¹² Yet it was another form of resistance that characterized the majority of everyday forms of protest for the IWW during periods of heightened repression, those “trickster characteristics” that have marked the rebellions of numerous oppressed groups for whom traditional political protests are proscribed.¹³ Declared illegal, under attack, with their treasuries hollowed out by legal fights, many IWWs conducted activity underground, in those spaces hidden from all but the most attuned observers.

My analysis has been deeply influenced by two generations of historians who, in the words of Robin D. G. Kelley, examined history from “way, way below.”¹⁴

Borrowing from anthropologists and historians who study traditionally oppressed groups,

¹¹ Reports by 31, Aberdeen, Wash., 15, 20 November 1917, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service. Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA. On the IWW’s practice of “hoosiering up,” see Kornbluh, ed., *Rebel Voices*, 253; Stewart Holbrook, “Wobbly Talk,” *The American Mercury* 7:25 (January 1926): 64.

¹² Dreyfus, “Timber Workers,” 2.

¹³ Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1994); James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

¹⁴ Kelley, *Race Rebels*, 1-16.

I see a great deal to be gained by looking at what has been called “infrapolitics,” that is the “daily confrontations, evasive actions, and stifled thoughts” of working people.¹⁵ Although there are many instances where the IWW operated in plain sight, any illegal and endangered group -- which the IWW certainly was -- needs to operate with a degree of secrecy, as was plainly demonstrated by the secret societies and Luddites explored by E. P. Thompson and the subaltern forms of resistance shown in the actions of Alabama’s black Communists.¹⁶ Faced with hall raids, surveillance by labor spies, and the threats of blacklisting, the Wobblies split off into semi-autonomous cells in the camps or mills, carried out their meetings under the cover of dark, and hid their red cards in shoes or underwear, out of sight and reach of all but the most dedicated bosses.¹⁷ Confronted by the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen (4Ls), LWIU members initially opposed, then infiltrated, and finally subverted the military-company union. Harried by dragnet arrests, mass imprisonments, and kangaroo courts, the Wobblies did not lapse into a defense organization, a curious conclusion reached by a number of historians using flimsy evidence.¹⁸ Instead, a limited amount of LWIU dues and donations were designated for defense costs, while the movement continued to grow, out of sight and mind of those prosecuting the ostensible leaders of the organization. When confident enough during 1922 and 1923 to re-emerge in plain sight the IWW did so with its largest

¹⁵ Kelley, *Race Rebels*, 8-9. IWW sabotage, which consisted both of “conscious withdrawal of production” and overt machine-breaking, certainly falls into this category, as does their secretive transmission of information, their “boring from within” other unions and organizations, and their enrollment of “front” organizations and individuals to their struggles.

¹⁶ E. P. Thompson, *The Making*; Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 103.

¹⁷ On Wobblies’ methods of hiding their red cards to avoid detection, see Mark Reed to E. G. Ames, 1 December 1911, UW Special Collections, Edwin Gardner Ames Papers, Accession No. 3820, Box 4, Folder 2, UW.

¹⁸ Conlin, *Bread and Roses Too*, 143-144; Preston, “Shall This Be All?” 444; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 443-444. In his analysis of the IWW in Oklahoma, historian Nigel Sellars argued that the Wobblies did not turn into a defense organization, although defense of their fellow workers was one of their main responsibilities. See Nigel Sellars, *Oil, Wheat, and Wobblies: The Industrial Workers of the World in Oklahoma, 1905-1930* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 161-162.

dues-paying membership in its entire storied history.¹⁹ The terrific explosion that came during the spring 1923 general strike was merely one of many manifestations of the infrapolitical resistance organized during the previous half-decade of dedicated rank-and-file activity.²⁰

Students of the IWW have been correct about one aspect of its history: after 1917, all levels of state and capital used every means at their disposal to drive the IWW out of American industry. In Grays Harbor, the mass strikes of 1917 gave municipal and county authorities reason to worry and react. The strike spread rapidly from the woods of Grays Harbor to most of the logging camps and lumber mills west of the Cascades. According to historian Vernon Jensen, not more than “15 per cent of the mills on the West Coast were running” by 1 August, and an estimated fifty thousand workers took part in the strike. Throughout the summer of 1917, practically the entire lumber industry west of the Cascades was at a standstill.²¹

Threatened by the IWW’s support in the community, Harbor employers mounted a counterattack against the Wobblies and their allies. Local employers and state officials listened to their spies’ advice and thus also attacked the IWW’s rank-and-file members and community spaces. Groups of rank-and-file Wobblies were arrested, assaulted, and otherwise intimidated by police, thugs, and the US Army during the 1917 lumber strike and period of heavy IWW activity that followed the strike. Moreover, beginning in September 1917, the Harbor’s IWW halls came under attack. IWW halls in Aberdeen

¹⁹ Thompson, “They Didn’t Suppress,” 1-4; Jon Bekken, “A Note from Labor History: The IWW’s Emergency Program Split,” *Anarcho Syndicalist Review* 27 (Winter 1999): 23.

²⁰ On the 1923 IWW General Strike, see Chapter 10.

²¹ Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 125-126; Ficken, “The Wobbly Horrors,” 329; Howd, 72-73; *Industrial Worker*, 21, 28 July 1917. According to the *Daily Washingtonian*, by 17 July, five thousand workers in Grays Harbor alone were on strike. *Daily Washingtonian*, 17 July 1917.

and Hoquiam were raided or vandalized at least four times in 1917 and 1918.²² Indeed, that the mainstream press carried headlines like “Rooting out the Reds” was telling of employers’ desire to uproot the IWW from their community.²³

Municipal police and the county sheriff’s officers reacted to the strike by arresting Wobblies for a dizzying array of offenses. Well over one hundred Grays Harbor Wobblies were arrested in July and August 1917 on charges of unlawful assembly, picketing, vagrancy, and the dubious charge of being an “IWW agitator.”²⁴ Other Wobblies were specifically arrested as “slackers,” the pejorative label for those men who refused to register for the draft.²⁵ IWW member Frederick Meischke was tossed in a cell ostensibly for threatening to assassinate President Wilson, although his twin crimes of holding a red card and a German surname were more likely the cause.²⁶ The mainstream press urged authorities to take swift and decisive action, claiming that IWWs represented but a minority of the strikers, and were only able to shut down the mills through intimidation.²⁷ Throughout the strike Aberdeen police received frequent complaints from

²² *Aberdeen Daily World*, 5, 6 September 1917; *Industrial Worker*, 19 September; 24 November 1917; 8 April 1918; Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 129; Copeland, *The Centralia Tragedy*, 31.

²³ *The Literary Digest for November 22, 1919*, 15. The *Literary Digest* article was reprinted in the *Industrial Worker*, 13 December 1919.

²⁴ Chehalis County Jail Record: Civil/Criminal, 1913-1922, SWA. According to this record, twenty-three IWWs were arrested and held at the Chehalis County jail between 14 July and 23 August. This number does not, however, include those arrested and held in local jails or those IWWs merely harassed by local, state, and federal law enforcement agents.

²⁵ *Daily Washingtonian*, 13, 15, 17, 20 July; 1, 3, 7, 9, 11, 12 August 1917; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 2 April; 12, 14, 17 August 1917.

²⁶ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 12 July 1917; *Daily Washingtonian*, 13 July 1917. On the harassment faced by “slackers” during the Great War, see Gerald E. Shenk, “*Work or Fight!*” *Race, Gender, and the Draft in World War One* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Diane M. T. North, “Slackers,” in James Ciment and Thaddeus Russell, eds., *The Home Front Encyclopedia: United States, Britain, and Canada in World Wars I and II*, Vol. 1: World War I (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2007), 459.

²⁷ *Daily Washingtonian*, 15 July 1917.

local mill owners that IWW pickets were using “vulgar language,” and who promised to meet the radicals’ threat with violent retaliation.²⁸

Meanwhile, a number of lawmen had made their way into the Grays Harbor County sheriff’s office. Most prominent of these agents were deputy sheriffs H. D. McKenney and John A. McBride. Between 1917 and 1919, the two men were responsible for the arrest and jailing of more than one hundred Grays Harbor Wobblies. They also served as scab herders, informants, and spies, before graduating to positions as special agents for the Lumbermen’s Protective Association, an employer’s organization formed by employers in the lumber industry to maintain the ten-hour day and keep the industry union-free.²⁹ As part of his duties, McBride, a member of the US Army during the Spanish-American War, went undercover as a member of the IWW’s Marine Transport Workers’ Industrial Union (MTWIU) and “immediately set about spying on its meetings” and searching for “an inner circle” of IWW militants, all of which he reported to McKenney.³⁰ McKenney then submitted his reports to A. J. Morley, an Aberdeen-based officer in the Lumbermen’s Protective Agency and President of the Saginaw Lumber Company.³¹ However, McKenney’s greatest contribution to the anti-IWW crusade came as a spy for the US Army. He issued reports to military officers that included lurid details of “the Wobblys’ methods which are getting worse and very hard to combat.”

²⁸ City of Aberdeen, Police Department, Daily Report Journals, 1917-1919, SWA.

²⁹ Dreyfus, “Nature, Militancy, and the Western Worker,” 86.

³⁰ Testimony of John A. McBride, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, File 3, 5719, WSU, 3778, 3795, 3806-3806. During his testimony at the *United States v. Haywood, et al.* case in Chicago, McBride engaged in a revealing exchange with Wobbly attorney George Vanderveer. The attorney asked McBride if he was paid in “gold, silver, paper or what?” to which McBride responded, “Legal tender of the United States, all kinds.” Upon hearing McBride’s answer, Vanderveer snapped back, “Well, you know that silver is the usual payment for such services as you were rendering? You heard how Judas was paid, didn’t you?”

³¹ F. B. Stansbury to Colonel Bryce P. Disque, 22 November 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1065, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 364; Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 127.

According to McKenney these methods included the use of “acid in shoes and cow-itch,” and the destruction of tools and machinery.³²

McKenney, McBride, and other operatives wrote prolifically of their findings on the Harbor. Their reports thus form a key part of the evidence used in this thesis. Unfortunately, because employers and the state have so frequently turned to labor spies to monitor union and radical activities, these agents’ reports have become a major source of evidence for labor historians, especially those who study groups of workers whose own records either do not exist or have not been compiled in an archival collection.³³ In his classic book *The Making of the English Working Class* historian E. P. Thompson confronted the issues of using the reports of labor spies as evidence of union or radical activities. According to Thompson, one of problems with relying on these reports was that the spies were paid or otherwise rewarded to produce evidence of incendiary and illegal activities of radicals. Therefore, operatives had an incentive to lie or exaggerate in their accounts. Spies were also watching over activities that they sometimes did not understand, and thus might write about an action with little context, allowing a simple grumble of discontent to sound like a revolutionary conspiracy. Sometimes the information spies reported to their bosses derived from informants paid by the spies for their knowledge. Thus, spy reports were often based on information that had flowed through many sources, each of whom could interpret it in his or her own fashion. However, Thompson also recognized the potential value of the spies’ reports, arguing that “if scrutinized with care,” they offer source material that is difficult to replicate and

³² F. B. Stansbury to Colonel Bryce P. Disque, 22 November 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1065, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA. For more information on McKenney, see *Daily Washingtonian*, 12 August 1917.

³³ For example, see Andrew Parnaby, *Citizen Docker: Making A New Deal on the Vancouver Waterfront, 1919-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*.

can be of great value in studying the otherwise mysterious activities of radicals and unionists.³⁴

Because of the abundance of source material derived from the reports of paid operatives whose job was partly to disrupt the activities of the IWW, I confronted some of the same issues as Thompson as to the reliability of my sources. However, several characteristics of these sources lead me to accept the substance, if not every detail, provided by the spy reports. First, at certain points in the Harbor's history, such as 1917-1918, the region was home to a dozen or more publicly and privately funded labor spies. While the particulars of their reports varied, each of these men reached roughly the same conclusions about the size of the local IWW, the scope of the union's activities, and the level of support the Wobblies enjoyed in the community. To demonstrate that fact, I have included evidence provided by a number of different spies and spy agencies in my analysis below. Second, many of the major developments, if not the specific details, reported by Grays Harbor spies about IWW activities can be corroborated by other sources, including the writings of Harbor employers and the Wobblies themselves. Thus, not only were more than one spies reporting the same or similar conclusions, these conclusions have been corroborated by additional sources. Third, the information provided by these spies to their employers and law enforcement officials was used by agents of the law as sufficient evidence to break up IWW meetings, raid the IWW's halls and living quarters, and arrest the radicals whose names appeared in the operatives' reports. Considering the police frequently succeeded at rounding up and jailing Grays Harbor IWW members, it stands to reason that they were receiving accurate information about these members, their living spaces, and their activities from their informants.

³⁴ E. P. Thompson, *The Making*, 484-497. Cited on page 492.

The reports of labor spies such as those written by McKenney and McBride constitute a significant part of the written record of early twentieth century Grays Harbor labor activism. But spies represented merely the front line of the attack upon the Grays Harbor Wobblies during the war and its aftermath. Grays Harbor County Sheriff Jeff Bartell, who served briefly as both men's boss in the sheriff's office, arrested numerous IWWs and directly oversaw their internment in the Grays Harbor County Jail.³⁵ For the crime of being "loaded with strike posters signed by E. E. Wieland, president of the International Timber Workers union, and IWW [draft] dodgers," Paul Miller, a twenty-four year-old Finnish worker, was taken to Bartell's jail, where he was eventually joined by twenty-three fellow workers.³⁶ According to historian John McClelland, Bartell offered to deputize every American Legion man in the region to "preserve order" in 1918.³⁷ For his part, Aberdeen Police Chief George Dean refused to enforce Washington State prohibition laws during the 1917 strike, hoping the strikers would drink their skimpy savings away and be forced to abandon the conflict.³⁸ In November 1917, Dean traveled to Chicago to assist the prosecution in crafting their side in the *United States v Haywood, et al.* case. This case served as the centerpiece of the federal government's offensive against IWW officials in which 101 Wobblies were convicted and sentenced to up to twenty years in prison and fined, collectively, two million dollars for allegedly obstructing the war effort.³⁹ Fully aware of the chief's long tradition as an ally of employers, Aberdeen Wobblies Jack Rhodes and Walter Horace Margason wrote

³⁵ *Daily Washingtonian*, 11, 12 August 1917.

³⁶ Aberdeen Daily World, 14 July 1917; Chehalis (Grays Harbor) County Jail Record, Civil/Criminal, 1913-1922, Accession No. 86-1-9, SWA.

³⁷ McClelland, *Wobbly War*, 55.

³⁸ Testimony of Walter Horace Margason, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, File 3, 5719, WSU.

³⁹ Patrick Renshaw, "The IWW and the Red Scare, 1917-1924," *Journal of Contemporary History* (October 1968): 68.

“counsel for the damned” George Vanderveer in Chicago warning about Dean, “If he confined his statement to facts it will be of no use to them, but from what we know of him we think he said or will say what he is told.”⁴⁰

A second element of local state agents’ union-busting operation came in their aggressive enforcement of the many injunctions granted during the 1917 lumber strike.⁴¹ Between 20 July and 5 August, Grays Harbor Superior Court Judge Ben Sheeks’ Court responded to complaints brought by six lumber companies by issuing far-reaching injunctions against the “Industrial Workers of the World, International Union of Timber-Workers, Lumber Workers Industrial Union #500,” and a list of especially prominent picketers. The IWWs and trade unionists were enjoined from picketing the plaintiffs’ mills and camps, “coercing and intimidating” scabs, or even using the word “scab” or “scabs” to harass the strikebreakers.⁴² For defying the injunction picketers were arrested throughout the strike, including eleven men -- all loggers -- held in the county jail, charged with picketing.⁴³

⁴⁰ Lowell Stillwell Hawley and Ralph Bushnell Potts, *Counsel for the Damned: A Biography of George Francis Vanderveer* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co, 1953); J. F. Rhodes and W. H. Margason to George F. Vanderveer, 15 November 1917, Box 99, File 1, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, Folder 3, 5713, WSU. Dean’s role as a servant of Grays Harbor employers was analyzed in Chapter 3.

⁴¹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 23 July 1917; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 7, 253. According to Dreyfus, “Timber Workers,” 200, the “Washington Supreme Court issued an injunction against all forms of picketing on Jul 17.”

⁴² *Grays Harbor Lumber Company v. Industrial Workers of the World, et al.*, No. 14,101, Superior Court of the State of Washington, for Chehalis County (1917), SWA; *Hoquiam Lumber & Shingle Co., v. Industrial Workers of the World, et al.*, No. 14,104, Superior Court of the State of Washington, for Chehalis County (1917), SWA; *E. H. Lester v. Industrial Workers of the World, et al.*, No. 14,105, Superior Court of the State of Washington, for Chehalis County (1917), SWA; *Schafer Logging Company v. Industrial Workers of the World, et al.*, No. 14,106, Superior Court of the State of Washington, for Chehalis County (1917), SWA; *Henry Wilson, A. B. Johnson, Chas. R. Wilson Estate, INC., Co-Partners as Wilson Bros. Company v. Industrial Workers of the World, et al.*, No. 14,112, Superior Court of the State of Washington, for Chehalis County (1917), SWA; *Northwestern Lumber Company v. Industrial Workers of the World, et al.*, No. 14,115, Superior Court of the State of Washington, for Chehalis County (1917), SWA; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 23 July 1917.

⁴³ Chehalis (Grays Harbor) County Jail Record, Civil/Criminal, 1913-1922, Accession No. 86-1-9, SWA; *Daily Washingtonian*, 1, 3, 12 August 1917.

With wartime patriotic fervor running at high gear, a seemingly endless string of groups joined in the anti-Wobbly crusade. Mainstream Christian groups stood alongside religious fanatics in their quest to exorcise the IWW from the woods. The Aberdeen Presbyterian Church leafleted the town in December 1917 with literature boldly trumpeting its program of “IWW: Its Cause and Cure,” which evidently consisted of the minister’s “knowledge of a plot to paralyze the industries of the country in the coming months,” along with the more traditional service and a performance by the church choir.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, “Three fingered Jack” Godwin, a reformed “ex-hobo, ex-IWW, ex-gambler and gambling house proprietor,” toured the region during December 1917 providing lectures on how he was able to single-handedly convert eight thousand IWWs to the teachings of Christ. During an address in Aberdeen he claimed to have personally torn up 135 IWW red cards during the previous week, and was not shy about claiming responsibility for destroying the IWW on the Harbor.⁴⁵ J. G. Anderson, “corpulent, threadbare and shiney,” who had a history of testifying against radical political prisoners, toured the mills and camps of Grays Harbor in late 1919 “under the guise of evangelism” passing out Christian literature, and using his time among the workers to collect information on agitators.⁴⁶ In Aberdeen, T. H. Simpson of the Presbyterian Church became convinced of the need for “a logging pastor [who] should have a definite status in the camps like that of a chaplain in the army.” Thus convinced, Simpson became the first of many “industrial chaplains,” designated to many camps in the region to “bring to bear

⁴⁴ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 1 December 1917.

⁴⁵ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 5, 6, 13 December 1917; F. B. Stansbury to Edmund Leigh, 27 December 1917, Box 2, File 540-B, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA. Godwin appeared in the newspapers again in April 1924 after he was convicted of committing a “statutory crime” against a thirteen year-old relative of his. See *Aberdeen Daily World*, 5 April 1924.

⁴⁶ *Industrial Worker*, 18 October 1919.

the spirit and point of view of Christ.” He pursued this goal by showing the workers moving pictures, holding courses in “English and Americanization,” promoting discussion in the camps to combat the “one sided and fanatical social propaganda” of the Wobblies.⁴⁷

When local officials and religious preachers failed to quell the IWW, lumber operators turned to the iron fist to beat the rebels out of the woods.⁴⁸ During the 1917 lumber strike, management at the Grays Harbor Commercial Company in Cosmopolis was able to repel IWW pickets at their mill through the use of armed guards and an electric fence.⁴⁹ Threatening to revive the “ax handle brigade” of 1911-1912, the manager of the Western Lumber Company telephoned Aberdeen police in late July to threaten that if the lawful authorities did not remove the pickets, “the Mill would not be Responsible, for any Trouble that might Occur.”⁵⁰ IWWs were beaten, their halls were destroyed, and the threat of physical violence -- usually tar and feathering -- hung over all Wobbly actions.⁵¹ Aberdeen Wobbly Walter Margason declared that picketers not dare venture out alone or in packs of under fifty men because of the widespread knowledge

⁴⁷ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 1 December 1917; “Documentary Report on the Logging Camps of the Pacific North West with Recommendations by Worth M. Tippy,” Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 159, Folder D, WSU.

⁴⁸ Lumber operators were less violent in their dealings with the IWW during the Great War than they had been during the previous decade. Washington State Governor Ernest Lister attributed the lack of violence to his secret spy service, directed by C. B. Reed, which he described as “of great benefit in the handling of the many difficult situations that have arisen in this State.” See Governor Ernest Lister to S. V. Stewart, Governor of Montana, 22 April 1918, Governor Ernest Lister Papers, Secret Service Files, Correspondence – 1917-1921, WSA. Dreyfus agreed that the strike was “remarkably peaceful when measured against the backdrop of 1912, 1915, or 1916.” Dreyfus, “Timber Workers,” 200.

⁴⁹ Ficken, “The Wobbly Horrors,” 329; Ficken, *The Forested Land: A History of Lumbering in Western Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987), 135.

⁵⁰ City of Aberdeen, Police Department, Daily Report Journals, 1917-1919, SWA.

⁵¹ Grays Harbor Wobblies were tarred and feathered by 4L members and state authorities during 1917-1918. See F. B. Stansbury to Edmund Leigh, 26 August 1918, Record Group 165, Box 4, File 721, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

that “there were a lot of gun men carrying clubs and beating them up.”⁵²

On 5 September 1917, IWW halls throughout the nation were raided by federal agents. The Aberdeen and Hoquiam halls did not miss the action, and were raided by local, state, and federal officials in the middle of the night when no members were available to mount a resistance.⁵³

Additionally, in July 1917, federal troops descended on the Harbor as part of a program to round up anyone suspected of being a delegate, agitator, or “in any way a leader.”⁵⁴ The soldiers delivered little in the way of material assistance in the efforts to break the strike until the end of August when the Aberdeen mayor requested that they step in to protect the mills from IWW pickets. According to historian Philip J. Dreyfus, the mayor’s use of the troops achieved his goals, as the “strikers offered no resistance to the soldiers, and picketing practically ceased as the troops surrounded the mills and the city’s employment offices.”⁵⁵

In September 1917, the IWW took their strike “back on the job,” the radicals’ term for returning to work but utilizing a variety of tactics -- slowing down, feigning ignorance of work processes, closely following safety regulations, and sabotaging machinery -- in order to minimize production. Striking “on the job” had many advantages for the Wobblies. With the men on the job, securing scabs was made more difficult, and it enabled the “strikers” to continue to be paid while taking direct action against their employers. As IWW lumber worker James Rowan put it, the IWWs

⁵² Testimony of Walter Horace Margason, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, Folder 3, 5761, WSU.

⁵³ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 5, 6 September 1917; *Industrial Worker*, 19 September 1917. J. F. Rhodes and W. H. Margason to George F. Vanderveer, 15 November 1917, Box 99, Folder 1, WSU. Apparently undeterred by the loss of their halls, as well as documents, records, and literature, the Aberdeen branch threw a dance following “the regular street propaganda meeting” shortly after the raids.

⁵⁴ Preston, *Aliens and Dissenters*, 106-108; *Daily Washingtonian*, 20 July 1917.

⁵⁵ Dreyfus, “Timber Workers,” 215.

“advocated that the strike should be transferred to the job while the union was still intact, and the fighting spirit of the men unsubdued; or in other words, that the strikers should go back, and work no more than eight hours a day, or if at times they found it necessary to stay on the job ten hours, they should work slow so that no more than eight hours work should be done in ten hours.”⁵⁶ Facing these troubling new tactics, employers and their allies continued to violently repress local workers after the end of their strike. In November 1917, Grays Harbor gained national attention for its citizens’ terrorist activities. A group calling itself the Black Robes was formed in Grays Harbor and issued a threat to tar and feather Hoquiam Wobblies. The group broke a window out of the IWW headquarters with a note warning: “Remember the boys in France. Feathers are light and tar is cheap. This is for the IWW,” attached to a brick.⁵⁷ Warning of “Another Tulsa?” the Wobblies’ *Defense News Bulletin* reprinted an article from the *Chicago Post* that informed its readers of the Black Robes’ message. Fearful that his property was to be destroyed, their landlord evicted the Hoquiam Wobblies shortly after the Black Robes’ threat was issued.⁵⁸

In April 1918, during a series of region-wide raids of Wobbly offices and attacks

⁵⁶ Rowan, *The IWW in the Lumber Industry*, 48. See also Fred Thompson, “The IWW Tells Its Own Story,” *Industrial Worker* 22 March 1932.

⁵⁷ *Chicago News* article reprinted in the *Defense News Bulletin* (Chicago), 24 November 1917. The *Industrial Worker* recorded that the name of the terrorist group was “The Black Gown.” *Industrial Worker*, 24 November 1917.

⁵⁸ H. D. McKenney, one of the many labor spies hired to watch over and report on the Grays Harbor Wobblies during World War I, investigated the incident between the Black Robes and IWW. His inconclusive findings led him to suggest that the attack had been self-inflicted as a means of arousing public sympathy for the radical workers. If the Wobblies had committed the act to gain public sympathy -- highly unlikely -- their efforts backfired, as the rebel workers were forbidden from renting their former hall after the incident. F. B. Stansbury to Edmund Leigh, 27 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 2, file No. 540B, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA. The new Hoquiam hall was set up at the corner of 8th and M streets. *Industrial Worker*, 2 February 1918. See also, Aaron Goings, “Vigilantes Attack Hoquiam IWW Hall on November 16, 1917,” http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=pf_output.cfm&file_id=8783, Accessed 10 November 2009.

on individual IWWs, a mob of six hundred men ransacked the Aberdeen IWW hall, dragged out four cartloads of paper, and initiated what mob members joyfully called a “Liberty Loan” bonfire in the street.⁵⁹ Later that night threats of lynching were issued to the Wobblies and their allies, restaurants and hotels frequented by IWWs were raided, and Fellow Worker R. C. Quint was taken from town with a rope tied around his neck, made to “ride the rail” and run the gauntlet.⁶⁰ Mrs. H. W. Sampson, an Aberdeen hotel owner, reported that the mob took a nineteen-year-old boy “out of his room and the house to about a mile east of town and beat up and told not to return or he would get what Frank Little got.” Sampson mocked and condemned the mob’s actions, “Tuesday night they came again, took a man out of the office and beat him up, and we are told he is in the county hospital. I see they put handcuffs on him, as a mob of about 100 small men could not handle him.”⁶¹ The Wobblies centered their blame for this tragedy on Aberdeen Police Chief George Dean, who “issued an order that all hotels be searched -- by a bloodthirsty gang of maniacs -- for ‘seditious literature.’ The idea, of course, was to drag out for the amusement of the mob anyone found to have IWW literature in his room.”⁶²

The Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen was another source of state repression of the Wobblies. The 4Ls, as they were usually known, was organized to break the IWW and guarantee the production of timber needed for the Allied war efforts

⁵⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 8 April 1918; Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 129; Copeland, *The Centralia Tragedy*, 31.

⁶⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 8 April 1918. *Aberdeen Daily World*, 8, 10 April 1918. It should be noted that federal authorities were entirely aware of the threat to the various IWW headquarters around Grays Harbor as early as January 1918, but did nothing to stop the attacks on the Wobblies. Report of H. D. McKenney to F. B. Stansbury, 11 April 1918, Record Group 165, Box 1, File 508, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

⁶¹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 11 April 1918. Frank Little was lynched in Butte, Montana, on 1 August 1917. See Kornbluh, *Rebel Voices*, 295.

⁶² *Industrial Worker*, 14 April 1918. Dean also refused to protect the IWWs and anyone who considered re-opening the IWW hall or small businesses raided by the mob. According to the *Aberdeen Daily World*, Dean said one “would have to take his chances, that Aberdeen workingmen and citizens had been provoked to a high pitch of anger against the IWW and that the mobs which had been at work here twice were too large for local authorities to control.” *Aberdeen Daily World*, 11 April 1918.

in Europe. As an organization designed primarily to secure sufficient war materials from the woods, and rid those woods of the IWW menace, the 4Ls considered the Grays Harbor region a top organizing priority.⁶³ Shortly after its arrival the Legion was joined by the first detachment of the Spruce Production Division (SPD), a force of soldier loggers trained to facilitate spruce production, recruit for the 4Ls, and drive out suspected Wobblies.⁶⁴ By December 1917, 4L officers and troops were swarming around the Harbor cities and woods, recruiting loggers, and running unionists out of the camps.⁶⁵ Legion officers moved first into the Saginaw camps, where their appeals achieved the desired results as the organization signed up much of the workforce.⁶⁶ Four-L membership had its appeals. As historian Richard Rajala demonstrated, the “Legion’s primary appeal was based on tangible improvements in living conditions,” including the mandated creation of sanitary living conditions, meeting halls, and company-sponsored cultural activities: rather sophisticated early example of welfare capitalism deployed in the western woods.⁶⁷ Each worker who joined the 4Ls signed a pledge, reading, in part, “I, the Undersigned, in consideration of my being made a Member of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen, do hereby solemnly pledge my efforts during this war to the United States of America, and will support and defend this Country against enemies, both foreign and domestic.”⁶⁸ A second appeal of membership was that it enabled loggers to

⁶³ The necessity of securing spruce production in the Grays Harbor region was made clear by that region’s continued status as the largest lumber-producing region in the world. See, *Aberdeen Daily World*, 12 December 1917. On the 4Ls, see Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 413-414; Ficken, *Forested Land*, 325-341; Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 101-115; Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 129-137.

⁶⁴ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 28 December 1917; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 413-414.

⁶⁵ Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 412-414; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 15 December 1917.

⁶⁶ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 15 December 1917.

⁶⁷ Rajala, “A Dandy Bunch of Wobblies,” 223; and “The Boss and the Bill.”

⁶⁸ Cited in Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen Pledge Card No. 26101, Record Group 165, Box 2, File 508, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

avoid the brutal treatment meted out to 4L resisters. Indeed, to induct men into the 4Ls, military recruiters often used threats of violent retribution against all who refused to sign their pledge. Dissenters were made to run the gauntlet, beaten up, or tarred and feathered. Fellow Worker George Harper was threatened by a “Four Hells” lieutenant at the Aloha camp, who suggested that before allowing Harper to leave the camp he should be “mark[ed] up as a remembrance.”⁶⁹ The lieutenant also offered his advice for dealing with other intransigent loggers: “If they won’t line up, KNOCK THEIR BLOCKS OFF!”⁷⁰ In his book *The Centralia Conspiracy*, Wobbly Ralph Chaplin related news that a band of 4Ls lynched an IWW near the Grays Harbor County seat of Montesano.⁷¹ Three years after one of their members was tarred and feathered at the company town of Aloha, the IWW still issued reports about the perpetrators. One read: “Chas. Collins, 4 feet 4 inches, weight about 180, a little stoop-shouldered . . . This fink carried a gun in 1917, also was one of the leading guys who tarred and feathered a fellow worker at Aloha, Wash., in 1918.”⁷² Mixing coercion with patriotic appeals and promises of future improvements, the Legion organized practically the entire lumber industry with its peak membership reaching somewhere between 110,000 and 130,000 workers. The Legion

⁶⁹ “Four Hells” derives from an article written in the *Industrial Worker*, 5 January 1918. Similarly, James Rowan argued that the 4Ls “meant Little Loyalty and Large Loot.” Rowan, *The IWW in the Lumber Industry*, 53.

⁷⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 5 January 1918. Writing to the *Industrial Worker* two weeks later, M. J. G. described the induction methods for the Aberdeen 4L recruiter: “The officer sizes up the weakest looking men and bulldozes them first and when he forces their signatures he uses them to break down the other men. Those who refuse are put on the blacklist.” *Industrial Worker*, 19 January 1918. A similar attack to the one described in the text above appeared in the testimony of Frank Milward, superintendent of the Aloha Lumber Company mill in Aloha, Washington, during the *United States v. Haywood, et al.* case in Chicago. See Testimony of Frank Milward, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 108, Folder 2, 4405-4408, WSU.

⁷¹ Ralph Chaplin, *The Centralia Conspiracy* (Chicago: Industrial Workers of the World, 1924), 48.

⁷² *Industrial Worker*, 16 July 1921.

met with remarkable success on Grays Harbor where it organized 103 locals and more than eight thousand loggers by the summer of 1918.⁷³

The heavy activity of the IWW in the Pacific Northwest, their persistent threat to employers' profits, and the special dangers posed by lumber workers' militant strike activity during wartime pushed several western states to act decisively in helping municipal and county officials. Generally, state-level repression took two forms: the enactment of criminal syndicalism legislation to give law enforcement bodies more teeth in their prosecution of the Wobblies, and the creation of state secret service bodies to infiltrate, investigate, and break up radical organizations.⁷⁴ Washington State utilized both methods of repression, but to Governor Ernest Lister's credit, he refused to sign the criminal syndicalism bills passed by both houses of the state legislature in 1917 and 1919. Still, Lister, no civil libertarian, turned to labor spies to assist local authorities in disrupting the movement, and federal authorities who were already gathering information on the Wobblies' seditious activities.⁷⁵

For fifteen months, between 13 August 1917 and 1 November 1918, Governor Lister employed the Washington Detective Bureau, a New York City-based labor spy service headed by C. B. Reed.⁷⁶ Because of the IWW's strength throughout the state, the

⁷³ Howd, 81-84. On the violent methods used by the 4L to intimidate IWW loggers, see Rowan, *The IWW in the Lumber Industry*, 53; Harrison George, *The IWW Trial: Story of the Greatest Trial in Labor's History by One of Its Defendants* (reprint, Arno Press, 1969), 54-56; Testimony of Walter Horace Margason, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, Folder 3, 5713, WSU. In spite of the successes of the 4Ls, the Wobblies retained a large membership in the Grays Harbor logging industry. See Chapter 10.

⁷⁴ Joining Washington in the creation of a state secret service was at least one other state: Montana. See Robert Justin Goldstein, *Political Repression in Modern America from 1870 to 1976* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 130.

⁷⁵ John M. Hulick, "Whip Sawing: Wobbly [sic] Suppression as Practiced by the Washington State Secret Service" (B.A. thesis, Saint Martin's College, 1994).

⁷⁶ Governor's Secret Service, Statement of Expenses from August 13th 1917 to November 1st 1918, Governor Lister Papers, Secret Service Files, Correspondence – 1917-1921, WSA; Gunns, *Civil Liberties in Crisis*, 17.

agents covered all parts of Washington, focusing primarily on Seattle, Spokane, Yakima, Everett, Bellingham, and Grays Harbor. It was, in fact, largely due to the agents' efforts during the summer of 1917 that the US Bureau of Investigation was able to gather enough information on a number of Seattle Wobblies to have them indicted in the *United States v. Haywood, et al.* case.⁷⁷ Prosecutors, mayors, sheriffs, and anyone else with knowledge of the secret service operation and a desire to see the IWW stamped out of existence requested the assignment of the agents to their home towns, and once there, were opposed to seeing them go. City of Raymond Prosecuting Attorney John I. O'Phelan asked Lister that “in the interest of the spruce production, in the interest of the aeroplane propaganda, in the interest of the shipping propaganda that [agent] Mr. Bradbury be allowed to remain for a couple or three months any way.”⁷⁸

The agents monitored and reported to local authorities on bootleggers, sex workers, and “enemy aliens,” but their primary focus was on the IWW. Of the 697 investigations undertaken by the agents, 362, or about 52 percent, pertained directly to the Wobblies, while another 61 cases involved investigations of specific job sites and sabotage. All told, the agents arrested 87 workers they classified as “IWW Officers, Organizers and Delegates,” and confiscated four hundred “Seditious Volumes.”⁷⁹ One or more of the agents was assigned to Grays Harbor between November 1917 and February 1918. Due to what the agents perceived as their successes at stifling “IWW activity and

⁷⁷ Ernest Lister to Honorable S. V. Stewart, Governor of Montana, 22 April 1918, Governor Lister Papers, Secret Service Files, Correspondence – 1917-1921, WSA; Howard P. Wright, Special Agent in Charge, Department of Justice, Bureau of Investigation to Honorable Clay Allen, United States Attorney, 22 October 1917, Governor Ernest Lister Papers, Secret Service Files, Correspondence – 1917- 1921, WSA.

⁷⁸ John I. O'Phelan to Hon. Ernest Lister, Governor, 25 February 1918, Governor Lister, Secret Service Files, Correspondence -1917-1921, WSA.

⁷⁹ C. B. Reed to Governor Ernest Lister, 30 December 1918, Governor Lister Papers, Secret Service Files – 1917-1919, WSA. This letter provides a full documentation of all investigations undertaken by the secret service between 13 August 1917 and 30 December 1918.

also more or less labor difficulties in connection with the IWW organization,” a year into the war, Lister reduced the force to only four men.⁸⁰

Their four months on the Harbor were fruitful ones for the agents. Agent 31, most likely a man named L. C. Loewer, was the principal spy assigned to Aberdeen.⁸¹ While there he infiltrated the IWW, formed a friendship with Aberdeen branch secretary T. J. Rhodes, and gathered information about numerous strikes and cases of sabotage at local logging camps. He reported the presence of thousands of IWWs working in Grays Harbor and noted that hundreds of them attended the daily meetings in Aberdeen and Hoquiam. He gathered and reported the names of those Wobblies in Aberdeen he deemed worthy of special surveillance, many of whom were taken into custody personally by the servicemen.⁸² One, brief but typical report went as follows:

At midnight last night I met Grady, one of the IWW organizers of this district and learned from him that after New Years they are going to have assistance from other men not members of the I W W in closing all mills and camps, unless 8 hours are granted.

I received verification from one Ed North, who is an active member of the LLLL and is a former W., from Idaho and Montana. He is down on them now and will not even be seen speaking to one (at least I have heard him claim). Anyhow, from what I pick up it is sure to come. The Climax had another break down yesterday and it looks odd but I can't do anything, as Mr. Scott's partner, _____ Fox is rather inclined to believe that his men are O.K. When I pointed out a W. to him he wouldn't believe me, saying I'm mistaken. Of course I did not insist but let it go and admitted a mistake in identification.⁸³

⁸⁰ Ernest Lister to Honorable S. V. Stewart, Governor of Montana, 22 April 1918, Governor Lister Papers, Secret Service Files, Correspondence – 1917-1921, WSA.

⁸¹ Governor's Secret Service, Statement of Expenses from 13 August 1917 to 1 November 1918, Governor Lister Papers, Secret Service Files, Correspondence – 1917-1921, WSA.

⁸² Hulick, "Whip Sawing," 41-47; C. B. Reed to Governor Ernest Lister, 30 December 1918, Governor Lister Papers, Secret Service Files – 1917-1919, WSA.

⁸³ Report of Agent 31, 20 December 1917, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA; Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA. Each of the reports cited from Box 9, File 1095 were included as parts of a general report sent from Bryce P. Disque to F. B. Stansbury, 24 January 1919.

Agent 31 was so deeply entrenched within the union that he reported to headquarters of his imminent assignment as either “one of the flying squad or an active delegate.”⁸⁴ But shortly after reporting to his boss C. B. Reed of the possibility that he had been “outed” by Harbor residents, Agent 31 left town and issued no more reports.⁸⁵ A second agent, called S-7, was assigned to the region in early 1918. According to S-7’s reports, his activities in Aberdeen were mostly limited to tracking bootleggers and patronizing prostitutes.⁸⁶ However, he became so involved with the Raymond IWW that the rebel workers offered him a leadership post in the radical union. He wrote Reed, explaining how prominent Wobblies “asked me to start to open up a hall here big enough to hold the Wobblies and wants me to be the main speaker, having me speak one night at Raymond and the next in Centralia.”⁸⁷

A much more robust tool in the hands of Washington State authorities came from a criminal syndicalism statute passed in January 1919.⁸⁸ Its passage marked the high point of anti-radical lawmaking activity by the lumber industry-dominated Washington State legislature.⁸⁹ Although lumbermen had long possessed a great deal of power in the legislature, the criminalization of the IWW was their prized piece of legislation, one that

⁸⁴ Report of Agent 31, 26-27 November 1917, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA.

⁸⁵ Report of Agent 31, 2 January 1918; Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA.

⁸⁶ Report of S-7, 7-8 February 1918, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA.

⁸⁷ Report of E. B., 30 January 1918, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA.

⁸⁸ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 14 January 1919; Copeland, 90. The vote overriding Lister’s veto was nearly unanimous. In the Washington State House of Representatives, eighty-five of ninety-one votes were to override the veto, while in the Senate the bill passed by a count of thirty-seven to five.

⁸⁹ Gunns, *Civil Liberties in Crisis*, 37. A decade before passing the criminal syndicalism bill, the Washington State Legislature passed a Criminal Anarchy bill that was also directed at repressing the IWW.

finally allowed the lumbermen to focus solely on the serious business of making profits, rather than fighting street battles against radical workers.⁹⁰

Criminal syndicalism laws proved extraordinarily popular with state executives and legislators in the wake of the Great War, and were eventually passed by nineteen states, as well as in Alaska and Hawaii.⁹¹ Support for the bill had been pouring in from around Washington State since its introduction in 1917, but in Grays Harbor, where labor militancy had been a problem for employers for more than a decade, the response was especially rapid and enthusiastic. Many wealthy lumbermen with strong political connections, including state lawmakers Alex Polson of Hoquiam and Mark Reed of Shelton, considered the bill a compromise piece of legislation. Several of their colleagues preferred to completely outlaw strikes instead of the more “moderate” criminal syndicalism bill.⁹² During four days in March 1917 alone, Lister received no fewer than seventeen requests from Grays Harbor lumbermen and employers’ groups that he sign the syndicalism bill.⁹³ Polson, president of the Polson Logging Company and one of the champions of the bill, wrote the governor an urgent letter, arguing the criminal syndicalism law “is a sabotage bill, and which nearly everyone except the IWWs are in

⁹⁰ *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 30 March 1904; Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 116.

⁹¹ Gunns, *Civil Liberties in Crisis*, 37.

⁹² Ficken, *Lumber and Politics*, 40; Alex Polson to Mr. Irvin W. Ziegans, Secretary to Governor, 12 March 1917, Governor Ernest Lister Papers, Box No. 2H-2-112, 1917-1919, WSA.

⁹³ See Governor Ernest Lister Papers, Industrial Workers of the World—Judiciary Files, Box No. 2H-2-112, 1917-1919, WSA. Not surprisingly, this file also contains a letter from Centralia lumberman F. B. Hubbard, the chief proponent of driving the IWW from his home town during the Armistice Day activities of 1919. For his activism and leadership of the raid on the IWW hall on November 11, 1919, Hubbard’s son Dale was shot to death by IWW logger Wesley Everest as he was being pursued after the raid on the IWW hall. See Copeland, *Centralia Tragedy*, 52.

favor of.”⁹⁴ N. J. Blagen of the Grays Harbor Lumber Company offered a violent alternative, should the bill not be passed,

Five years ago we had a very serious experience with the IWWs on this Harbor which no doubt would have had terminated in serious destruction of both life and property had it not been for the strong hand with which it was handled by the authorities, and even at that it looked pretty serious for a couple of weeks. We have every reason to believe this is to be repeated this spring and summer if these people think the conditions are right for it. Therefore we think there is a special need of such law as above referenced to, especially in view of the experience Everett had lately with this lawless element.⁹⁵

Despite the great support for the bill, during its committee hearings in February 1917, Washington State Senator Peter Iverson of Kitsap County predicted what would follow should the bill be put into law. He declared: “In trying to prevent crime, we must not commit a wrong against our cherished principles of freedom of speech and press. I believe this bill is a dangerous measure. I vote no.”⁹⁶ Lister agreed, and while the governor was no friend to working people, he understood the inherent dangers of the bill and vetoed the criminal syndicalism bills in 1917 and 1919.⁹⁷

Passed over Governor Lister’s veto during January 1919, the law did not go into widespread use until ten months later following the events of the Armistice Day tragedy in Centralia, Washington.⁹⁸ The town of Centralia was a major lumber center during the early twentieth century, but it lacked the longstanding Wobbly presence of the Harbor towns. Still, a small contingent of IWWs had operated in Centralia since at least 1912, and the surrounding woods contained scores of rebel workers throughout the 1910s and

⁹⁴ Alex Polson to Mr. Irvin W. Ziegans, Secretary to Governor, March 12, 1917, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 381.

⁹⁵ N. J. Blagen to Hon. Earnest Lister, Governor of State of Washington, 14 March 1917, Governor Ernest Lister Papers, Industrial Workers of the World—Judiciary Files, Box No. 2H-2-112, 1917-1919, WSA.

⁹⁶ *Senate Journal of the Fifteenth Legislature of the State of Washington, Begun and Held at Olympia, the State Capital, January 8, 1917* (Olympia: Frank M. Lamborn Public Printer, 1917), 390.

⁹⁷ Copeland, *The Centralia Tragedy*, 90;

⁹⁸ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 14 January 1919.

1920s.⁹⁹ On the first Armistice Day, American Legionnaires joined several other groups in a planned parade through downtown Centralia. The parade, ostensibly designed to celebrate the end of the “war to end all wars,” in fact proved to be a cover for the belligerent veterans to attack their IWW foes. As they reached the hall, the parading Legionnaires paused called out: “Let’s get them!” The veterans then rushed the Wobbly headquarters, broke down the door and front window, and entered the hall. Waiting on the other side of the door was a surprise for the veterans: armed IWWs willing to protect themselves and their hall with lethal force. As the first round of Legionnaires entered, a flurry of bullets fired from within the hall met them, scattering the frightened, injured, and dying men. After regrouping, the mob re-entered the hall and rounded up six Wobblies, while a second group chased down IWW logger Wesley Everest who had escaped through the back door. Chased down at the banks of the Skookumchuck River, Everest traded shots with his pursuers before finally capitulating and being unceremoniously hauled off to his jail cell. Later that night, a mob retrieved Everest, tortured and lynched him, and shot his body full of bullets while it was slung off the side of the Chehalis River Bridge.¹⁰⁰

The Wobblies’ audacious self-defense at Centralia provided state agents and vigilantes with all the reason they needed to aggressively enforce the new criminal syndicalism law. The law gave the police an extraordinarily broad scope with which to direct their attacks. The law stated that, “Whoever shall (1) Advocate, advise, teach or justify crime, sedition, violence, intimidation or injury as a means or way of effecting or resisting any industrial, economic, social or political change,” along with those who

⁹⁹ Copeland, *The Centralia Tragedy*, 23-24; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 455.

¹⁰⁰ Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 155-184; Renshaw, *The Wobblies*, 163-167; Adamic, *Dynamite*, 167-173; Chaplin, *The Centralia Conspiracy*.

helped to “organize, give aid to, be a member of or voluntarily assemble with,” and anyone who printed, published, edited, issued, or sold material advocating the above, was guilty of violating the statute.¹⁰¹

The law brought forth a massive crackdown on the most active members of the IWW, those considered by authorities to be leaders and those whose silence, authorities hoped, would guarantee the end of the movement. The first arrests in Washington State came in Tacoma during late April, when R. E. Eddy, a disabled construction worker, and eighteen-year-old Perry St. Louis were arrested and charged with the new crime.¹⁰² Two days after the Centralia IWWs violently defended their hall, police raided the IWW hall in Spokane, long the union’s stronghold in the Inland Empire and a favored target for repression. Authorities arrested seventy-four IWWs in Spokane, fifteen more were nabbed in Tacoma, while thirty-eight Seattle IWWs were victimized by the law in what was fast becoming known as the “White Terror.”¹⁰³ But the quickest response to the Centralia tragedy occurred at Aberdeen, which lay only a short distance from Centralia and whose members had commanded a considerable presence for almost a decade. On 12 November, police raided the Aberdeen IWW hall, evicted its tenants, seized a large amount of materials, and nailed the place up tight.¹⁰⁴ In commenting on the raid, the *Aberdeen Daily World* noted the internationalism of the Wobblies’ revolutionary

¹⁰¹*Senate Journal of the Sixteenth Legislature of the State of Washington* (Olympia: Public Printer, 1919), 518-519. This law passed the Senate on March 3, 1919; the House of Representatives on March 11, 1919, and was approved by the Governor on March 19, 1919.

¹⁰²*Industrial Worker*, 4 May 1919.

¹⁰³Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 163; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 12, 13 November 1919.

¹⁰⁴*Aberdeen Daily World*, 12 November 1919. The seized materials included a large number of “English, Swedish, Finnish, and Russian stickers,” detailed reports on members and activities, and conditions of the area’s lumber camps.

program, decrying the locals' ability "to carry on a thorough class-warfare fermentation . . . in several languages, and in a variety of ways."¹⁰⁵

As tends to happen with the enforcement of overtly political laws, the criminal syndicalism legislation served as a vehicle for social-climbing agents of the law.¹⁰⁶ In Grays Harbor, the law was specifically a boon to county prosecutor George Acret, who, in the words of one IWW, used attacks on syndicalists to advance his "political ambitions for a higher job."¹⁰⁷ Regardless of his motivations, Acret proved an enthused partner in what Wobblies called the "lumber trust's orders for revenge."¹⁰⁸ Dozens of IWWs were arrested in Grays Harbor between 12 November 1919 and 5 April 1920, with no fewer than eighteen of them tried by the Grays Harbor County Superior Court under provisions set to law by the criminal syndicalism statute.¹⁰⁹ The dubious honor of being the first criminal syndicalism victim on the Harbor fell to Charles Riddle, a "logger transient," whose crimes of being "suspected of being an IWW" and blaming the "capitalist class" for the Centralia tragedy earned him time in the county lockup.¹¹⁰ In an attempt to gain guilty verdicts, prosecutors brought in professional witness and former Wobbly A. E. Allen, who testified about his knowledge of IWW death threats against public officials, the destruction of property, and "slacking on the job . . . during war days."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 12, 15 November 1919.

¹⁰⁶ Two notable examples of anti-radical politicians who parlayed their reactionary actions into prominent national reputations are Seattle Mayor Ole Hanson and Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, both of whom sought to become president of the US. See Dana Frank, *Purchasing Power: Consumer Organizing, Gender, and Seattle Labor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 250; Burton A. Boxerman, "Alexander Mitchell Palmer (1872-1936)," in *The United States in the First World War: An Encyclopedia*, Routledge Illustrated ed., ed. Anne Cipriano Venzon (New York: Routledge, 1999), 433.

¹⁰⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 21 October 1922.

¹⁰⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 28 October 1922.

¹⁰⁹ Chehalis/Grays Harbor County Jail Record: Civil/Criminal, Jail Record, 1913-22, SWA; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 15, 17 November 1919.

¹¹⁰ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 12, 13 November 1919; 10 February 1920

¹¹¹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 10 February 1920.

Criminal syndicalism prosecutions continued in Grays Harbor for the next four years: eleven in 1919, six the next year, fifteen in 1921, while in 1922, the last year of its enforcement in the county, twenty-three IWWs were arrested for violations of the statute. According to Grays Harbor County jail records, the men arrested during these first 6 months of raids spent between 4 and 518 days in jail, with the jail terms evenly spread out between the two extremes. Four of the men, John Bradshaw, Emil Boettcher, Joe Hemhilter, and Sidney S. Scott received sentences from 1 to 10 years at the Walla Walla State Penitentiary for their involvement with the IWW, while Elmer Saleno received a suspended sentence from 6 months to 10 years in the state reformatory. Joining their male fellow workers were three women victimized under the law: Hilma Ray, Jenny Sipo, and Amanda McDonald, who each remained behind bars for under one month.¹¹² Indeed, so widespread were the criminal syndicalism arrests that a November 1922 issue of the *Grays Harbor Post* could boast that “there have been prosecutions and convictions of IWWs during practically every jury term in the past two years.”¹¹³

Some unrepentant IWWs refused to be silenced, even in the face of mass repression. IWW mill worker Fred Miller was pinched by authorities in both 1921 and 1922, with the latter arrest netting him five months in jail. Undeterred by his experiences, Miller refused bail after his 1922 arrest.¹¹⁴ Others provided even more potent evidence that repression is an ineffective method of breaking one’s commitment to

¹¹² Chehalis/Grays Harbor County Jail Record: Civil/Criminal, Jail Record, 1913-22, SWA.

¹¹³ *Grays Harbor Post*, 4 November 1922.

¹¹⁴ Chehalis/Grays Harbor County Jail Record: Civil/Criminal, Jail Record, 1913-22, SWA; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 10 April 1922; *Industrial Worker*, 17; 24 June 1922; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 31 May 1922.

radical causes. Criminal syndicalism prisoners Bob Pease, John Bradshaw, Jenny Sipo, and Hilma Ray all remained within the IWW for many years after their arrests.¹¹⁵

With the IWW harried and pressed by vigilantes and local authorities, and membership in the radical organization criminalized in the State of Washington through its syndicalism law, historians such as Joseph Robert Conlin and Melvyn Dubofsky can hardly be blamed for their contention that wartime repression destroyed the union.¹¹⁶ However, vigilantes, sheriffs, labor spies, and criminal syndicalism legislation could not break the back of the IWW, nor could it break the members' spirits. Western governors and employers had conceded this fact frequently, and appealed to the federal government for assistance both during the 1917 lumber strike and the trial in Montesano of those Wobblies involved in the Centralia tragedy.¹¹⁷ But as the next chapter will attest, not even the military could completely suppress the Wobblies. Throughout the late 1910s and early 1920s, the IWW carried on both in secret and open activities, planning general strikes and calling spontaneous -- or "quickie"-- strikes in the woods and mills of Grays Harbor.

¹¹⁵ See Chapters 10-12; *Industrialisti*, 16 December 1935.

¹¹⁶ Joseph Robert Conlin, "Industrial Unionist," in *American Radical Press, 1880-1960*, Vol. 1, Joseph Robert Conlin, ed. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974), 1933; Conlin, *Bread and Roses Too*, 140-141; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*.

¹¹⁷ Ficken, "The Wobbly Horrors," 329; Copeland, *The Centralia Tragedy*, 76.

CHAPTER X:

CUT OFF THE HEAD AND THE BODY WILL THRIVE:

THE GRAYS HARBOR WOBBLY MOVEMENT, 1917-1923

*If they crush us as an open organization, we'll have to make it a secret one.*¹
Anonymous IWW in Aberdeen, Washington, 24 December 1917

The quotation printed at the top of this chapter points to the adaptability and flexibility of the IWW movement. As the anonymous worker indicated, IWWs could and did respond to the state and employer repression arrayed against them at the end of the Great War; in this case they shifted toward underground activity, operating in secrecy and hoping to re-emerge in friendlier waters. Although some historians have noted that the Wobblies went underground from 1918 to 1921 during the most intense period of repression, these analyses end with the declaration of the radicals' subterranean immersion, from which they were condemned never to re-emerge.² But, rather than conclude my analysis with the submergence of the rebel workers, I see much to be learned from the actual operation of the secret activity and their re-emergence in open class warfare. Instead of mocking the IWW's activities between 1917 and 1923 as "incompetent," "tired," and "rudderless," as have earlier scholars, I hope to understand the continuing relevance of their struggles against the boss.³ Thus, this chapter is an analysis of the size, scope, and activities of the IWW in Grays Harbor during the Great War and its aftermath.

¹ Report of Agent 109, Aberdeen, 24 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

² Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 456; Steve Babson, *The Unfinished Struggle: Turning Points in American Labor, 1877-Present* (Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999), 39; Tom Juravich, William F. Hartford, James R. Green, *Commonwealth of Toil: Chapters in the History of Massachusetts Workers and Their Unions* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 95.

³ McCartin, ix; Conlin, *Bread and Roses Too*, 145; Hughes and Beckwith, *On the Harbor*, 39.

To show the activities of the IWW with any kind of accuracy, it is important to examine them at the local level. This is because most of their activities were circumscribed by local or even sub-local conditions, and because the lives of Wobblies, just like those of other working people, mostly took place in their local communities. Equally important, as anarcho-syndicalists, the Wobblies functioned on a primarily local or regional level, federated together from the bottom-up. Scholars who have used the term “anarcho-syndicalist” to describe the IWW have focused almost entirely on the theoretical radicalism and revolutionary activities of anarcho-syndicalism, including their emphases on the general strike and sabotage.⁴ This ignores the fact that part and parcel of this revolutionary ideology is its focus on self-direction and self-activity, a leaderless movement that was, in fact, comprised entirely of leaders. While not all Wobblies were anarchists, the union was organized around anarcho-syndicalist principles such as the revolutionary opposition to capitalism and the state, the belief that unions were the primary agents of revolutionary change, and its decentralized organizational model.⁵ Commenting on what he viewed as the desirable organizational principles of anarcho-syndicalist unions, anarchist Rudolf Rocker wrote, “The organization of anarcho-syndicalism is based on the principles of federalism,” which enables “a movement whose very existence depends on prompt action at any favourable moment and on the independent thought and action of its supporters.”⁶ It was precisely this concentration on local conditions by small bodies of self-directed IWWs that enabled local movements to

⁴ This does not include historians like Conlin, Dubofsky, and Tyler who eschew the term anarcho-syndicalism altogether, preferring to label the IWW as “an entirely American invention” or simply a left-wing industrial union.

⁵ For an extended discussion of IWW ideology and its syndicalist influences, see Chapter 1.

⁶ Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 60-61.

operate relatively unscathed by the goings on in Chicago, Seattle, or wherever else the well-known officials were concentrated.

The IWW's activities in Grays Harbor during the years 1917 to 1923 provide a suitable lens to examine these aspects of Wobbly history for four main reasons. First, the IWW in Grays Harbor, as well as the wider Pacific Northwest, was much larger than many historians have concluded, and thus the repressive acts taken by the state and employers, devastating though they were, removed only part of the organization. Second, the Wobblies who remained in the movement in the wake of these repressive acts were not blind followers, hapless without their leaders, but were instead self-activated workers who responded to the loss of their officials by organizing to fight the boss. The IWW was thus sustained in large part by organizers who knew how to plan and organize effectively without guidance from above. The men and women who comprised the movement during and shortly after the Great War discussed and debated tactics, and implemented creative methods for fighting the boss. Grays Harbor IWWs' use of sabotage, quickie strikes, and violence were each testament to their creative responses to poor working conditions and repression.⁷ Third, the responses of state actors, particularly at the local level, shaped the Grays Harbor IWW movement. During earlier periods of IWW activity on the Harbor, particularly 1911-1912, agents of the state were fully arrayed against the IWW, serving as willing partners of capital as they fought the radicals. However, in the middle and late 1910s, local government offices in Grays Harbor were contested terrain, sites where working people and their allies were capable of electing friendly politicians and gaining even-handed treatment from some local elected officials. Fourth, from 1921-1923, as the levels of state and employer repression

⁷ For an examination of the Wobblies' use of violence, see Chapter 11.

against the IWW receded, the Grays Harbor Wobblies joined fellow workers across the US by increasing their public actions, organizing repeated displays of power designed to challenge obnoxious laws, liberate their imprisoned fellow workers, and win bread-and-butter gains on the job. As this chapter demonstrates, during the years 1917-1923, Wobblies remained active throughout Grays Harbor although much of their activity occurred underground.

A central tenet of IWW historiography holds that the Wobblies were never more than a tiny group who received marginal support from liberals and socialists, but were otherwise wildly unpopular with the general public.⁸ Wobbly George Speed, in fact, dubbed the organization, “a conglomeration of freaks,” a characterization that the IWW historian Joseph Robert Conlin enjoyed so much that he used it as a chapter title in his book *Bread and Roses Too*.⁹ While it is impossible to estimate with any precision the number of IWWs in the US during the late 1910s and early 1920s, it is clear that there were numerous Wobblies working in the lumber industry. The *American Labor Yearbook* for 1919 estimated national IWW membership at seventy thousand members, with twenty thousand members in the Lumber Workers’ Industrial Union (LWIU), while Cloice R. Howd estimated that approximately 15,000 lumber workers belonged to the IWW in 1921.¹⁰ According to the IWW’s *Lumberjack Bulletin*, in March 1918, 55,000 members belonged to the LWIU, with more than thirteen hundred members joining that

⁸ According to Melvyn Dubofsky, Wobblies during the post-World War I period became “an aging and vanishing breed.” Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 414.

⁹ Flynn, *The Rebel Girl*, 76-77; Brissenden, *The IWW: A Study of American Syndicalism*, 110; Conlin, *Bread and Roses Too*, 41.

¹⁰ Howd, 102. Figures from the *American Labor Yearbook* appear in John S. Gambs, *The Decline of the IWW* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), 173.

industrial union during December 1917 alone.¹¹ Ten thousand LWIU members paid dues in July 1919 and six hundred of them were new recruits, according to the *Industrial Worker*.¹² It is equally significant that during the latter half of 1917, between 20,000 and 30,000 copies of the *Industrial Worker* came off the presses at the rate of two issues per week, meaning that approximately 200,000 copies of the western IWW paper were in circulation each month.¹³ Washington State secret service agents and federal agents put the number of Wobblies in the Aberdeen district alone at between 1,000 and 2,500. Even this high figure was too low for Wobblies on Grays Harbor, who estimated the number of local fellow workers closer to 4,000.¹⁴ Furthermore, actual membership figures do not include those unable to find a delegate to join the union or strong sympathizers who did not join the union because they were not members of the working class or were frightened of potential consequences of joining. Practically every mass meeting held on the Harbor between 1917 and 1923 attracted several hundred IWWs. One labor spy informed his employers in January 1918 that “more than 70% workmen at Humptulips Camp are IWW and I believe it for most every logger or millman I talked to is one, and all of them are wishing that a revolt would start in the US.”¹⁵ Wobbly Ralph Chaplin wrote that two thousand Grays Harbor Wobblies showed up to a meeting in Aberdeen

¹¹ *Industrial Worker*, 12 January 1918. According to this issue of the *Industrial Worker*, the LWIU gained 1,311 members during December 1917. *The Lumberjack Bulletin* (Seattle), 16 March 1918. While this figure is most likely exaggerated, it reinforces the widespread belief that several thousand Wobblies worked in the Pacific Northwest lumber industry during the Great War, and perhaps just as many were ex-Wobblies or sympathetic non-IWWs. The *Industrial Worker* reported that the LWIU had sold 12,330 in the month of December 1917 alone. *Industrial Worker*, 12 January 1918.

¹² *Industrial Worker*, 16 August 1919.

¹³ Testimony of J. A. MacDonald, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 114, Folder 6, 9515, WSU; *Industrial Worker*, 19, 22 September 1917.

¹⁴ *Industrialist*, 16 June; 3, 23 July 1917; *New Unionist*, 14 January 1928; Report of Agent 31, 20 November 1917, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA.

¹⁵ Report of Agent 76, 3 January 1918, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

during 1919 where he was scheduled to speak.¹⁶ Individual IWW organizers also reported tremendous gains for the organization. LWIU delegate Fred Packa reported signing up twenty-two members in the course of only a single week of organizing on the Harbor.¹⁷ Never completely isolated to the woods, local Wobblies continued to maintain a strong presence on the docks, mills, and canneries, while the presence of fifty-four Aberdeen domestic workers organized in Domestic Workers' Industrial Union 122 between 1917 and 1919 was certainly disconcerting for those who could afford their services.¹⁸

Evidence of the Wobblies' strength in the Pacific Northwest lumber industry abounds in the IWW's own records, as well as those of federal labor spies tasked with breaking up the union. In December 1917 a general strike referendum was distributed widely by the IWW. In all, approximately 400,000 IWW votes were cast on the question, including 85,000 metal mine workers, 90,000 construction workers, 59,000 agricultural workers, and an unknown number of lumber workers, of whom ninety-nine percent supported the general strike.¹⁹ In logging camps and mills around Grays Harbor, friend and foe alike estimated that anywhere from one-third to all of the workers within a plant were openly affiliated with the IWW in 1917-1918. Worried over the inability of the state to stamp out the IWW, particularly any saboteurs who might belong to the union, in Grays Harbor, labor spy H. D. McKenney wrote to his superior of the radicals' strength in the isolated lumber town of Humptulips. His report stated, "There are seven logging

¹⁶ Chaplin, *Wobbly*, 291.

¹⁷ F. B. Stansbury to Captain George Gund, 23 July 1918, Record Group 165, Box 2, File 570, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

¹⁸ Aberdeen Women's Union Records, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 36, File 1, WSU. Also, Sipo was a domestic servant. The Aberdeen domestic workers' union was listed as Local 122 in *Industrial Worker*, 12 January 1918; *Industrialisti*, 3 August; 19 December 1917.

¹⁹ Report from 11, 12 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 2, File 539, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

camps and one county road. Camp crew in this immediate vicinity, employing 300 men, of which 80% are IWWs, any one of which would have thrown this box of powder in river if they had an opportunity.”²⁰

Repression during the war years never came close to eliminating the Wobblies from the lumber industry. The persistence of the LWIU was ably demonstrated by the Aberdeen branch, which was one of, if not the, largest locals in the industrial union. Between October 1920 and June 1921, the *Industrial Worker and Lumber Workers’ Bulletin* listed delegate and branch reports for each of the locals within the Seattle District of the LWIU, including Aberdeen. The figures show that the Wobblies were not paralyzed in the western woods. More than a dozen delegates worked in the Aberdeen district alone, collecting between \$65 and several hundred dollars each week in initiations and dues in the heart of the first depression of the interwar period.²¹ Considering that the IWW maintained low membership fees and monthly dues as a means to encourage poorly paid workers to join the union, the Aberdeen delegates’ dues-collection figures indicate that either the union had a healthy membership paying their dues regularly, or that dozens of new members were taking out their red cards each month.

These figures also revealed that despite most historians’ claims to the contrary, the Wobs -- at least those enrolled in branches of the LWIU -- never became solely, or even primarily, a defense organization.²² Instead, the LWIU was engaged primarily in educating and organizing the working class. In the midst of the Centralia trial in Montesano, Wobblies flooded the Harbor towns with circulars telling their version of the

²⁰ H. D. McKenney to George Gund, 11 May 1918, Record Group 165, Box 2, File 570, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

²¹ *Industrial Worker*, 9, 16 October 1920; 1, 14 May; 11 June 1921.

²² Preston, “Shall This Be All?” 444.

Armistice Day Tragedy. These leaflets were sent to “students in the high schools, to stenographers in offices, to secretaries of craft unions, and to citizens generally.”²³ The Seattle LWIU Organizing Committee reminded fellow workers that the IWW remained committed to direct action, insisting that, “While maintaining the best possible defense for the men inside the jails, we must not neglect the work of organization.”²⁴ Between June and November 1920, while several hundred IWWs lay in jails, the LWIU spent only \$1,631.55 out of total expenses totaling over \$18,000 to “defense.” This sum was only slightly larger than what the union spent on a single month’s literature expenditures.²⁵ These figures alone bespoke a lively, thriving local union membership, one that understood that the best legal defense was a strong offensive on the job.

The Wobblies’ movement during the war and postwar period depended on their ability to think, act, and create independently of their so-called leaders. This group -- the General Executive Board, newspaper editors, famous speakers, and prominent organizers -- were removed from circulation as of late 1917. Most were dead, tied up in court, jailed, or moved to friendlier left and liberal waters.²⁶ Following the 5 September 1917 nation-wide raids of the IWW offices, most of the famous IWW officials and organizers were jailed, tried, and in many cases, convicted and sentenced to long prison terms.²⁷ But, along with the “Big” Bill Haywoods and Ralph Chaplins of the world, the second-tier leaders, the camp and job delegates, the local agitators, and anyone unlucky enough to get caught at a meeting or holding a red card, were marched into the court rooms and

²³ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 20 December 1919.

²⁴ *Lumber Workers’ Bulletin*, 2 April 1920.

²⁵ *Lumber Workers’ Bulletin*, 18 December 1920.

²⁶ Kornbluh, ed., *Rebel Voices*, 318-325; Renshaw, *The Wobblies*, 169-194; Thompson, *They Didn’t Suppress*, 1-4.

²⁷ *Renshaw*, “The IWW and the Red Scare,” 66; Fred Thompson, *The IWW*, 111.

jail cells around the nation. Many faced the prospect of deportation, denaturalization, and imprisonment, while a much larger group was sentenced to shorter jail and prison sentences.²⁸ For example, J. H. Byers, an IWW organizer from Michigan and one of the defendants from the Everett Massacre case, served as a member of the Aberdeen strike during the great 1917 lumber conflict. Following that strike, Byers, like Haywood, Chaplin, and other well-known Wobblies, was arrested, put on trial in the *United States v. Haywood, et al.* case, convicted, and sentenced to a long prison term.²⁹ Without high-level activists such as Byers, others from the movement were forced to take a more active leadership role in the union, one that would enable the IWW to stay active in the face of mass repression. Harbor Wobblies had demonstrated their ability to initiate and lead a major strike without guidance from above during the lumber strike of 1917.³⁰ Their self-directed leadership came in handy in the strike's aftermath as many of the organization's national and local elected officials were removed from the union. This point about losing the "second tier" is of key importance, because throughout much of 1919-1922 the IWW functioned not only without its head, but also without its neck and sternum.

Illustrative of the local activists who helped direct the movement in the absence of top IWW leaders was Walter Horace Margason, Grays Harbor logger, camp delegate, and chairman of the Aberdeen strike committee during the summer of 1917. Hailing from Oakland, Illinois, Margason had worked for two decades in the woods, "west of the Mississippi River nearly every place," before joining the IWW twice. He dropped out the

²⁸ For a sophisticated analysis of state attacks on the IWW, see William Preston, Jr., *Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903-1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963).

²⁹ Testimony of John A. McBride, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 107, Folder 4, 3800, WSU; Stephen Martin Kohn, *American Political Prisoners: Prosecutions Under the Espionage and Sedition Acts* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), 90.

³⁰ See Chapter 8.

first time because he “was in a country where there was no organization,” and in June 1917 rejoined the organization as a member of the LWIU. Despite labor spies’ derisive depictions of the man as “5’9”, 200 lbs., red face, fat, and talks as though his mouth was full of spit, is a bad man,” Margason was undoubtedly the most feared Wobbly operating on the Harbor during the war. A dedicated agitator, Margason worked at several Grays Harbor camps during the war, but he “couldn’t get started to work for a while until I would get run away.”³¹ Because of his creative organizational skills, Margason was elected secretary-treasurer of the Lumber Workers’ Organizational Committee in late 1917. These activities that earned him title as “the most persistent agitator in the IWW” from one federal labor spy.³²

Like many IWW loggers, Margason was an anarcho-syndicalist, a revolutionary unionist and firm believer that local workers should determine individual branch’s courses of action, based primarily on their experiences with local conditions. He explained to state attorney Frank K. Nebeker at the *US v. Haywood* trial in Chicago that the LWIU in Seattle “had nothing to do with the strike in Aberdeen, whatsoever.”³³ His testimony rang true with the passion of a radical worker committed to localized decision making. When pressed to elaborate as to why J. S. McDonald, editor of the *Industrial Worker* and one of the defendants at the case, had campaigned to prevent the Harbor workers from carrying out the 1917 strike, Margason retorted that the editor’s caution

³¹ Report of Agent 11, 31 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA; Testimony of Walter Horace Margason, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, Folder 3, 5708, WSU.

³² Report of Agent 11, 31 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

³³ Testimony of Walter Horace Margason, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, Folder 3, 5756, WSU.

was due to his detachment from the world of the worker. “He was not in touch with the working conditions in that country and [thus] he did not know,” concluded Margason.³⁴

Some second-tier IWW leaders understood the region’s strategic importance and departed other regions to organize on the Harbor. Representative of this latter group was W. I. “Windy” Fisher, one of the first IWW secretaries in Aberdeen and veteran of the 1911-1912 lumber wars. Fisher returned to the Harbor in 1918. Treated to a celebratory homecoming, fully deserved after his forced expulsion from town during the 1912 mass strike, Fisher spent much of his first meeting back at the hall discussing superior ways to destroy logging equipment.³⁵ Lists of IWWs from Puget Sound who, like Fisher, organized on the Harbor during the war, were meticulously collected by the federal government and Lumbermen’s Protective Agency. One such list of “bad men” contained forty-three names, while far more detailed physical descriptions of the most active Wobs were circulated among employers’ ranks.³⁶ Employers were warned of “an IWW agitator and organizer” named James Alexander, who could be spotted by looking out for a man “about 5 ft. 9 in. light hair, clipped close, blue eyes, weighed 185 lbs., 27 yrs. Old. Skilled woodsman; claimed to be an American. Left employ of C.C.L & T. morning of 28th of December, 1917.”³⁷

³⁴ Testimony of Walter Horace Margason, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, Folder 3, 5748, WSU.

³⁵ Report of Agent 11, Hoquiam, 6 November 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

³⁶ Grays Harbor Loggers Association to Humptulips Logging Company, 26 November 1917, Record Group 165, Box 1, File 512, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

³⁷ Report of H. D. McKenney, 31 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 2, File 563, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

Records of the War Department are replete with these types of detailed physical descriptions. Characteristics to be on the lookout for included one man’s “scar on head back of right ear,” another’s “beard on chin, one eye, is strictly pro-German,” while prominent Wobbly W.H. Margason was described as being “5’9”, 200 lbs., red face, fat, and talks as though his mouth was full of spit, is a bad man.” Grays Harbor Loggers Association to Humptulips Logging Company, 26 November 1917, Record Group 165 Box

Behind and sometimes in front of “second-tier leaders” like Margason and Fisher were several thousand IWWs whose own leadership qualities are more opaque and, at best, poorly recorded. But these were the men and women who stood up to the boss, quit their jobs without notice, and maintained the organizational framework of the union despite being the targets of state and employer repression. As the experiences of the 1917 strike attested, the IWW required hundreds of leaders whose talents encompassed a wide range of skills in each locality to persist in the face of overwhelming public and private opposition. To maintain their strike among loggers in Grays Harbor in 1917, the Wobblies required camp delegates for each of the Harbor’s roughly fifty logging camps. These delegates served as correspondents carrying news to and from the picket camps, or “jungles” as they were widely known.³⁸ Each camp contributed its own news to the daily strike bulletins printed during the conflict, while in town, a delegation collected and edited news for these bulletins printed throughout the strike.³⁹ To prevent beatings and the ubiquitous tar and feather threats, Wobblies also needed to move in packs, guaranteeing that any attack on one would be an attack on all. Each of the temporary camp residents was also a picketer, responsible for confronting, verbally haranguing, and intimidating potential scabs from crossing.⁴⁰ For example, at the Aloha Lumber Company mill in the company town of Aloha, Washington, “quite a bunch” of Wobblies set up a picket camp immediately after striking in July 1917. According to mill superintendent Frank Milward, the picketers carried signs reading “Don’t scab” and “Be

1, File 512, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

³⁸ *Daily Washingtonian*, 15, 17, 20, 21 July 1917; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 16, 17 July 1917.

³⁹ Testimony of Walter Horace Margason, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, Folder 3, 5717-5719, WSU.

⁴⁰ Testimony of Walter Horace Margason, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, Folder 3, 5715-5719, 5737, 5743-5745, WSU.

a Man.”⁴¹ Indeed, in the reports of friend and foe alike, we see numerous acts of self-initiated direct action, experiences all with the potential to harden commitments to the IWW, and experiences that each spoke to the famous IWW motto, “We Are All Leaders.”

Two examples drawn from the lives of rank-and-file Wobblies illustrated the radicals’ self-directed militancy. During the great lumber strike of 1917, Bill Amey, an IWW logger, was elected as one of the dozens of camp delegates who played such a key role in the strike’s operations. He was particularly effective as a messenger, carrying information between camps and to town. Cognizant of the dangers to himself and his sensitive deliveries, Amey raced between woods and town by motorcycle, dodging authorities and vigilantes along his route. When the Wobblies took the strike back on the job in September 1917, Amey logged at a camp owned by the Coats-Fordney Logging Company. After a disagreement with his boss, Amey was fired from his position. But, before leaving camp, the Wobbly dumped emery dust into the company’s donkey engines, the steam-powered winches used to drag felled logs, causing considerable property damage. Leaving for California, Amey was arrested by police in Los Angeles and returned to Grays Harbor to stand trial for sabotaging machinery at the Coats-Fordney Company in March 1918. Throughout his affair, the IWW publicized the case of the previously anonymous logger, advertising his legal troubles and heralding his courageous motorcycle rides.⁴²

⁴¹ Testimony of Frank Milward, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 108, Folder 2, 4376-4377, WSU.

⁴² Walter L. Stout to Spruce Production Division, Signal Corps, USA, 27 November 1917, Record Group 165, Box 2, File 573, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA; F. B. Stansbury to H. D. McKenney, 23 February 1918, Record Group 165, Box 2 File 573, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA; H. D. McKenney to F. B. Stansbury, 8 March 1918, Record Group 165,

In the same month as Amey's trial, a group of ten loggers at a Coats-Fordney Logging Company petitioned their foreman for the reinstatement of their co-worker Henry Hiller, who had been fired for spreading "false rumors and accusations against the management." When their boss failed to heed their request, all ten men quit work and walked away from the job, passing "logs felled and bucked along the road." One such log later caused an accident at a local mill when a saw shattered after striking metal in the wood. Upon investigation, it was discovered that the log contained eight railroad spikes, "driven in a 'U' shape, this no doubt for the purpose of making sure that which ever way the log was sawed, the saw would come in contact with the spikes." Grays Harbor labor spy H. D. McKenney investigated the matter and concluded that the aggrieved loggers were responsible for the act of sabotage. After their hostile departure from the work site, the "most logical thing for such men is to do something of this nature to get, as they think, square with the outfit," according to McKenney.⁴³

The different methods Harbor Wobblies utilized in their dealings with the 4Ls demonstrated the importance of local control in the union's program, as well as the willingness and ability of Wobblies to learn and adapt in an ever-changing industrial landscape. IWW branch debates centered on whether to join the 4Ls en masse in an attempt to subvert its activities or to outright oppose what Aberdeen Wobbly delegate

Box 2, File 573, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA; *Daily Washingtonian*, 12 February 1918.

⁴³ H. D. McKenney to F. B. Stansbury, 16 April 1918, Record Group 165, Box 1, File 506, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA; H. D. McKenney to F. B. Stansbury, 23 April 1918, Record Group 165, Box 1, File 506, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA; Exhibit 1, included with files marked "Spikes in saw logs at Donovan saw mill South Aberdeen," 13 April 1918, Record Group 165, Box 1, File 506, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

John Grady called “industrial conscription.”⁴⁴ The former attitude was typified by Harbor logger Jack Curley who felt that because of their union experience, the Wobblies could simply join the Loyal Legion as a group, take control of their meetings, and elect their own secretary. Then, continued a second IWW, “those members of the Legion who might not attend meetings would be branded as disloyal and an effort made to throw the onus of being disloyal to the Government upon the operator.”⁴⁵ This approach was adhered to by those Wobblies who understood the IWW-4L contest as a numbers game, one the IWW appeared to be losing by early 1918. Whether by force, infiltration, patriotic appeals, or the promise of material rewards, the Legion was gaining influence rapidly. Harbor IWW delegates reported on Christmas Eve 1917, only two weeks after the Legion entered the region, that already “as high as 90% of loggers in camps joining the Legion and some said over 50% of the IWW loggers had joined.”⁴⁶ The view that many IWWs also held cards in the military-company union was echoed by Grays Harbor Wobbly Walter Margason at the *United States v. Haywood* trial, when he declared that ninety-five percent of all Pacific Northwest loggers belonged to the 4Ls, while only thirty-five percent of the loggers were IWWs.⁴⁷

Initially caught off-guard by the 4-L appeal, local Wobblies were forced to reconsider their tactics, taking into account their belief that by January 1918 “70% of

⁴⁴ Report of Agent 109, Hoquiam, 24 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA. Grady left Grays Harbor and moved to Spokane where he served as secretary of that local’s legal defense fund. He was arrested in Spokane along with sixty-five of his fellow workers in the criminal syndicalism raids of late 1919. *Aberdeen Daily World*, 1 January 1920.

⁴⁵ Report of Agent 11, Hoquiam, WA, 24 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

⁴⁶ Report of Agent 109, Hoquiam, 24 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

⁴⁷ Testimony of Walter Horace Margason, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, File 3, 5715, WSU. Further proof of the IWW’s strength within locals of the 4Ls can be seen in the *Bulletin, LWIU No. 500* (Spokane), 11 January 1918.

their members in Grays Harbor have joined LLLL and the other 30% say there is no use of a few radicals bucking LLLL.”⁴⁸ Facing this evidence of 4L strength, some Wobblies refused to be marginalized by the military union, and perhaps just as significantly, refused to accept the necessity of “boring from within” the Legion. The Aberdeen IWW branch distributed resolutions opposing “any and all DOCUMENTS THAT DISFRANCHISE WAGEWORKERS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS OF FREE ACTION IN ALL LABOR DISPUTES,” a clear reference to the 4L requirement that members not strike.”⁴⁹ Wobbly logger Walter Margason agreed that the IWW needed to battle the 4Ls without joining that organization. At a mass meeting held at the Aberdeen Finnish socialist hall, he urged Grays Harbor Wobblies to not sign the pledge card, for in doing so, they renounced their freedom to strike.⁵⁰ The growing strength of the military union, however, forced Margason to reconsider the IWW’s tactics to oppose the Legion. He signed a 4L card and defended this decision by arguing “that there are 2500 Wobblies in the Grays Harbor country and that if they would all get into this thing, it would not take them long to break it up.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ Report of Agent 109, Hoquiam, 8 January 1918, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA; Report of Agent 18, Hoquiam, 20 August 1918, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

⁴⁹ To All the Workers of the Lumber Industry, Resolution signed by M. J. Grady, Wm. McNamara, and E. Renton, 12 December 1917, Record group 165, Box 1, 508C, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

⁵⁰ Report of Agent 11, Hoquiam, 24 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

⁵¹ Agent in Charge, Plant Protection section, Districts 13 and 14 (Western) to Edmund Leigh, Chief, Plant Protection Section, 24 January 1919, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA. Report of Agent 99, Hoquiam, WA, 16 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

In December 1918, 4L members decided to maintain the union even without military sponsorship once the war ended.⁵² Wobblies celebrated the Legion's decision to remain in the woods as a civilian operation, one stripped of its coercive state protection. As one labor spy reported, the Wobblies' joy was based on the radicals' beliefs that they could infiltrate and control the defanged company union. He wrote, "they will have no trouble in gaining control of the organisation and it is a well known fact that a large number of the Secretaries of the LLLL are members of the IWW and have a list of most of the members."⁵³ Subsequent events revealed that the large numbers of loggers who joined the 4L did not mean the IWW had been displaced or that loggers rejected radicalism for patriotism. For example, at a small lumber mill at the beach town of Westport, one labor spy reported that, "most of the soldiers working there are members of the IWW."⁵⁴ The Wobblies' successes at circumventing 4L control in the camps worried a number of high-level military officials, who fretted over the possibility of an open and aggressive IWW growing to dominate the 4Ls. Signal Corps officer F. B. Stansbury expressed this sentiment: "The Army stamp is the only thing that keeps them quiet. Lighten or remove this stamp in any way and the Legion is gone and conditions become the same that they were a year ago or probably worse for there would then be the

⁵² Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 134.

⁵³ Report of Agent 18, Hoquiam, 18 August 1918, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

⁵⁴ Report of Agent 18, Hoquiam, 20 August 1918, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA. See also H. D. McKenney to F. B. Stansbury, 11 April 1918, Record Group 165, Box 1, File 508, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA; F. B. Stansbury to H. D. McKenney, 27 April 1918, Record Group 165, Box 2, File 561, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

opportunity to use the Legion to further their own ends. A real Wobbly never reforms. . . . Under no consideration do these ever reform.”⁵⁵

The Wobblies’ covert activities continued during World War I, in the midst of one of the biggest IWW crackdowns in the history of the region. In May 1918, one Wobbly reported his success at organizing multiple members during the previous week while working secretly. He described the organizing strategy that proved so successful, stating: “A delegate goes ahead and feels out the prospective member whereupon, if latter is sympathetic with the IWW and desirous of joining, he is steered against a second party working under cover who is carrying the supplies necessary to writing up the members and giving them credentials.” The new members continued by holding secret meetings “to avoid the activities of the police.”⁵⁶

Recognizing that most authorities and vigilantes were both ignorant of the Finnish language and reticent to upset the largest ethnic group on the Harbor, the Wobblies also hid behind the cloak of the “Red” Finns, hosting cultural events alongside this group or using their hall.⁵⁷ At a September 1919 meeting at the Aberdeen Finnish socialist hall, a group of “Holigans [sic]” and “gangsters,” drawn mostly from the American Legion, planned to attend the meeting with the intention “to arise up en-masse and clean up with saps.” Fortunately, the Aberdeen Wobblies were able to avoid the fate that befell their fellow workers in Centralia, largely because of the advanced warning given to the workers and the show of strength they were able to mobilize among Harbor Finns. After

⁵⁵ F. B. Stansbury to Captain George Gund, 16 May 1918, Record Group 165, Box 2, File 562, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

⁵⁶ F. B. Stansbury to Captain George Gund, USNA, in Charge Military Intelligence, Record Group 165, Box 2, File 570, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

⁵⁷ Report of Agent S-7, 25 February 1918, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA.

advertising the meeting “solely by word of mouth,” the Wobblies were able to wait until “the gang” of Legion men arrived in the hall, “puffed out their chests and swaggered thru the door,” before “a continual stream of loggers and Finnish Fellow Workers” joined them. The “husky, grim faced workers banked the gang on all sides,” filling “the remaining seats and overflowed in the aisles, in the gallery and out on the street.”

Realizing a trap had been set, the aspirant thugs’ “former boisterous manner, evolved into a respectful silence,” a silence that remained until an IWW speaker heaped scorn upon the Legion men as “stool pigeons” and “lick-spittles.” After a brief moment of tension, the Legion’s leader left the hall. From the street he let out a whistle, and answering his call, the Legionaires “edged through the crowd of grinning workers, not unlike cowed dogs, with eyes on the floor and shamefaced.”⁵⁸

Perhaps better than any other tactic, sabotage spoke to the IWW’s reliance on the careful planning of a decentralized rank and file. IWW editor Ben H. Williams called sabotage “a new word,” but “as old as the labor movement,” which ranged “all the way from ‘passive resistance’ at one extreme to violent destruction of property at the other.” Elizabeth Gurley Flynn called it an effort “to affect the quality, the quantity and the service are aimed at affecting the profit of the employer.” As these conflicting definitions indicated, sabotage was a loosely defined term, its meaning rooted far more in specific sociohistorical contexts than any rigid definition.⁵⁹ Walker Smith, a committed radical and IWW editor, drew a close connection between the successful use of sabotage

⁵⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 4 October 1919.

⁵⁹ Kornbluh, *Rebel Voices*, 51-52. French revolutionary syndicalists hailed the benefits of sabotage long before the founding of the IWW. Particularly influential on this matter was Emile Pouget, who argued in favor of working-class sabotage in ethical terms. He saw sabotage as far less destructive than physical violence, but with potential to help spur on revolutionary working class activity. See Barbara Mitchell, “French Syndicalism: An Experiment in Practical Anarchism,” in *Revolutionary Syndicalism: An International Perspective*, ed. Marcel van der Linden and Wayne Thorpe (Brookfield, VT: Gower Publishing, 1990), 29.

and the decentralization of the anarcho-syndicalist movement. Likening sabotage to guerilla warfare, Smith noted that the arrests of strike leaders could “be met by a prolonged series of mishaps in the industries.” Thus, for Smith, as for many IWWs, sabotage was one of the best “weapon[s] of the existing daily combat between the masters and the slaves,” one capable of being employed even when its practitioners were few in number and without centralized control.⁶⁰ Because of the diversity of union members’ views on the subject and worries over being persecuted for their real or perceived advocacy of property destruction, the IWW rarely took an official stand on sabotage, and when it did the union condemned the use of senseless property destruction.⁶¹ Commenting on the relationship between the decentralized structure of the IWW and its members’ use of sabotage, one reference argued that sabotage occurred “without the permission of the union leadership.”⁶² Still, Wobblies wrote, discussed, and debated its use throughout much of their history and there can be little question that the Wobs turned the “sabcat” loose on bosses the world over.⁶³ The practice received special valorization in organs like the *Lumberjack* and *Voice of the People*, both edited by Covington Hall, which ran regular cartoons, articles, and editorial pieces attesting to “the cat called Sab that has no conscience” and pictures of a coiled rattlesnake marked with

⁶⁰ Adamic, *Dynamite*, 204-206; Walker Smith, *Sabotage, Its History, Philosophy, and Function*, in *Direct Action and Sabotage: Three Classic IWW Pamphlets from the IWW*, ed. Salvatore Salerno (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Press, 1997). Smith’s pamphlet first appeared as *Sabotage: Its History, Philosophy, and Function* (Chicago: Industrial Workers of the World, 1913).

⁶¹ For one Wobbly’s spirited attack on property destruction in the lumber industry, see Testimony of Walter Horace Margason, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, Folder 3, 5728, WSU.

⁶² Lauren Helene Coodley, “Industrial Workers of the World,” in Ronald Gottesman, ed., *Violence in America: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1999), 170-171.

⁶³ For instances of IWWs turning the “sabcat loose” in Grays Harbor, see Report of Agent 11, Hoquiam, 5 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA. See also Adamic, *Dynamite*, 204-215.

the word Sabotage.⁶⁴ During the 1912 Grays Harbor lumber strike, the IWW utilized the word “sabotage” as a secret password to communicate with fellow workers in Cosmopolis.⁶⁵ Indeed, sabotage was a tactic discussed frequently by members of the IWW, one that relied on independent decision-making by the decentralized Wobbly membership, and one with the potential to be used in the class struggle for the IWW’s benefit.

One form of sabotage, the covert destruction of property, was utilized by IWWs, but unlike slowdowns or “hoosiering up,” damaging and destroying property sometimes left a trail of evidence. Scholars of the IWW have often commented on destructive forms of sabotage, but few have been able to classify or quantify the acts.⁶⁶ In the mills and logging camps of Grays Harbor, I was able to uncover nine individual covert acts of destruction of employers’ property. Drawn from the reports of federal labor spy H. D. McKenney, his chief lieutenant J. A. McBride, their numerous operatives and informants, and a host of other state-funded spies, this analysis is based on all available evidence, although I am certain that it is incomplete. Yet, considering the unusual nature of these sources, I consider myself fortunate to have gathered this supply of information. These

⁶⁴ *Lumberjack*, 3 July 1913; *Voice of the People*, 15 January 1914. A similar perspective on sabotage was adopted by the aptly titled *Wooden Shoe*, published in Los Angeles, which printed mottoes like “Kick your way out of wage slavery” and “The foot in the wooden shoe will rock the world.” Cited in Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 161.

⁶⁵ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 1 April 1912.

⁶⁶ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 164. In this case Foner refers to the “idea that a few broken saws, a few burnt threshing machines and a few slow-ups in logging camps would lead to a reconstruction of society was both romantic and fantastic!” That the Wobblies practiced and advocated sabotage is admitted, but Foner’s implication that Wobblies believed sabotage would bring about the revolution is misleading.

nine acts consisted of some type of damage done to property, including acts of arson and dynamiting.⁶⁷

Spy reports also indicated that some radicals expressed tremendous pride in their property wrecking skills, which were on display with great regularity at Grays Harbor logging camps. According to one report, Joe Hardesty, an IWW from Oklahoma, who had been sabotaging machinery in the oil fields, “came here for that purpose.”⁶⁸ At one large logging camp, where labor spy H. D. McKenney estimated that of the loggers, “80% are IWWs,” the spy argued that the radicals considered property destruction and theft as “a joke.”⁶⁹ One such report indicated that IWW Lawrence Willis, boasted that he was “the best man in breaking up machinery that ever went to the woods,” perfectly capable of doing hundreds of dollars of damage to machinery in two days.⁷⁰ In November 1917, F. B. Stansbury, agent in charge of the United States Signal Corps in Portland, described the destructive methods of the IWWs, methods he predicted would continue until the eight-hour day became universal in the lumber industry. He wrote:

They are using all sorts of methods to hamper timber production in every way and to make operation here as expensive as possible. It appears that their plans are to work one or two members in a camp or mill to damage either some of the logging equipment or machinery, mill machinery or non-members’ persons. Their methods are to dope the engineer’s oil can with emery dust, grit or carbonate or dope the oil cups on engines.⁷¹

⁶⁷ I counted nine acts of sabotage through a complete examination of the records of the Washington State Secret Service Department at the Washington State Archives and the Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, at the National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Alaska Region.

⁶⁸ Report of Agent 11, Hoquiam, 1 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

⁶⁹ H. D. McKenney to George Gund, Intelligence Officer, US Army, 11 May 1918, Record Group 165, Box 2, File 570, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

⁷⁰ Report of Agent 11, Hoquiam, 1 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

⁷¹ F. B. Stansbury to Edmund Leigh, 14 November 1917, Record Group 165, Box 2, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

Stansbury also believed that the Loyal Legion did not cure this menace, writing, “Every IWW in this territory will obtain these [4Ls] credentials and carry them as a cloak for sabotage and as a defense against suspicion, etc.”⁷² Additionally, state authorities were acutely aware that employers’ anti-unionism had a boomerang effect, making them prime targets for acts of retribution, and worried about the Wobblies’ ability to “hit back by sabotage.”⁷³ Writing to I. M. Howell, Washington’s secretary of state, in November 1917, one attorney warily reported, “At the present time there are many indications that the delayed policy of sabotage is now to be put in force and effect by members of the IWW. The activity . . . in my mind indicates something more than industrial unrest.”⁷⁴

Accompanying sabotage as an IWW tactic was the intermittent strike. In this type of direct action, Wobblies responded to individual camp conditions by walking off the job and into the foreman’s office to present their demands. Also known as “quickie strikes,” owing to their short duration, the strikes were effective at gaining strikers’ immediate demands. In fact, the strikes succeeded precisely because they were so unpredictable. Their demands were rarely radical in and of themselves. Most, in fact, were called to bring about or enforce the eight-hour day or in response to the discharge of an IWW agitator.⁷⁵ But the fact that any camp could strike at any time without direction from above or outside was an effective method for exacting gains from their employers.

⁷² F. B. Stansbury to Colonel Bryce P. Disque, 22 November 1917, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

⁷³ F. B. Stansbury to H. D. McKenney, 18 April 1918, Record Group 165, Box 1, File 506, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

⁷⁴ United States Attorney to I. M. Howell, Secretary of State, 26 November 1917, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA.

⁷⁵ For examples of quickie strikes called to enforce the eight-hour day, see A. C. Hughes to C. H. Younger, 15 February 1918, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA; Report of Agent 63, Hoquiam, 1 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA; Howd, 75; Ficken, “The Wobbly Horrors,” 333.

One IWW put the duality of the seemingly moderate demands with much more radical implications into context. He noted in early 1918 that, “The conversation was confined largely to means and methods of making the IWW a hundred per cent organization in the woods, and building up the economic power to bring about the release of class war prisoners.”⁷⁶

At least forty-two intermittent strikes occurred in the Grays Harbor woods between September 1917 and March 1918.⁷⁷ The size of these quickie strikes varied considerably from one at the National Lumber Company camp at Cedarville, which involved only eleven loggers, to strikes at two large Humptulips Logging Company camps in December 1917.⁷⁸ So prevalent were these walkouts that the C. H. Clemons Logging Company reported that thirty men were quitting work every day.⁷⁹ One typical report was delivered by Wobbly No. 261357, which stated, “I was working on pile driver singing ‘Dump the Bosses’ Off Your Back’ when the straw boss, Austin, told me to go and get my time. ‘Did you get me?’ he said. I told him I did and that the rest of the crew would get him, too, which they did, as the whole crew accompanied me to the office and kept the timekeeper busy writing checks until there was no one left on the job but the boss and he was swearing to himself the last we saw of him.”⁸⁰

⁷⁶ *Industrial Worker*, 12 January 1918.

⁷⁷ I counted forty-two “quickie strikes” by investigating the records of the Washington State Secret Service Department at the Washington State Archives, the Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, at the National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Alaska Region, and the *Industrial Worker* between September and December 1917. See *Industrial Worker*, 26, 29 September; 3 October; 3, 10, 17 November; 15 December 1917.

Cloide R. Howd wrote that many of these small strikes were called by the IWW in the wake of the great wartime lumber strike of 1917. Howd, 102.

⁷⁸ Report of Agent 63, Hoquiam, 1 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

⁷⁹ A. C. Hughes to C. H. Younger, 15 February 1918, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA.

⁸⁰ *The Lumberjack Bulletin*, 16 March 1918.

Wobblies were not satisfied by “pork chops” alone, as was demonstrated by the fact that quickie strikes continued to be called even after the lumber workers benefitted from improvements in their wages and hours. At the Copalis Lumber Company camp at Carlisle, where “conditions are ideal; the men are well fed, well-clothed and furnished with shower baths, etc.” one hundred loggers poured off the job in late 1917, leaving the President of the Grays Harbor County Council of Defense unable or unwilling to discern the strike’s cause.⁸¹ T. J. Rhodes, one of the Aberdeen IWW secretaries, reported that three strikes began on 19 September 1917, when loggers “took the eight hour day.” He continued by drawing a correlation between the strikes and political aims, and paid tribute to Sabo-Tabby, the IWW’s black cat mascot and a symbol of direct action: “The class war prisoners in the Montesano jail were all released today. M-E-O-W!”⁸² Even where the eight-hour day was adopted, as at one camp just outside of Aberdeen, workers were empowered by their successes to demand more. There, a November 1917 strike occurred “because the men demanded a seven hour day, leaving one hour to go from the bunks to the woods and return.”⁸³

These “quickie strikes” did not end in 1918 with the widespread adoption of the eight-hour day, a contention made by historians Robert Ficken and Melvyn Dubofsky.⁸⁴

Instead, the tactic survived the war and the Red Scare, was used during the early 1920s

⁸¹ Chariman Grays Harbor County Council of Defense to Colonel Bryce P. Disque, 19 November 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

⁸² *Industrial Worker*, 22 September 1917.

⁸³ Chariman Grays Harbor County Council of Defense to Colonel Bryce P. Disque, 19 November 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

⁸⁴ Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 413-414. Ficken went even a step further, arguing that the IWW was “decimated” in the Pacific Northwest woods by the introduction of the 4Ls, and that the state’s intervention in the industry “went a long way toward eradicating radical influence in the logging camps.” Ficken, “The Wobbly Horrors,” 336, 340. For an alternative interpretation, one that understands the postwar successes of the Wobblies in lumber, see Rowan, *The IWW in the Lumber Industry*, especially “Chapter Seven – Victory, but not the Final Victory.”

by loggers, and again surfaced during the early 1930s by workers impressed by the past successes of the tactic.⁸⁵ Oiva Carl Wirkkala, a Finnish-American IWW who worked in and around the Grays Harbor woods during the early 1920s, recalled that despite the fact that the Wobblies “were under pretty heavy attack by 1921,” they still retained a large presence in the logging camps, and were capable of calling intermittent strikes practically at will. At one camp, a few IWW delegates had been hired and after six months of holding Wobbly style concerts and discussing camp conditions in the bunkhouse, one day delegates exchanged secret correspondence calling for a strike. The next morning, according to Wirkkala, “It was ‘roll out,’ to work, you know, nobody went out. That’s how quietly it was pulled.”⁸⁶

The strike described by Wirkkala occurred in the early 1920s after the worst of the post-World War I repression had abated. In fact the early 1920s was a time of tremendous organizational gains for the OBU on the Harbor. As throughout much of the 1910s, a broadly based Wobbly movement existed on the Harbor during the early 1920s.⁸⁷ Thus, rather than a tiny, weak movement comprised of only a few nostalgic members who performed “charade[s] in order to pretend it still fought strikes,” the IWW

⁸⁵ See Chapter 15.

⁸⁶ Oiva Carl Wirkkala, interviewed by Donald L. Myers, 22 September 1976, Washington State Oral/Aural History Project, 4.

⁸⁷ Because of the meticulous scholarship of Wobbly historian Fred Thompson, IWW scholars, including Greg Hall, Peter Cole, and Nigel Sellers have concluded that much of the scholarship written on the union during the 1960s and 1970s grossly underestimated the strength of the postwar IWW. See Fred Thompson, “They Didn’t Suppress the Wobblies,” *Radical America* 1:2 (September-October 1967). See Hall, *Harvest Wobblies*; Cole, *Wobblies on the Waterfront*; Sellars, *Oil, Wheat, and Wobblies*. According to the *American Labor Yearbook*, the IWW reported approximately 58,000 members at the time of its Fifteenth General Convention held between 12 November and 3 December 1923. See *The American Labor Yearbook* (New York: Rand School of Social Science), 93-95. At least two Canadian scholars have also broken away from the historical orthodoxy that dominated IWW studies of the 1960s and 1970s. See Leier, *Where the Fraser River Flows*; J. Peter Campbell, “The Cult of Spontaneity”; Buhle and Schulman, ed., *The Wobblies!*

actually grew during the early 1920s.⁸⁸ In 1922-1923 IWW membership in the US rebounded to nearly its high mark attained during the First World War, a fact that has gone unrecorded by many historians of the IWW.⁸⁹ Moreover, during the early 1920s, US Wobbly membership was based largely in two unions: the Agricultural Workers' Industrial Union (AWIU) and LWIU.⁹⁰ Much as in 1912 and 1917, Grays Harbor was at the center of lumber worker Wobbly activism during the early 1920s. Wobblies never ceased trying to organize the mills and woods, a fact demonstrated by the presence of a core of camp delegates on the Harbor: twelve in October 1920, ten in May 1922, nineteen in July 1922, while in October 1923 the *Industrial Worker* announced that clearances for twenty-four Wobbly delegates had arrived at Aberdeen headquarters.⁹¹ Evidence of the growth of the IWW in the Pacific Northwest woods came at the 1923 LWIU convention when it was announced that the industrial union had "doubled in numbers" during the previous year.⁹² In Aberdeen, nine hundred Wobblies and supporters attended a September 1923 talk by Wobbly Arthur Boose and donated \$69.31 to the local movement.⁹³ New activists such as Bob Pease, John N. Johnson, William

⁸⁸ Conlin, *Bread and Roses Too*, 145.

⁸⁹ Students of Finnish-American labor history will note the similarities between the conclusions reached by such eminent Finnish-American scholars as Michael Karni, Douglas Ollila, and Carl Ross, and those of historians Melvyn Dubofsky, Philip S. Foner, Robert Tyler, and Joseph R. Conlin, as to the post-WWI decline of the IWW. For examples among Finnish-American labor historians, see Michael G. Karni, "Finnish Americans," in *Encyclopedia of the American Left*, ed. Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle, and Dan Georgakas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 227; Douglas Ollila, Jr., "The Work People's College: Immigrant Education for Adjustment and Solidarity," in *For the Common Good: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America*, ed. Michael Karni and Douglas J. Ollila, Jr. (Superior: Tyomies Society, 1977), 111.

⁹⁰ An excellent history of the AWIU is Hall, *Harvest Wobblies*. On the postwar strength of the AWIU and LWIU, see Hall, 205, 209-210; Roediger, ed., *Fellow Worker*, 59-60.

⁹¹ *Industrial Worker*, 9, 16 October 1920; 27 May 1922; 27 October 1923. In addition to the ten camp delegates were at least two delegates organizing for other IUs, Jennie Sipo, Delegate H-104 of IU 460 and T. M. Johnson, Delegate X-409 of 510. See *Industrial Worker*, 17 June 1922. The figure of nineteen delegates in July 1922 was based upon the arrival of nine new delegate clearances at the Aberdeen headquarters during July. *Industrial Worker*, 15 July 1922.

⁹² *Industrial Worker*, 28 April 1923.

⁹³ *Industrial Worker*, 15 September 1923.

Randall, and Matt Johnson took up prominent roles in the re-energized IWW as it once again regained its prominent position in the Pacific Northwest.⁹⁴

Rank-and-file IWW activism continued throughout 1921-1923. Well-known speakers such as Elmer Smith, Arthur Boose, and Ralph Chaplin drew hundreds of listeners to events on the Harbor.⁹⁵ When IWWs entered the workplace, they came armed to the teeth with radical literature. After an early August 1921 police raid on the Aberdeen IWW hall, the *Aberdeen Daily World* registered some shock that “75 pounds of radical literature was seized” from the wrecked hall.⁹⁶ When the newspapers were not seized, they reached an eager audience that used them to advertise working conditions and debate union policies. One Wobbly delegate at a Humptulips Logging Company camp reported that despite such creature comforts as “bunks are good, all lower,” and the presence of “a bath house, and electric lights,” this was “a good camp to sell papers in.”⁹⁷ At a second camp, four Wobbly delegates met, read the *Industrial Worker*, and issued a condemnation of the paper and called to “censure the editor” for printing “false” news,

⁹⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 27 May 1922; Chehalis/Grays Harbor County Jail Record – Civil/Criminal, 1913-1922, Acc. No. 86-1-19, Box 245D, SWA In May 1922 Pease was Joint Branch Secretary in Aberdeen. J. N. Johnson held that same position the following year. Matt Johnson emerged on the Grays Harbor scene in late 1922 as a camp delegate for the LWIU. *Industrial Worker*, 14 October 1922. *Industrial Worker*, 24 July 1923; 30 August 1924. Randall served as branch secretary of the Aberdeen LWIU in 1924 and was joint branch secretary for the district the year before. He was also the most dedicated of all Wobbly fundraisers, collecting and relaying \$62.90 through four separate donations to the IWW Publicity, Defense, and Jail Relief fund during in 1923-1924. See Records, 1923-1925, Publicity, Defense, and Jail Records (IWW), Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 134, Folder 1, WSU.

⁹⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 15 September 1923; *Industrialisti*, 24 March 1921. Speaking in Aberdeen was one of Chaplin’s last acts as a free man. He returned to the Leavenworth penitentiary, where he was confined from September 1918 to July 1919 and from April 1921 until the commutation of his sentence on 25 June 1923. See Stephen Martin Kohn, *American Political Prisoners: Prosecutions Under the Espionage and Sedition Acts* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1994), 91; Chaplin, *Wobbly*, 322-324.

⁹⁶ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 5 August 1921.

⁹⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 23 September 1922.

strong evidence that this news organ provided an open clearinghouse for internal union debate.⁹⁸

An illustration of the strength of the IWW in the years following the great World War I lumber strike in Grays Harbor can be seen by examining their movement among Pacific Beach clam diggers and cannery workers. The diggers were several hundred piece-workers who supplied clams to the canneries at Westport, Copalis, Markham, and Moclips.⁹⁹ Socialists and Wobblies gained large followings in the beach communities, primarily among the loggers, shingle weavers, and mill hands who populated the towns, but also among the fishermen and clam diggers. Throughout 1916-1917, SPA and IWW locals in the beach towns grew to the point where circuit-riding radicals visited and addressed large audiences in these communities.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, when the most active Wobblies were blacklisted or beaten out of the mills and woods, a number of them moved to the beaches where they worked as shellfish farmers and canners at the beaches, working semi-independently for employers unaccustomed to the aggressive style of labor relations pursued by lumbermen.¹⁰¹ This was the case with Jack Rhodes, who according to labor spy H. D. McKenney, was “one of the volunteers last September [1917] during strike period that . . . promised to murder or dispose of any man or men that opposed the

⁹⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 14 October 1922.

⁹⁹ *Washington, West of the Cascades* (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Company, 1917), 493; Harry F. Giles, *Manufacturing Opportunities in Washington State* (Olympia: Public Printer, 1918), 196; Ruth McCausland, *Washington's Westport* (Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Company, 1998), 147-148. McCausland notes the operation of no less than three canneries operating in Westport between 1908 and 1913. According to *Washington, West of the Cascades*, more than one thousand clam cannery workers were employed in the Aberdeen-based canning operations owned by Peter Halferty and his sons. Clam diggers in Hoquiam had struck previously, in 1915, over wages. See State of Washington, *Ninth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Factory Inspection, 1913-1914* (Olympia: Frank Lamborn, Public Printer, 1914), 234.

¹⁰⁰ *Socialist World* (Seattle), 4 August 1916; *Northwest Worker* (Everett), 1 February 1917.

¹⁰¹ H. D. McKenney to F. B. Stansbury, 8 March 1918, Record Group 165, Box 2, File 563, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

IWWs,” and who, since the strike ended, had become “leader on beach, 6 miles above cannery,” and remained “a rabid IWW.”¹⁰²

For all these reasons -- contact with radical organizers, the presence of a core of blacklisted IWWs run out of the lumber industry, and the growth of SPA and IWW branches at the beaches -- these tiny communities became dens of radicalism, harboring and nurturing left-wing thought and militant action throughout the late 1910s and early 1920s. On the beaches, Wobbly activity centered among lumber workers and clam diggers. This fact so disturbed McKenney that he wrote a series of reports to his commanding officer telling of the “spirit of unrest among” the “IWWs [who] are now locating in outlying camps and on Ocean Beach.”¹⁰³ The beach IWWs made use of the available seaside materials and, like their urban counterparts, crafted a hall of their own. McKenney reported, “These men have a Hall, made of drift logs split into shakes and nailed to frames. The Hall is about 30 x 30 feet and quite comfortable. Hall has a flag-pole but not a flag. They hold meetings twice a week in Hall and get together every evening in their living shacks.”¹⁰⁴ The rebel workers who lived at the beach developed reputations for militancy. In fact, so powerful was their push for direct action that during the 15 April 1923 IWW Central Branch Conference of Grays Harbor District meeting in Aberdeen, in which delegates met to plan the upcoming general strike to free IWW class war prisoners, one delegate was instructed to reach out and instruct the “clam diggers not

¹⁰² H. D. McKenney to F. B. Stansbury, 5 May 1918, Record Group 165, Box 2, File 563, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA; *Everett Prisoners' Defense Fund*, Industrial Workers of the World Papers, Accession No. 544, Box 3, Folder 9, UW.

¹⁰³ H. D. McKenney to F. B. Stansbury, 8 May 1918, Record Group 165, Box 2, File 563, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

¹⁰⁴ H. D. McKenney to F. B. Stansbury, 5 May 1918, Record Group 165, Box 2, File 563, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

to strike until notified.”¹⁰⁵ Joining the clam diggers at the forefront of Wobbly movement were the Harbor’s sailors and longshoremen, as the Grays Harbor waterfront again proved to be one of the centers of militancy during the early 1920s. The Aberdeen branch of the IWW’s Marine Transport Workers’ Industrial Union (MTWIU) 510 maintained itself as one of the largest and longest-running Wobbly maritime locals on the Pacific Coast between 1912 and the 1930s.¹⁰⁶ The Aberdeen branch of MTWIU 510 was already the largest local of that IU on the Pacific Coast during 1917.¹⁰⁷ Agent 31 of the Washington State Secret Service reported in December 1917 that the “Longshoremen here [Aberdeen] have almost all signed up with the W.”¹⁰⁸ MTWIU members walked off the job as often as any other industrial union during the early 1920s, a feature that marked the history of the IWW from the Pacific Northwest to the ports of Philadelphia, San Pedro, and New York.¹⁰⁹ In June 1922, the crew of the steamship *Osage* that had taken on a load of lumber in Hoquiam, walked off the job after its captain refused to change out the rotten water in the tanks and physically assaulted the ship’s carpenter, knocking him and his tools down a flight of stairs. Despite three days of pleas from the captain for the crew to return to the ship, these men refused to work for the cruel boss.¹¹⁰ Nine months later, two crews of Aberdeen seamen “struck in succession,” holding up the *S. S. Edna*

¹⁰⁵ Minutes of the Central Branch Conference of Grays Harbor District, 15 April 1923, 3, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 46, Folder 12, WSU.

¹⁰⁶ See also *Industrial Worker*, 29 February 1912. One measure of the strength of the IWW on the docks of Grays Harbor was the continual presence of an MTWIU branch in Aberdeen during the 1920s and 1930s. See, for example, *Marine Worker* (New York), 1 June 1925; 1 May 1926; 1 June 1928; 15 February 1929; 1 July 1936. Copies of the *Marine Worker* are available in Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 70, Folder 31, WSU.

¹⁰⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 9 June 1917.

¹⁰⁸ Report of Agent 31, 20 November 1917, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA.

¹⁰⁹ The best history of the MTWIU is Cole, *Wobblies on the Waterfront*. See also Kimeldorf, *Battling for American Labor*, 21-85; Cole, *Black Wobbly: The Life and Times of Benjamin Harrison Fletcher* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Press, 2007).

¹¹⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 17 June 1922.

Christensen with a protest over wages and the food served on the ship. One Grays Harbor MTWIU delegate registered his happiness over the affair writing, “If all crews being treated badly would pursue these guerilla tactics, and cost the master several hundred dollars a trip, the conditions would improve.”¹¹¹

Grays Harbor Wobblies, including the contingent who worked on the beaches and docks of the region, attempted a variety of legal and parliamentary tactics to free their fellow workers during the early 1920s, but the importance of direct action retained its place as the chief weapon in their arsenal. Declaring, “Come one, come all! You’re needed,” the Wobblies declared free speech fights in 1921 and 1922 to pressure local judges and prosecutors to cancel criminal syndicalism prosecutions and free the scores of men and women held in city and county jails for their involvement with the IWW.¹¹² After securing some judicial relief despite massive resistance in these fights, IWWs and others from around the nation turned to a much stronger weapon during the spring of 1923, as they pulled off a massive and international general strike, which was designed to pressure politicians to release the nation’s class war prisoners. Shutting down construction camps, many of the nation’s ports, and scores of Pacific Coast logging camps, the IWW demonstrated the unparalleled power of direct economic action to hit the bosses where it hurt most.¹¹³ As will be shown, anarcho-syndicalists in the US were neither devoid of revolutionary enthusiasm nor locked in a static system of retrograde ideology during the 1920s, but were as creative and nearly as strong as ever.

¹¹¹ *Industrial Worker*, 28 March 1923.

¹¹² One of the only secondary sources to mention this lesser-known round of IWW free speech fights, carried out during the 1920s, is Gambs, *The Decline of the IWW*, 169, 172. Like their predecessors, these free speech fights remained consigned to the West, and Gambs briefly mentions the San Pedro, California, Port Arthur, Texas, Great Falls, California, and Fargo, North Dakota free speech fights, all of which came in 1923.

¹¹³ Gambs, *Decline of the IWW*, 230-231.

The Wobblies were old hands at fighting to free political prisoners, and in the early 1920s they turned to an old tactic -- the free speech fight -- to combat the continued abuses of state-directed union busting. Free speech fights re-emerged in 1921-1922 after a hiatus of more than four years that followed their last major fight, the Everett Massacre. The tactic of using mass pressure to gain publicity, bankrupt municipalities, and secure workers' rights had long fallen out of favor with much of the IWW, particularly its top brass, who like John Pancner, argued that fights were better at organizing "the bourgeois, the street moocher and the saloon soak" than the "wage slave."¹¹⁴ IWW editor C. E. "Stumpy" Payne declared that some of the fights were waged in cities that were "not worth fighting for" and that the IWW "fell into the trap of making an attack at a time and place where nothing was to be gained."¹¹⁵ But, as IWW historians have been so quick to point out, most of the former leadership of the IWW was in prison, marginalized, dead, or departed for greener pastures by 1921, and the discussion of tactics could again be debated and experimented with "from below."¹¹⁶

As with the free speech fights of 1909-1916, which the IWW waged partly to challenge and overturn municipal street-speaking bans, the latter-day struggles were launched in open defiance of the criminal syndicalism laws that made their organization illegal.¹¹⁷ Grays Harbor IWWs declared free speech fights in 1921 and 1922. The earlier conflict began after groups of Wobblies were arrested in Aberdeen and Hoquiam and charged with criminal syndicalism in June 1921. The IWW publicized the trial, asked for

¹¹⁴ Clemens P. Work, *Darkest Before Dawn: Sedition and Free Speech in the American West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 31.

¹¹⁵ C. E. Payne to Fellow Worker [Fred] Thompson, n.d., Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 25, Folder 4, WSU.

¹¹⁶ Len Decaux, *Labor Radical: From the Wobblies to the CIO* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), 88; Conlin, *Bread and Roses, Too*, 141; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 465.

¹¹⁷ Brissenden, *The IWW*, 367.

funds to help sustain the local while their members were in jail, and called upon volunteers to head to Aberdeen to spend their “winter . . . in the Grays Harbor County jail, getting your three good meals a day and enjoying the clean, sanitary conditions.” Although the Grays Harbor Wobblies were unable to mount a massive resistance to the arrests and jailing of their fellow workers, they were able to attract widespread publicity to the injustice of the syndicalism law through the *Industrial Worker* and speeches given by Harbor activists. After being jailed for more than a month, the syndicalism prisoners were released in late September. The *Industrial Worker* celebrated the decision, writing: “Wobs Freed; Jury Acquits.”¹¹⁸

Large-scale free speech fights were waged across the Pacific Northwest in 1922, with those in Bellingham, Astoria, and Aberdeen receiving the most attention.¹¹⁹ In Aberdeen the free speech fight was triggered by the May 1922 arrests of J. M. Johnson and Claude McAlpin in Hoquiam for violating the criminal syndicalism statute.¹²⁰ Nineteen IWWs were arrested for the same offense during the next week.¹²¹ As in earlier battles, Aberdeen Wobblies sought to overwhelm the local authorities with a mass show of support from fellow workers around the region. In a piece that could have appeared a decade earlier, the *Industrial Worker* ran an announcement proclaiming “Volunteers

¹¹⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 20, 27 August; 3, 24 September 1921.

¹¹⁹ On the Bellingham free speech fight, see *Industrial Worker*, 2 May 1923. On Astoria free speech fight, see *Industrial Worker*, 28 April 1923. Other towns that experienced this second wave of Wobbly free speech fights includes Pasco and Raymond, Washington. See *Industrial Worker*, 28 April; 12, 16 May 1923.

¹²⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 27 May 1922; *Grays Harbor Post*, 4 November 1922.

¹²¹ Chehalis/Grays Harbor County Jail Record – Civil/Criminal, 1913-1922, Acc. No. 86-1-19, Box 245D, SWA. Two other IWWs, loggers William Newman and Henry McCoy, joined their fellow workers in jail on criminal syndicalism charges in August 1922. See also *Grays Harbor Post*, 4 November 1922; *Industrial Worker*, 21, 28 October 1922.

Wanted” to make “it safe to Organize in Grays Harbor Country!”¹²² The same issue contained a letter from Bob Pease, Aberdeen branch secretary, who reminded readers, “This is the same old story. . . . We must stop this thing here, as well as elsewhere. . . . Let’s fill their jails. Yours for the IWW.”¹²³

Answering the call, Wobblies again centered their attention upon Aberdeen and mounted efforts to protect their organization. They called branch meetings in Seattle, Portland, and Aberdeen to support the fight, and collected defense funds from “many points in Washington and Oregon.”¹²⁴ In keeping with their tradition of local autonomy, the workers formed a committee from inside the jail, which was responsible for making all decisions regarding their defense. The jail committee corresponded with supporters and the IWW press, but in keeping with the Wobblies’ long-standing preference for direct action, issued “requests that you do not write to these men, but come and help in the fight.” They also used the *Industrial Worker* to antagonize the “able-bodied bourgeoisie” who were persecuting their organization, arguing that the American Legion had “been duped to further the schemes of the lumber barons.”¹²⁵

During the conflict, Wobblies were arrested in their hall and on the street, while one activist was pinched for holding hall meetings and selling copies of the *Industrial Worker* on the streets of Aberdeen.¹²⁶ Those targeted by local authorities reflected the movement as a whole, particularly in terms of ethnicity and skill. Many of the twenty-one men and two women arrested were Finnish Americans. Two loggers, two

¹²² *Industrial Worker*, 27 May 1922. Bob Pease, along with fellow Grays Harbor Wobbly Matt Johnson, was arrested during the Raymond free speech fight, carried out in May 1923. Raymond and its sister-city of South Bend are located in Pacific County, Washington, just south of Grays Harbor County, Washington. See, *Industrial Worker*, 12 May 1923.

¹²³ *Industrial Worker*, 27 May 1922.

¹²⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 27 May; 24 June 1922.

¹²⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 27 May; 5 August 1922.

¹²⁶ *Industrial Worker*, 27 May; 5 August 1922.

longshoremen, a sailor, and a construction laborer joined fifteen of the victims who were unskilled laborers.¹²⁷ Even those IWWs arrested and interned during the fight managed to bring their message to the streets. During “an outing to the beautiful little city of Aberdeen,” in which the prisoners were loaded in the back of a truck and taken from their jail cells in the Grays Harbor County seat of Montesano to Aberdeen, the Wobblies sang lively renditions of “Hold the Fort” and “Solidarity Forever” to the “waving hands and hankerchiefs by sympathizers among both workers and business men.” Maintaining a wall of solidarity, nearly all of the prisoners refused to have their charges dropped or be released on bail unless all of the prisoners could be released as a group.¹²⁸

The 29 October 1922 edition of the *Industrial Worker* triumphantly blared, “Free Speech Fight Won, Syndicalist Law Ended.”¹²⁹ Although the celebration proved premature -- two of the liberated Grays Harbor Wobblies were immediately re-arrested by federal authorities who held them for deportation hearings -- the fight succeeded at freeing the fourteen IWW defendants and severely restricted the state’s use of evidence in all future syndicalism cases in Grays Harbor.¹³⁰ Their attorney, “the fighting Wobbly Lawyer from Centralia” Elmer Smith, hinged his argument on the fact that most criminal syndicalism prosecutions were based on the state’s use of literature written by non-IWWs as evidence. This included “the writings of authors and poets, some times dead for many years,” many of which “would be disclosed as standard books on the library shelves.”¹³¹ The free speech fight victory, while based more on legal than direct action, gave the local

¹²⁷ The prisoners’ occupations were listed in the Chehalis/Grays Harbor County Jail Record – Civil/Criminal, Jail Record, 1913-1922, Accession No. 86-1-19, Box No. 245D, SWA.

¹²⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 24 June 1922.

¹²⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 28 October 1922.

¹³⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 16 September 1922.

¹³¹ *Industrial Worker*, 21, 28 October 1922.

Wobblies ample cause to celebrate. After years of public and private harassment kept them underground, fighting in the shadows, the Wobblies had re-emerged during 1922 in a very public free speech fight. With the criminal syndicalism law, one of the many organizational barriers, cleared out of their path, the Wobblies carried their revolutionary program to the next level with the declaration of a general strike in spring 1923.

The IWW strategy in 1923 “to free class war prisoners” was based around the general strike.¹³² The general strike was the central piece of the IWW’s revolutionary strategy, a tactic designed to prevent capitalists from extracting profits from their workers, thereby paralyzing corporations and the state apparatus dedicated to their defense. Wobblies viewed these strikes as both the most logical and the best way to bring about a social revolution. Big Bill Haywood declared, “All the workers have to do is to organize so that they can put their hands in their pockets; when they have got *their* hands there, the capitalists can’t get theirs in. If the workers can organize so that they can stand idle they will then be strong enough so that they can take the factories. . . . whether the capitalists like it or not; when we lock the bosses out and run the factories to suit ourselves. That is our program. We will do it.”¹³³

Wobblies likewise sought on many occasions to use the great strike as a means to gain political ends, usually the liberation of radicals imprisoned for political crimes. On the night of 30 December 1917, ninety-seven percent of the members of the Aberdeen “IWW Lumberworkers' Union” voted in favor of a general strike for the following

¹³² *Industrial Worker*, 25 April 1923.

¹³³ William Haywood, “The General Strike,” in *Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology*, New and Expanded ed., ed. Joyce Kornbluh (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Press, 1998), 49-50.

month.¹³⁴ Three months later the streets of Aberdeen were littered with leaflets reading, “8-HOUR DAY EVENTUALLY, WHY NOT NOW?,” and featuring an IWW pouring gasoline on his bed roll atop the date “May the First 1918.” The bed roll signified the IWW’s demand that boss loggers provide workers with sanitary bedding, thereby ending the odious practice of forcing itinerant timber workers to carry their beds on their backs.¹³⁵ Another leaflet distributed in Aberdeen in 1918 declared “ATTENTION WORKERS!,” and called upon the nation’s workers to declare a general strike until 1 October. It read, “And all Class War Prisoners MUST and SHALL be released from jail! Down tools until all are released. YOU may be next!”¹³⁶ At their semi-annual convention in August 1919 the LWIU resolved to “call a general strike in the lumber industry, Seattle District” to force the state to free class war prisoners.¹³⁷

Once it became clear that President Warren Harding had no intention of freeing the Wobblies held in federal prison, planning for the general strike to free class war prisoners began in October 1922. Throughout early 1923 Wobblies speculated about the size and scope of the general strike, which was planned to begin on 1 May. Throughout the nation, Wobblies met to plan for the great struggle. In Aberdeen on 15 April, thirteen IWW delegates from the Grays Harbor district voted to coordinate the strike with their

¹³⁴ Report of Agent 11, Hoquiam, 30 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

¹³⁵ This leaflet was included in the papers of the Washington State Secret Service Reports, dated February 1918. See Governor Ernest Lister to S. V. Stewart, Governor of Montana, 22 April 1918, Governor Ernest Lister Papers, Secret Service Files, Correspondence – 1917-1921, WSA. For a brief discussion of the IWW’s activism around bedding, see A. Ross McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 103.

¹³⁶ “Attention Workers,” Record Group 165, Box 1, File 511, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

¹³⁷ 5th Semi-Annual Convention of LWIU 500, Seattle District, 23 August 1919, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, MSS 143, Box 3, Folder 10, Washington State Library, Tumwater, Washington.

fellow workers in the Puget Sound, all while making it clear that “the main issue in this upcoming strike shall be the release of the class war prisoners.”¹³⁸

The IWW struck early, leafleting the Northwest with declarations of “The Strike Call For April 25, 1925,” while the front page of the 25 April 1923 edition of the *Industrial Worker* proclaimed, “Strike One--Strike All!”¹³⁹ That day reports were already running “into the Seattle headquarters in a steady stream,” announcing that forty-eight log camps in western Washington were closed by the strike. In Grays Harbor, these included the Clemons, Independence, Saginaw, and Anderson and Middleton camps.¹⁴⁰ On 26 April, eleven days after their initial meeting to plan the strike, six hundred IWWs in good standing met in Aberdeen to celebrate what had already been accomplished and plan their next moves.¹⁴¹ A report that appeared in the *Industrial Worker* illustrated how one group of loggers brought about the strike at their camp, “ABERDEEN, Wash. -- Saginaw Camp No. 1 . . . We held a meeting here on April 16th with 35 members present in good standing and 30 non-union men present. A collection of \$27.65 was taken up for the strike fund. A strike vote was taken and every one present. Sixty-five in number voted to go out when the strike call comes for the release of class-war prisoners. -- (LU-224).”¹⁴²

Wobbly songwriter Dublin Dan penned the poem “One Hundred Thousand Strong,” to commemorate the tremendous scale of the strike:

Did they come out? I’ll say they did;

¹³⁸ Minutes of the Central Branch Conference of Grays Harbor District, April 15th 1923, 2, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 46, Folder 12, WSU. Release of class war prisoners was the main issue in each of the locals involved in the strike. See Gams, *The Decline of the IWW*, 70-71.

¹³⁹ *The Strike Call For April 25, 1923*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 46, Folder 28, WSU; *Industrial Worker*, 25 April 1923.

¹⁴⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 2 May 1923.

¹⁴¹ *Industrial Worker*, 5 May 1923.

¹⁴² *Industrial Worker*, 25 April 1923.

One hundred thousand strong,
“Release the Class-War Prisoners”
Was the title of their song;
In lumber camps, construction jobs,
And even on the sea,
Events will now be dated from the
Strike of -- ‘23¹⁴³

The scope of the 1923 general strike never approached Dan’s grandiose claims, but thirty lumber camps were struck in Grays Harbor County alone. In addition, groups of longshoremen and sailors quit work, joined the strike, and picketed the docks. According to one IWW’s report of the union’s activities on the waterfront, “As fast as the ships come in, the crews are notified that the General Strike is on for release of Class War prisoners, and so far 75 per cent on all boats have quit.”¹⁴⁴

Mill workers were less supportive of the action, but on 27 April James Pezzanis, chairman of the Grays Harbor Joint Strike Committee, reported that the lack of logs coming from the camps had caused Grays Harbor saw mill owners to switch from three to one shift per day, and that there were “not enough logs to run the mills more than four or five days longer.”¹⁴⁵ Still, impatient radicals preferred a show of solidarity from their fellow workers in the mills and shifted their campaign to local mill workers on 28 April. Reports of striking lumber mill hands trickled in to the radical and mainstream press. Pezzanis wrote that there were “30 or 40 men in each mill, distributing hand bills and talking to the workers as they come off the job.” One of the IWW’s greatest successes came at the Grays Harbor Commercial Company, the largest mill in the region and the

¹⁴³ *General Strike Bulletin*, Seattle District, 7 May 1923, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 162, Folder 1, WSU. Dublin Dan also penned the more famous song “The Portland Revolution,” also written for the General Strike. See Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 201-202

¹⁴⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 5 May 1923. At least some Harbor longshoremen maintained their militancy after the conclusion of the IWW general strike. In July 1923 the Aberdeen MTWIU branch agreed to “go into action July 14” to free class war prisoners, bringing “the tyrannical courts to their knees.” See *Industrial Worker*, 18 July 1923.

¹⁴⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 5 May 1923.

only one that had withstood IWW strikes in 1912 and 1917. Here, following an IWW strike call, approximately eighty-five percent of the mill's workers walked off the job. Shocked that the mill, appropriately dubbed the "penitentiary," succumbed to the rebel workers, the *Seattle Union Record* celebrated the closure of this "infamous company" that was "known for long hours and short wages."¹⁴⁶ In all, somewhere between 4,000 and 5,000 mill workers, loggers, longshoremen, and clam diggers walked off their jobs in Grays Harbor during late April and early May 1923.¹⁴⁷

Employers worried that the strike might reach proportions of earlier IWW conflicts and responded to this threat by putting aside log price negotiations until the strike had run its course.¹⁴⁸ At the 2 May 1923, meeting of the Douglas Fir Exploitation Committee, one committee official registered their concern, noting, "This is a strike, not for wages, but to show their power and ability to call strikes and call out men. The IWW are active, and old leaders are appearing who have not been seen for four or five years." In addition, Grays Harbor lumbermen intimidated and attacked picketers. Mill owners hired gunmen to stand watch outside the plants. "Stoolpigeon" Jackson, the night watchman at the Grays Harbor Lumber mill, yelled at a group of workers that, "If my son joined the IWW I would shoot him."¹⁴⁹

Writing in the *General Strike Bulletin* issued from Seattle on 7 May one IWW summarized the triumph and tragedy that befell the Harbor during the previous week writing, "Of course here, where our strength was the greatest, the fight was the bitterest.

¹⁴⁶ *Seattle Union Record*, 3 May 1923.

¹⁴⁷ Even the conservative company union, the 4Ls admitted that by the second day of the strike, at least two thousand Grays Harbor loggers were striking. See *Aberdeen Daily World*, 26 April 1923.

¹⁴⁸ Douglas Fir Company Business, 2 May 1923, Edwin Gardner Ames Papers, Accession No. 3826, Box 120, Folder 8, UW.

¹⁴⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 28 July 1923; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 3, 8 May 1923.

At least one member paid with his life for our success there.”¹⁵⁰ On the morning of 3 May 1923, a group of twenty strikers arrived at the Bay City mill in south Aberdeen to continue the picketing that had gone on since the strike’s onset. E. I. Green, a guard hired by the Bay City Mill, met the picketers at the mill gate. Green had a long history of violent activities. He had fought in the Spanish-American War and World War I, and according to the *Southwest Washington Labor Press* “was known as a man quick to use a gun and had done time because of it previously.”¹⁵¹ C. E. Barton, a non-IWW bystander, recalled that Green “was standing a short distance away [from the pickets], loudly taunting the crowd of men with abuse and vile language, including in his remarks something to the effect that no one belongs to the Industrial Workers’ Union but foreigners who cannot speak English.”¹⁵² Outraged at the taunt, William McKay, a logger and long-time member of the IWW, stepped forward shouting “Do you mean that for me?”¹⁵³

McKay’s bravado singled him out from his fellow workers and provided the mill gunman with a convenient target. During their argument, Green pulled his revolver and McKay, seeing the weapon, attempted to flee. As McKay ran, Green fired two shots, one of which struck McKay in the back of the head, killing him.¹⁵⁴ At the coroner’s inquest that was called to investigate the murder, three doctors and six community members confirmed the horrific details of the logger’s death. According to the autopsy, McKay died from a single bullet that entered two inches above his right ear, “traversed through

¹⁵⁰ *General Strike Bulletin*, Seattle District, 7 May 1923, Industrial Workers of the World Papers, Box 162, Folder 1, WSU. During the strike employers hired gunmen specifically for their abilities as sharpshooters, and as mentioned above, Wobblies were frequently the victims of violence in the region. *Industrial Worker*, 28 July 1923.

¹⁵¹ *Southwest Washington Labor Press*, 11 May 1923.

¹⁵² *Industrial Worker*, 16 May 1923.

¹⁵³ *Industrial Worker*, 16 May 1923.

¹⁵⁴ *Seattle Union Record*, 4 May 1923; *Seattle Times*, 4 May 1923; *Bellingham Herald*, 4 May 1923.

brain substance,” and bounced between many parts of his skull.¹⁵⁵ Nonetheless, in a decision that some workers compared with the “Centralia frameup,” members of the coroner’s inquest refused to affix blame for the murder and thus “tacitly condoned the killing by holding that Green was ‘on duty.’”¹⁵⁶ Reacting to McKay’s murder with a callousness that might have shocked the readers of more mainstream organs, the right-wing *Hoquiam American* opined that, “A man who listens to the talk of an IWW is on a par with the man who looks down the muzzle of a loaded gun while fooling with the trigger.”¹⁵⁷ Grays Harbor County Prosecutor A. E. Graham declared that he would prosecute Green for the murder. Yet after an initial hearing, the gunman was freed on bail and was never tried for the murder.¹⁵⁸ At this point the historical record becomes extremely murky. Of the four local newspapers, only the *Washingtonian* mentioned the trial, noting that prosecutor Graham had decided to “dispose” of the case.¹⁵⁹ Unfortunately, while the IWW press remained vigilant in their desire to hold Green accountable, no source revealed the ultimate fate of McKay’s murderer.¹⁶⁰ As the next chapter will demonstrate, however, the murder of McKay was only the most blatant act of class violence committed in “Red Harbor” during the first three decades of the twentieth century.

¹⁵⁵ Coroner’s Inquest into the Death of William McKay, Aberdeen, Washington, 4 May 1923. Grays Harbor County Papers, Southwest Washington Regional Branch Archives, Washington State Archives, Olympia, Washington. Members of the inquest included car salesman George Eddy, Frank Hite of the Aberdeen Cabinet Works, grocer F. C. Carpenter, Millwright G. P. Adams, Real Estate agent E. B. Crary, and Guy Allison of the Grays Harbor Welding Company. See *Daily Washingtonian*, 5 May 1923.

¹⁵⁶ In a handbill distributed on the night of McKay’s murder, the Wobblies wrote, “Everyone is urged to watch this case and compare it with the Centralia frameup.” Cited in the *Tacoma Ledger*, 4 May 1923. See also, *Aberdeen Daily World*, 3 May 1923; *Grays Harbor Post*, 5 May 1923; *Seattle Union Record*, 5 May 1923.

¹⁵⁷ *Hoquiam American* (Hoquiam, WA), 10 May 1923.

¹⁵⁸ *Seattle Union Record*, 5 May 1923; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 8 May 1923.

¹⁵⁹ *Grays Harbor Washingtonian*, 8 September 1923.

¹⁶⁰ I wrote extensively of the 1923 general strike and the murder of McKay in Goings, “The IWW Lost A Fellow Worker.”

CHAPTER XI

WOBBLIES, WORKERS, AND VIOLENCE IN GRAYS HARBOR

The story of William McKay's death and the unwillingness of state authorities to punish his murderer will not come as a surprise to those who have studied the Wobblies. In contemporary accounts, McKay was depicted as either an innocent victim of employing-class brutality and its complicit state apparatus, or a violent thug who was terrorizing "loyal" workers when he met his death. In fact, certain elements of this tragedy bear close resemblance to those of the Wobblies' well-known martyrs Joe Hill, Frank Little, and Wesley Everest. Like McKay, these three men were itinerant laborers, committed radicals, and IWW organizers. Like McKay, Everest and Little were both murdered by private citizens whose crimes went unprosecuted and unpunished by the law. Like Hill and Everest, McKay was portrayed by many of his contemporaries as a ruffian whose own violent actions precipitated the violent actions taken against him. Indeed, as the conservative labor newspaper *Grays Harbor Post* described the confrontation between Green and his murderer, it was the Wobbly logger who was to blame for his own death. It read, "A group of IWW pickets at the entrance of the Bay City mill yards Thursday morning, assaulted the watchman, E. I. Green, a man past 60 years of age. Green fired two shots, one of them striking McCay [sic] in the head."¹

As the examples of McKay, Hill, Little, and Everest demonstrate, the historiography of the IWW has tended toward simplifying the place of violence in the union's history by arguing either that Wobblies were terrorists who regularly used violence to achieve their aims, or were the passive victims of employer, vigilante, and state violence. Scholarly and popular controversy over the role played by offensive and

¹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 5 May 1923.

defensive violence in the strategy and tactics of the IWW has raged for over a century. Sounding an early warning bell, economist Thames Ross Williamson proclaimed that “the IWW prefer violence to political action,” and included in his *Problems in American Democracy* the “IWW METHOD: DESTRUCTION OF LIFE,” because “the term sabotage [was extended] to cover the destruction of human life.”² Others have concurred with Williamson’s assessment. In his book *A Conservative View of the American Left*, Daniel J. Flynn concluded not only that “IWW strikes involved a great deal of violence,” but that “much of it was instigated by the Wobblies.”³

Numerous other scholars, hailing from all over the political spectrum, from the liberal Melvyn Dubofsky to the Marxist Philip S. Foner, have sharply disagreed, contending, in Dubofsky’s words, “Although the IWW employed the vocabulary of violence, more often than not it practiced passive resistance.”⁴ The radical journalist Louis Adamic went even farther in his estimation that, “All the violence in IWW strikes and free speech campaigns between 1910 and 1916, as we have seen, was perpetrated by the police, the militia and hired gunmen.”⁵ This contention is for the most part true. The IWW rarely matched their violent revolutionary discourse in practice.⁶ But to carry this argument a step further and argue that the Wobblies were exemplars of the hallowed traditions of nonviolence is to be simplifying the multifaceted relationship between the IWW and violence.⁷

² Williamson, *Problems in American Democracy*, 119. See Joseph Robert Conlin, “The IWW and the Question of Violence,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 51:4 (Summer 1968): 316-326.

³ Daniel J. Flynn, *A Conservative History of the American Left* (New York: Random House, 2008), 166.

⁴ Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 160; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 164-167.

⁵ Adamic, *Dynamite*, 102.

⁶ Historian Philip S. Foner indicated that Wobblies occasionally threatened to take “an eye for an eye” against their oppressors. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, Vol. 4, 500.

⁷ Michael True, *An Energy Field More Intense Than War: The Nonviolent Tradition and American Literature* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 48-55; Conlin, “The IWW and the Question of

This chapter argues that the relationship between the IWW and class violence is more complex than earlier studies have contended. Rejecting both the simplistic “IWW as terrorist organization” and “IWW as victim” paradigms, this chapter begins with the assumption that Wobblies were very much the targets of concerted employer and state violence. As many historians have argued, Wobblies were beaten up, shot, tarred and feathered, and lynched by employers, vigilantes, and state officials.⁸ However, employing-class violence against the IWW was not confined to overt physical attacks against the radical unionists. Wobblies were also victimized by so-called industrial accidents, those everyday acts of violence that cause so much pain in the lives of working-class families. The IWW was heavily represented in some of North America’s most dangerous industries, including lumber, construction, and marine transportation. Attacked by state and boss, and victimized by a social system that placed them in dangerous proximity to capitalist-owned machinery, members of the IWW responded to these forms of class violence in three main ways. First, Wobblies chose to fight back violently against their bosses. They countered the systematic violence of their class enemies with sporadic, guerrilla-style acts intended for self-defense or to gain revenge against their employers. Second, faced with the growing list of casualties from labor conflicts and at the workplace, IWWs developed a critique of capitalism that lay full blame for both the murder of working-class activists and industrial accidents at the feet of their capitalist exploiters. Third, IWWs and their allies led politicized funeral parades and graveside addresses that celebrated their fellow workers’ lives and struggles,

Violence.” Staughton Lynd considered the IWW’s traditions of nonviolent direct action to be of such magnitude that he included them in his documentary collection of nonviolence in America. See Lynd, *Nonviolence in America: A Documentary History* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966).

⁸ See John Clendenin Townsend, *Running the Gauntlet: Cultural Sources of Violence against the IWW* (New York: Garland, 1986).

condemned the institutional violence that caused the deaths and injuries, and demonstrated the significance of their union and their deceased fellow workers in the community.

Grays Harbor Wobblies committed acts of violence both individually and in groups against employers, strikebreakers, and agents of the state. The most frequent examples of Wobbly-directed violence came in self-defense. After being provoked during the 1912 lumber strike, several IWWs decided to strike back. In one attack, Wobblies confiscated the oak clubs made by the Aberdeen Manufacturing Company and used in attacks on the strikers.⁹ A striker used a club, “beating one cop over the head,” and nearly getting to another officer before a third was able to intervene and disarm the picketer.¹⁰ A “Greek striker” was “about to hit a special police officer in the head with a hammer,” when he was “put out of commission” by a brick thrown by Lon Miller, “an old-time citizen.”¹¹ Striker Fhitin Visco was forced to pay one hundred dollars for assaulting two high school boys who were on their way to scab.¹² These scuffles occasionally turned into pitched battles, as strikers mobilized to protect their right to picket, and exact some retribution when possible. The mainstream press wrote provocatively of “free for all” fights, “a pitched battle with clubs,” and “broken heads” throughout the strike.¹³ Other strikers found blunt instruments insufficient and preferred to use firearms and projectiles as weapons. Guns were found on many of the arrested

⁹ *Aberdeen Herald*, 28 March 1912; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 26 March 1912.

¹⁰ *Oregonian*, 27 March 1912; *Aberdeen Herald*, 28 March 1912; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 26 March 1912.

¹¹ *Oregonian*, 21 March 1912.

¹² *Aberdeen Daily World*, 29 March 1912.

¹³ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 26, 27, 29 March 1912; *Grays Harbor Post*, 30 March 1912; *Oregonian*, 27 March 1912; *Aberdeen Herald*, 28 March 1912.

radicals, and strikers threw rocks and bricks at scabs and strikebreakers' homes to convince them to join the strike.¹⁴

Many IWWs, in fact, venerated acts of self-defense, promising to meet violent repression with armed defense. Wobbly Joseph Murphy, an agricultural laborer during the 1920s, remembered how the men who rode the rails dealt with “hijacks,” train robbers who targeted agricultural laborers. He said years later, “There’s only one way to deal with that stuff. We took those hijacks, many of them; we took a razor, a Gem razor blade, and cut ‘IWW’ on their face, ‘I’ on the forehead and ‘W’ on each cheek. Then we put permanganate potassium [sic] into it. That marked them up.”¹⁵ In the Harbor towns Wobblies had similarly violent tactics for taking out their anger, both individually and in groups. In December 1917, Grays Harbor IWW Walter Margason proposed a plan to bring reluctant loggers into the union and fight back against unfriendly foremen. Wobblies were to give the “cold shoulder” to the “intended victim,” explaining to him it is “because he is against them and the union.” If a foreman shows disfavor to the IWWs or discharges one of their members, they “stool’ on him and get him discharged”; and if that does not work, the straw boss was treated to “the ‘lavatory,’” the term used for putting itching powder into his clothing, shoes, and bedding.¹⁶

Harbor IWWs also paid tribute to the violent actions taken by their fellow workers. Although history has remembered the incidents surrounding the 5 September 1916, shoot-out between Wobblies aboard the *Verona* and a combined group of deputies

¹⁴ *Oregonian*, 2 April 1912; *Grays Harbor Post*, 27 April 1912; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 22, 26 March 1912.

¹⁵ Stewart Bird, Dan Georgaskas, Deborah Shaffer, *Solidarity Forever: An Oral History of the IWW* (Chicago: Lake View Press, 1985), 46.

¹⁶ Report of Agent 11, Hoquiam, 16 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA. The report concludes by saying that Margason’s methods were “adopted by a majority vote and every member becomes an organiser or delegate on the job if he can read or write.”

and vigilantes on the Everett docks, as the “Everett Massacre,” contemporaries of the Everett victims paid as much attention to the glories of their fellow workers’ gun-play than the sadness of the affair. At a December 1917 meeting among Aberdeen IWWs one observer noted that the radicals had plans to “give some of the Vigilantes who have been driving them out of certain towns a taste of the medicine which was issued at Everett.”¹⁷ While there is no evidence that Grays Harbor IWWs waged violent class warfare in response to the declarations made at this meeting, the radicals did arm themselves for later conflicts. Ralph Chaplin recalled that in response to a threat from vigilantes against the Aberdeen IWW hall in 1919, each Wobbly “was armed with a loaded baseball bat.” One of the armed Wobblies warned Chaplin that “there’s going to be hell-popping” and “we don’t want you in on it. You’re married and have a long sentence hanging over your head already.” In this instance, two thousand IWWs turned out to protect the Aberdeen Wobbly hall.¹⁸

Rebel workers’ violent acts were not dedicated to self-defense alone. Wobblies also assaulted obnoxious employers, foremen, scabs, and labor spies. A short list of the bosses physically attacked by IWWs during 1911 and 1912 includes logging foreman George Hulet, city councilman John Myles, and mill foreman M. C. Quinn.¹⁹ During the 1912 lumber strike, Hulet was “beat severely” and left in a “critical condition” by nine IWWs who the logging foreman had tried to prevent from organizing at his camp.²⁰

¹⁷ Report of Agent 11, Hoquiam, Washington, 19 December 1917, Record Group 165, box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

¹⁸ Chaplin, *Wobbly*, 290.

¹⁹ *Aberdeen Herald*, 4 April; 12 October 1912; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 15 March 1912; *Oregonian*, 15 March 1912.

²⁰ *Aberdeen Herald*, 4 April 1912.

Local IWW leader William Thorn showed a special fondness engaging in fistcuffs with the boss. Indeed, two of his more prominent fistfights against employers, in October 1911, and March 1912, catalyzed members of the working class who were impressed by his courage and audacity.²¹ During Thorn's trial for assault against M. C. Quinn, strikers marched en masse to Thorn's trial and filled up "every available space in the police court was crowded when Judge C. J. Coghlan called the case." The judge found Thorn guilty of assault and fined him \$12.²²

IWWs also invoked violent rhetoric, publicly warning employers and their servants against taking their violent deeds too far. Writing of their relationship with violent direct action during the free speech fight, Wobbly leaders stationed far away in Chicago threatened Grays Harbor employers and elected officials with the revelation that the IWW program "embraces various methods, from passive resistance on the job to extreme violence or insurrection. The degree of violence will depend upon conditions, namely the counter resistance of the enemy, the strength of the 'direct action' organization, and other contributing causes."²³ In a letter issued to the Aberdeen mayor and chamber of commerce, Chicago Wobblies promised a "battle of the ages -- an oppressed class fighting against its oppressors -- fighting for their right to live."²⁴ Not to be outdone, rank and filers made it known that any violence visited upon their own would be met with equal or greater force. In April, in a response to the disappearance of striker

²¹ Lewarne, "The Aberdeen Free Speech Fight," 3-4; *Aberdeen Herald*, 12 October 1911; Hughes and Beckwith, *On the Harbor*, 36.

²² *Aberdeen Daily World*, 15 March 1912; *Oregonian*, 15 March 1912.

²³ *Solidarity*, 27 December 1911.

²⁴ *Solidarity*, 9 December 1911. Aberdeen mayor James Parks was also threatened with "a ducking in the river" by an IWW named Wilson during a speech the radical made on one of the city's streets. *Aberdeen Daily World*, 27 January 1911.

A. B. Myers, one Harbor Wobbly left no doubt that the strikers intended to defend themselves, if necessary with violence:

There was a bunch of State Cossacks not very many years ago who were notified that for every life that they took from a workers' body those remaining workers would exact TWO of their lives in return.

And I want to say personally to all the Littles, Lytles and all their paid hirelings, hessians and thugs of any and all descriptions that this SAME notification is extended to them in this strike of the Lumber Workers on Grays and Willapa Harbors.²⁵

Belligerent, antagonistic language on the picket lines was common during the Grays Harbor conflict. This militant rhetoric also found its way into print, as Harbor IWWs promised to exact an eye for an eye. In late May, a strike "captain, a Greek, had his head split open with a hammer in the hands of a scab," to which one Wobbly warned that "We know them and will do some arresting also."²⁶ Anti-union state officials, scabs, and employers, including *Washingtonian* and *Home Defender* editor and Congressional candidate Albert Johnson received death threats from the Wobblies during the 1912 strike.²⁷

Throughout the late 1910s, scabs, foremen, and labor spies were physically attacked, beaten up, and had their shoes and clothing filled with itching powder.²⁸ In December 1917, a group of Aberdeen Wobblies unanimously agreed to use physical violence against any foreman showing disfavor against the IWW, including purposely

²⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 18 April 1912.

²⁶ *Industrial Worker*, 28 March 1912.

²⁷ *Home Defender*, March 1913; *Daily Washingtonian*, 29 December 1911; *Pacific Lumber Trade Journal* (April 1912): 24; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 25, 26 November 1911.

²⁸ Report of Agent 11, Hoquiam, Nov. 21, 1917, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA; Report of 109, Aberdeen, 28 December 1917, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA; Testimony of C. E. Fettis, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 108, Folder 3, 4591-4598, WSU.

dropping heavy objects on the intended victim's foot.²⁹ A Wobbly logger named Christensen, veteran of the 1911-1912 lumber wars, bragged during one meeting that "he and an Austrian had sent three scabs to the hospital since the strike had been taken to the job."³⁰ Especially gratifying must have been the sweet taste of revenge gained against C. E. Fettis, manager of a logging camp owned by the National Mill Company, who had cow-itch put in his pocket after he refused to recognize the eight-hour day.³¹ In addition, scab logger Edward Winston declared that IWWs put "some acid put in his shoes or socks," which caused his skin to start "peeling off from his toes."³² During a quickie strike in September 1917 at the logging camp of the National Mill Company, scab logger John Tabbert was confronted by an IWW organizer who forced his way into the bunkhouse and demanded threateningly, "Show me that scab . . . I will cut his heart out."³³ For their part, spies appeared to understand the dangers they faced if caught by those they spied upon. In 1917, with the local IWW movement peaking in membership, labor spies remained constantly vigilant against the chance of discovery. Even the possibility that they had been discovered was cause for a rapid escape from town, as was the case with an agent of the Washington State Secret Service, who hurriedly departed

²⁹ Report of Agent 11, Hoquiam, Washington, 16 December 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

³⁰ Report of Agent 11, Hoquiam, Washington, 3 November 1917, Record Group 165, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

³¹ Testimony of C. E. Fettis, 4596, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, Folder 3, 5713, WSU. Fettis was the superintendent of a logging camp owned by the National Mill Company, based in Hoquiam.

³² Testimony of C. E. Fettis, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 108, Folder 3, 4597, WSU.

³³ Testimony of John Tabbert, *United States vs. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, Folder 3, 4612, WSU. Tabbert was one of the four lumber workers who traveled from Montesano to Chicago alongside their bosses to testify against the IWW in June 1918. *Aberdeen Daily World*, 11 June 1918.

town after being accused by an Aberdeen woman of being a “Govt. man.”³⁴ Discretion proved to be the better part of valor for the secret agents. For his years of spying on Grays Harbor workers, H. D. McKenney wore a bullet in his leg, an unwelcome present from one Wobbly’s rifle.³⁵ Thus, while the Wobblies have been hailed for their commitment to non-violence, it would be more accurate to say that this was more strategic than an ethical commitment to non-violent protest.

As many historians have argued, Wobblies were frequent targets of violence from employers, vigilantes, strikebreakers, and the state. A short list of well-known IWW martyrs, those Wobblies who gained fame for what radicals saw as wrongful deaths, would include Joe Hill, Wesley Everest, and Frank Little. In addition, numerous IWWs died in prison, killed by guards or victimized by what “Big” Bill Haywood described as the “lack of medical attention, nurses, and food” provided to political prisoners.³⁶ A far greater number of IWWs were physically attacked by employers, thugs, and state officials. During the 1911-1912 “War of Grays Harbor,” IWWs were shot, sprayed by fire hoses, beaten with clubs, and forcibly deported from town.³⁷ During the Great War and its aftermath, as the vigilante group Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen (4Ls) threatened lumber radicals, agitators were lucky to escape with a tar and feathering or a

³⁴ Report of Agent 31, 2 January 1918, Governor Ernest Lister, State Secret Service Correspondence Files, 1917-1921, Accession No. AR2-H-5, WSA.

³⁵ F. B. Stansbury to Colonel Bryce P. Disque, 22 November 1917, Box 9, File 1095, Records of the War Department General Staff, Military Intelligence Division, Plant Protection, Portland District, NRA.

³⁶ Haywood, *The Autobiography of Big Bill Haywood*, 311. One of the Wobblies who died in prison was James McInerney, one of the Centralia prisoners. Like all of the Centralia prisoners, McInerney was tried, convicted, and sentenced to prison at the Grays Harbor County Courthouse in Montesano. See Copeland, *The Centralia Conspiracy*, 177.

³⁷ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 18 March 1912; *Industrial Worker*, 28 March; 4 April 1912; *Oregonian*, 27 March; 1 April 1912; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 4, 223-224; Fred Thompson, *The IWW*, 69.

night in jail.³⁸ Indeed, William McKay's death from a lumber company gunman's shot in the back of the head was only the most notable of many acts of violence committed by the employing class against members of the Grays Harbor IWW.

The murder of McKay and the physical assaults delivered by bosses and state officials were only some of the examples of employing-class violence exacted against members of the IWW. Far more numerous were the everyday acts of violence committed at the workplace. Thus, while much has been made about various massacres, lynchings, and assassinations in the history of the IWW, the true horrors of being a working-class radical were those daily, lived experiences under the gun of capitalist production methods. For example, in early June 1917, Wobbly J. G. McLeod was found unconscious on the streets of Aberdeen, and died soon after.³⁹ Knowing full well the reputation of the Aberdeen employers, police officers, and anti-union thugs, the *Industrial Worker* provocatively asked "Whether he was murdered or came to his death as a result of an accident."⁴⁰ Although the cause of McLeod's death remained a mystery, two other Grays Harbor IWWs died from workplace accidents between mid-May and early June 1917.⁴¹ Indeed, on the Harbor, the men and women who worked in the lumber industry spent their working lives faced with the reality that the next day on the job could be their last.

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, loggers died at a much higher rate than any other job on the Pacific Coast. Lumber manufacturing was the

³⁸ Weinstein, *Grays Harbor*, 27. In *The Centralia Conspiracy* (Chicago: Industrial Workers of the World, 1920), Ralph Chaplin argued that a number of unknown IWWs were lynched in the woods of Grays Harbor by employing-class vigilantes. See Chaplin, *The Centralia Conspiracy*, 48.

³⁹ *Toveri* (Astoria, OR), 11 June 1917; *Industrial Worker*, 9 June 1917.

⁴⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 9 June 1917.

⁴¹ *Industrial Worker*, 2, 9 June 1917.

second most dangerous occupation, while shingle manufacturing likewise took its toll in human blood.⁴² These dangers were evident to logger Con Murray, who perished in a “frightful manner” after a “sudden increase of speed on cable” trapped him between a swinging log and tree trunk. Murray’s death affected his fellow workers who observed the logs “crushing the heart and intestines,” as the logger cried out “My God! I’m killed!”⁴³ Deaths such as Murray’s were not inevitable, but the product of specific technological innovations, speed-ups, high-ball logging, massive firms, foremen, and employers motivated only by higher production quotas. “As they are too fatigued by the hard and rigorous work of the woods to be alert,” argued journalist Charlotte Todes, “and as they are being speeded up at a rate which makes it impossible for them to think of personal safety, accidents will continue to mount.”⁴⁴ Most Pacific Northwest loggers spent their entire adult lives aware that they would meet their fate in the woods. Finnish-American logger Max Wilson recalled there being “49 different ways to get killed in the woods,” and during one year logging for the Aloha Corporation, he recalled, “they must have killed about five men.”⁴⁵

The lives of scores of loggers, mill hands, and shingle weavers were taken during the years 1917-1918, as production increased rapidly under increased demand for war materials. In fact, in his exhaustive study of workplace deaths in the lumber industry, historian Andrew Prouty demonstrated that more loggers and sawmill workers were

⁴² Prouty, *More Deadly*, xvii-xix, 143, 190-195; Todes, *Lumber and Labor*, 137.

⁴³ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 19 December 1904. The detailed report of Murray’s death was not unusual. Early twentieth century reporters and editors were perfectly willing to print the most gruesome details of working people’s deaths on the front page of their newspapers.

⁴⁴ Todes, *Lumber and Labor* 135.

⁴⁵ Maxwell Wilson, interviewed by Donald L. Myers, 26 November 1975, Washington State Oral/Aural History Project, 22.

killed in 1917 than in any other year during the 1910s.⁴⁶ The dangers of logging amid wartime pressures were demonstrated to the twenty-eight-year-old Finnish-American logger George Wilson whose head was crushed between two logs while on the job.⁴⁷ It was of little wonder then that lumber workers consciously framed their struggles to organize unions as an effort to make “the lumber industry safe for democracy.”⁴⁸

Workers, subjected to production-pushing foremen and the “high ball” method of logging, fell victim to swirling saws and falling logs at new and frightening levels during the 1920s. So-called industrial accident rates skyrocketed in the lumber industry during that decade. The 1920s saw at least 1,767 Washington State loggers die on the job, along with 493 saw and shingle mill workers. The total of 2,260 combined loggers, mill hands, and shingle weavers who died due to “industrial accidents” during the Twenties was sixty-three percent higher than the previous decade. Among mill workers alone, deaths nearly quadrupled from 127 during the 1910s to 493 the next decade.⁴⁹

Grays Harbor’s lumber industry reached its greatest heights during the 1920s, becoming the first port in the world to ship over a billion board feet of lumber in 1924. However, the tremendous production feats of the mid-1920s were accompanied by high numbers of lumber workers killed on the job. For example, at least twenty-one Grays Harbor workers were killed in the service of the lumber industry during 1924. That was the same year that Harbor mills hit the billion board foot mark, a feat local boosters greeted by writing that, “Grays Harbor would be the only lumber port in the world able to

⁴⁶ Prouty, *More Deadly Than War*, 186.

⁴⁷ Reinikka, “Finnish death certificates.”

⁴⁸ *Shingle Weaver*, 25 August 1917.

⁴⁹ Prouty, *More Deadly Than War*, 205.

talk in billions while others were talking millions in the lumber game.”⁵⁰ Three of those killed on the job while working at the Aberdeen-based Saginaw Timber Company in 1924 were John Pesola, an IWW logger, killed after a log rolled over him; Ole Rasanen, killed at a logging camp when a knot from a tree spar struck him; and Ernest Lehto, who died in October 1924 after his skull, face, and right thigh were fractured by a log rolling over him.⁵¹ A year later, according to historian Ed Van Syckle, more than one hundred Grays Harbor loggers lost their lives due to logging accidents.⁵² Straining under the pressure from the increased local population of disabled workers, the Finnish-American fraternal organization United Finnish Kaleva Brothers & Sisters Lodge #9 in Aberdeen was forced to increase its fundraising activities to fund “the sick benefits [which] became a heavy burden,” particularly for those who “were crippled for life.”⁵³

Employers, state officials, and members of the mainstream press frequently blamed the victims of these so-called “industrial accidents,” declaring the violent acts to be the result of stupidity, drunkenness, carelessness, or even suicide.⁵⁴ For example, local authorities declared that Steven Wash, a twenty-seven year old planerman at the Grays Harbor Commercial Company, committed suicide after he “was crushed in a planing machine.”⁵⁵ The *Aberdeen Daily World*, the county’s largest newspaper, ran a long article in January 1924, attesting to Aberdeen’s record as a safe city, specifically

⁵⁰ Hughes and Beckwith, *On the Harbor*, 72. The number of deaths in the lumber industry in 1924 was drawn from my analysis of the front pages of the *Aberdeen Daily World* for the year 1924.

⁵¹ *Industrial Worker*, 28 May 1924; Reinikka, “Finnish death certificates.”

⁵² Van Syckle, *They Tried*, 65

⁵³ *History of Aberdeen USKB&S Lodge No. 9*, 6, United Finnish Kaleva Brothers and Sisters Lodge 9 Collection, AHM.

⁵⁴ In the 20 November 1924 edition of the *Aberdeen Daily World*, Steven Wash, a twenty-seven year old planerman at the Grays Harbor Commercial Company, was killed in the most grisly of manners when he “was crushed in a planing machine,” was declared to have committed suicide by local authorities.

⁵⁵ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 20 November 1924.

noting that “Births outstrip deaths for 1923.”⁵⁶ Worse yet must have been hearing a Washington State Department of Labor and Industries official’s speech, reprinted in the *Daily Washingtonian*, arguing that, “Eighty per cent of the accidents were the result of carelessness! The majority of those 409 men killed last year are in their graves because someone was careless.”⁵⁷ This statement assigns no responsibility to employers or to capitalist relations of production for these workplace deaths. Instead, the state official implied that workers were themselves responsible for dying on the job.

Unlike their employers and the mainstream press, which labeled industrial violence as either unfortunate accidents or the result of worker negligence, Grays Harbor Wobblies persuasively argued that these deaths were the fruits of a violent capitalist system. However, historians have ignored the Wobblies’ analysis of the relationship between capitalist relations of production and so-called “industrial accidents.” In his book *More Deadly than War*, logging historian Andrew Mason Prouty argued that the Wobblies did not care about industrial accidents, and made no efforts to stop workplace violence.⁵⁸ Although Prouty is considered to be the foremost scholar of industrial accidents in the Pacific Northwest lumber industry, his conclusion reflects his ignorance of the fact that the Wobblies were from their inception among the most vigorous opponents of industrial violence. In September 1916, Wobbly Walter Harris wrote an article entitled “Murder in the Lumber Industry” for the *Industrial Worker* in which he condemned the speedup, which “kills and injures more than all else.” Harris also

⁵⁶ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 11 January 1924. This article closely resembled that which the *World* ran six years earlier under the headline, “Aberdeen Still Healthiest City.” *Aberdeen Daily World*, 12 January 1917.

⁵⁷ *Daily Washingtonian*, 12 February 1924.

⁵⁸ Prouty, *More Deadly than War*, xxiii. In fact, Prouty makes among the most ridiculous arguments ever written about the IWW when he argues, “The Wobblies had a reputation for striking over peripheral issues and missing the important grievance,” as though capitalism, imperialism, racism, and sexism were somehow “peripheral.”

expressed a distaste for those “workers trying to save the bosses from destruction,” and who did not seem to understand that when “the boss loses tools or timber, he does not lose anything that he has worked for,” while “our body is all we have; and we should protect it against accident.”⁵⁹

During the 1920s, lumber employers’ obsession with driving workers to produce more made the IWW’s attack on capitalist modes of production literally a life and death matter.⁶⁰ Like their conservative counterparts in the AFL, the Wobblies explained that the vast majority of injuries and deaths occurred after “the second half of the day, when the muscles have become fatigued, when the brain action is slower, and the response to thought more uncertain,” a seemingly reasonable justification for shorter workdays.⁶¹ But the Wobblies did not limit their demands to a shorter working day. Instead, according to the IWW, workers slaughtered in the woods and mills were “dead to feed profits” and “another victim of capitalism.”⁶² IWWs argued that while their fellow workers died on the job, their bosses were “speed-mad, profit-hungry, life careless . . . callous to the fact that the grim spectre rides the rigging.”⁶³ The speed-up system and those “slaves” who rushed to keep up with foremen’s demands were central targets of IWW condemnations.⁶⁴ “Speed crazed slaves” too engrossed in the “mad race for logs” overlooked worn down equipment at a Schafer Brothers camp in the Wynoochee Valley,

⁵⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 2 September 1916.

⁶⁰ For a sample of the Wobblies’ attacks on the role of the capitalist mode of production in precipitating industrial violence, see *Industrial Unionist* (Portland, OR), 7 October; 2 December 1925; 3 February; 24 March 1926; *Industrial Worker*, 20 May; 2 December 1925.

⁶¹ In an editorial entitled “Industrial Slaughter,” AFL President Samuel Gompers scored employers who “send lobbies to defeat the simplest legislation for the prevention of fatal accidents and reasonable compensation to victims.” See *Grays Harbor Post*, 3 August 1907. On the relationship between hours worked and so-called “industrial accidents,” see *Industrial Worker*, 22 February 1912.

⁶² *Industrial Worker*, 31 May 1924; *Industrial Worker*, 9 June 1917.

⁶³ *Industrial Unionist*, 24 March 1926.

⁶⁴ The epithet “slaves” was commonly employed during the 1920s by the Wobblies to refer to ignorant workers who held the mistaken belief that their interests were the same as their employers, and particularly those who willingly sped up on the job in order to increase production. *Industrial Worker*, 7 May 1924.

costing three workers their lives.⁶⁵ Wobblies even accused their employers of encouraging workers to consume stimulants such as a coffee labeled “The Lumbermen’s Special,” which has “a kick like a mule and is capable of so stimulating a man’s energies that he can perform extraordinary feats of strength and endurance for a few days or weeks.” According to the IWW, the automaker Henry Ford was “said to be conducting experiments with ‘Lumbermen’s Special’ as a motor fuel . . . but unless modified, it is not likely to come into general use as it is too severe on machinery, frequently blowing out the cylinder heads.” “Although unsuitable for automobiles, this coffee is admirably adapted for use in lumber camps,” continued the Wobbly, because “as it costs nothing to replace a lumberjack, it makes no difference what effect it has on his internal machinery.”⁶⁶ The key to combating what the Wobblies called the “man-killing pace” of capitalist production during the 1920s was organization.⁶⁷ Only through organization, noted one IWW, could the workers assume a “position to defy the employers and compel installation of more safe and sane methods of logging and lumber manufacture.”⁶⁸

The Wobblies used their press to draw connections between capitalism and violence, but a second public outlet for the Wobblies to condemn capitalist violence came at funerals for their deceased fellow workers. Hosting large, often elaborate funerals ranked high on the list of priorities for trade unions, socialist organizations, and the IWW. As scholars of working-class funerals have argued, these communal celebrations also “expressed the deceased’s place in the local community,” and enabled the local working class, or some segment of it, to take center stage in planning and carrying out the

⁶⁵ *Industrial Unionist*, 24 March 1926.

⁶⁶ *Industrial Unionist*, 3 February 1926.

⁶⁷ *Industrial Unionist*, 2 December 1925.

⁶⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 20 May 1925.

commemoration of their colleague's life and death.⁶⁹ For example, Aberdeen Sailors' Union of the Pacific agent William Gohl planned and paid for thirty-nine funerals for deceased union sailors between 1905 and 1909.⁷⁰ So great were the demands for union members' funeral expenses, that in August 1907, the Grays Harbor Trades and Labor Council passed a resolution allowing its secretary to purchase flowers for deceased members' funerals without approval from its members.⁷¹

IWW funerals served as community-building activities, ones that provided members of the working class with the opportunity to gather with other members of their class, commemorate the life of the deceased, and articulate the relationship between class and the workers' death. One such funeral fell on 8 June 1917, when four hundred IWWs joined one hundred friends and relatives at the funeral of Wobbly logger Mike Ladiach who was killed on the job. Described as "one of the largest [funerals] held in Aberdeen recently," the ceremonies included a parade by the Wobblies, complete with a sixteen-piece band at the head of the march.⁷² The front-page headline of the *Industrial Worker* that labeled Ladiach "Another Victim of Capitalism" was surely speaking for many of the local workers who could not have helped but notice that Ladiach was but one of three Wobblies killed in Grays Harbor between mid-May and early June 1917.⁷³ In addition, Fellow Worker Holmes, an IWW logger, who fell victim to "the speedup system" in

⁶⁹ Thomas Laqueur, "Bodies, Death, and Pauper Funerals," *Representations* 1 (February 1983): 112.

⁷⁰ According to my survey of Grays Harbor newspapers, no less than seventeen sailors found their watery graves between July 1905 and August 1909. *Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), 9 February 1910; *Aberdeen Daily Bulletin*, 5 July; 22 August 1905; *Aberdeen World*, 25 August 1908; 4, 14 February 1909; *Grays Harbor Post*, 8 June; 7, 24, 31 August; 21 December 1907. *Grays Harbor Post*, 15 May 1909. At the 12 May 1909 Aberdeen city council meeting Gohl declared that thirty-nine sailors had drowned at the docks and wharves of Aberdeen and Hoquiam during the previous five years. Eighteen of these men had drowned in the Wishkah River.

⁷¹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 10 August 1907.

⁷² *Industrial Worker*, 2, 9 June 1917.

⁷³ *Industrial Worker*, 2, 9 June 1917.

March 1918, was celebrated by a twelve-piece Finnish Wobbly band that marched to the cemetery alongside three hundred Wobblies sporting their red carnations. Graveside addresses were given in Finnish, Swedish, and English, before ending with renditions of “The Red Flag” and “Joe Hill.”⁷⁴ When a more somber tone was necessary, Wobbly pianists, singers, or orators replaced the raucous sounds of the brass band. After the Finnish-American Wobbly John Pesola was killed on the job, his fellow Finnish Wobbly “Fellow Worker Suoja” celebrated the life and struggles with a graveside oration on behalf of this “active member of the IWW.”⁷⁵

A grand illustration of IWW principles on capitalist violence and community support for the movement came on 8 May 1923, as more than one thousand men, women, and children marched across Aberdeen in a funeral parade paying tribute to William McKay.⁷⁶ McKay’s funeral was extraordinary for both its size and the explicitly political messages of its participants. The *Seattle Union Record* described the affair as the “most imposing funeral ever held in Grays Harbor.”⁷⁷ The parade ran through the streets of downtown Aberdeen bearing a massive sign that read, “Fellow Worker McKay: Murdered At Bay City Mill By A Co Gunman May 3rd, 1923, A Victim of Capitalist Greed We Never Forget?”⁷⁸

At the head of the funeral march were two young Finnish-American sisters, Taskia and Ellen Jarvinen, who dressed in identical white outfits and posed for photographs in front of McKay’s grave. The girls’ conspicuous presence in the day’s

⁷⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 16 March 1918.

⁷⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 31 May 1924.

⁷⁶ *Industrial Solidarity*, 12, 19 May 1923; *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 4 May 1923; Goings, “Aberdeen Lost A Fellow Worker in 1923.”

⁷⁷ *Seattle Union Record*, 7 May 1923.

⁷⁸ Hughes and Beckwith, ed., *On the Harbor*, 42; Goings, “Aberdeen Lost A Fellow Worker”; *Industrial Worker*, 16 May 1923.

affairs were pointed reminders of the scores of children, including McKay's own, who were left without parents as the result of industrial violence. McKay himself had recognized the potentially deadly nature of class struggle. At his funeral one speaker remembered the fallen Wobbly's words: "I would rather die fighting the masters than be killed slaving for them."⁷⁹

As McKay's words indicated, his activism within the IWW put him on the front lines of the class war, exposing him to both the dangers of "fighting the masters" and "slaving for them." In fact, as this chapter has demonstrated the Wobblies were victimized by numerous forms of employing-class violence. But the lynchers and gunmen who took the lives of IWW martyrs were not the only perpetrators of anti-Wobbly violence. Instead, Wobblies, like all workers, were victimized by a capitalist system of production that killed them on the job through what were conveniently labeled "industrial accidents." Still, rather than accept their place as the victims of capitalist violence, Wobblies chose to resist their oppressive and exploitative conditions by organizing and fighting back. Indeed, Grays Harbor Wobblies celebrated their fellow workers' use of violence against their bosses, used violent tactics both to defend themselves from physical attacks and to harass their class enemies, wrote and spoke about the connections between capitalism and workplace violence, and used every means at their disposal to challenge, and hopefully end, the violent system of American capitalism.

The Grays Harbor Wobblies' most public condemnation of capitalist violence came at the funeral for William McKay on 8 May 1923. But the Grays Harbor Wobblies

⁷⁹ A photograph of these two girls beside this sign has appeared in several different publications, including Sulkanen, *Amerikan Suomalaisen Työväenliikkeen Historia*, 205; Hughes and Beckwith, ed., *On the Harbor*, 42; Goings, "Aberdeen Lost A Fellow Worker." See also *Industrial Worker*, 16 May 1923.

were not buried alongside the Wobbly logger at Aberdeen's Fern Hill Cemetery. The tragic loss of McKay came at one of the climaxes of industrial power for the IWW during the first quarter of the twentieth century. Never again would an IWW general strike call be heeded by so many. Still, the IWW movement, nurtured during two decades of industrial and community conflict, was to flourish during the next decade in the cultural sphere, the point of production, and throughout the community. Indeed, as the next two chapters will demonstrate, the Grays Harbor Wobblies enjoyed a great deal of community support throughout the 1920s. It was this community support that enabled the IWW to maintain such a visible presence and large base of support on Grays Harbor in the decade following McKay's death.

CHAPTER XII

HALL SYNDICALISM:

FINNISH-AMERICAN WOBBLIES IN GRAYS HARBOR

On the weekend of 31 October to 2 November 1924, hundreds of working people crammed into a massive new wooden hall constructed during the previous five months with funds raised by the Finnish Workers' Association (FWA) of Aberdeen. The hall's price tag was approximately \$25,000. The finished product included an auditorium, theater stage, balcony, library, business offices, restaurant, and apartments.¹ The weekend's activities bespoke the local character of the IWW movement culture as it existed on the Harbor during the 1920s and early 1930s. Finnish workers were treated to a play, a banquet, a dance, poetry recitals, and political speeches, all of which were reported by *Tie Vapauteen* (Road to Freedom), the monthly Finnish-language magazine of the IWW. Finnish Wobbly Antti Maki voiced the jubilation experienced by him and his fellow workers at the creation of this magnificent new structure in a poem entitled "Puolesta Joukon Miljoonaisen" (On Behalf of A Group of A Million Strong):

Thus, as one we must procure information,
And begin this work of light.
Who has gotten lost will be guided
By showing light into the night.
The power of tyrants will be stricken down
The work will be raised into honor.
We demand freedom for slaves
Even if we must purchase it with blood...
--Wonder if the chest filled with glee endure
When the moment of freedom arrives --:
When the cold chains of the slave are broken
And our victory journey has begun...

Thus, welcome, children of oppression,

¹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 March, 5 April 1924; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 27 March; 24 October 1924.

Beginners of a new era.
Young, and the gray-haired,
Carriers of a heavy load:
Welcome, a thousand times welcome,
Are you to celebrate here.²

For the next decade, while strikes, demonstrations, and parades occurred throughout the Harbor, the Finnish IWW hall functioned as one of the main incubators of radicalism during this conflict-ridden period of working-class history.

Some IWW scholars have marginalized the ethnic or racial cultures that collectively constituted the American Wobbly movement.³ But the Wobblies in the US were not simply American syndicalists, but African-American, Italian-American, and in the case of Grays Harbor, Finnish-American syndicalists. Among these groups of ethnic radicals, indigenous cultural traditions were often every bit as significant as their revolutionary union culture.⁴ This was particularly true of the Finns, whose halls, music, and press at once distinguished them from their fellow workers and gave them a firm foundation in their communities upon which the movement as a whole could build. This chapter will trace the history of Finnish-American Wobblies on the Harbor during the years 1917-1924, aiming its lens specifically at their material culture, the leading role they played in local labor struggles, and the high level of participation of women in the movement.

There exists a vast literature on the Finnish-American left. The majority of these studies pertained to parliamentary socialist groups affiliated with the Socialist and Communist parties, while historian Michael Karni's analyses of socialist Finns clearly set

² Antti Maki, "Puolesta Joukon Miljoonaisen," *Tie Vapauteen* (November 1925): 7-8, trans. Jenni Salmi.

³ Some outstanding exceptions to this rule do exist. Among them are Cole, *Wobblies on the Waterfront*; Topp, *Those Without A Country*; Salerno, "No God, No Master"; Campbell, "The Cult of Spontaneity."

⁴ This point has been made most effectively by historian Salvatore Salerno. See Salerno, *Red November, Black November*.

him apart as one of the leaders of American immigration and labor history.⁵

Unfortunately, with the sole exception of a few scattered institutional studies, precious few scholars have explored the rich connections between Finnish-American culture and working-class activism within the IWW, into what I have termed “hall syndicalism.”⁶

Where studies of Finnish-American syndicalists have been undertaken, they have been laced with a muted hostility towards the IWW, one reflected in the misunderstanding and minimization of the relevance of the IWW in American history, and the deliberate evasion of using the term “syndicalist” to describe the IWW.⁷ Wobblies have been depicted as “the unenfranchised” who turned to syndicalism out of “desperation.” But literally thousands of Finnish Americans joined the IWW. Wobbly Finns published their own newspapers, built their own halls, and were at the fore of major strikes from the Mesabi iron range to the forests of the Pacific Northwest.⁸

Historians’ omissions and mischaracterizations have been only partly ideological; they too have been geographic in nature. Rare indeed are studies of the Finnish-American working class in the Pacific Northwest, where Finnish syndicalism thrived in Seattle, Raymond, Hoquiam, and Aberdeen.⁹ One major work, *Finnish American Radicals in Astoria, Oregon*, deals with the IWW as a mere side feature, one less significant than the ostensibly more serious ideologies of parliamentary and authoritarian

⁵ Among Michael Karni’s many fine studies are Karni and Douglas J. Ollila, Jr., *For the Common Good: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America* (Superior, WI: Tyomies Society, 1977); Karni, Matti E. Kaups, and Douglas J. Ollila, *The Finnish Experience in the Western Great Lakes Region: New Perspectives* (Turku: Institute for Migration Studies, 1975).

⁶ Aaron Goings, “Hall Syndicalism: Radical Finns and Wobbly Culture in Grays Harbor, Washington,” *Journal of Finnish Studies* 14:1 (Summer 2010): 18-28.

⁷ Richard Hudelson and Carl Ross, *By the Ore Docks: A Working People’s History of Duluth* (St. Paul: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 61-66.

⁸ Karni, “The Founding of the Finnish Socialist Federation,” 67.

⁹ Reino Nikolai Hannula, *Blueberry God: The Education of a Finnish-American* (San Luis Obispo, CA: Quality Hill Books, 1979), 203; *Amerikan S.S. Jarjeston Lansipiirin ensimmaisen piirikokouksen Poytakrja, Pidety Astoriassa, OR, huhtik, 21-23, 1911*, 4, 20-25, 34-35, FAA.

socialism.¹⁰ More recently, Finnish-American scholars have honed more directly on working-class cultural traditions, including James P. Leary's studies of Finnish folk music and Gary Kaunonen's examinations of working-class material culture in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.¹¹ Unfortunately, like their predecessors, recent studies have rarely strayed outside the Midwestern heartland of Finnish Americana; few have broken the wall of silence surrounding studies of Finnish-American syndicalism in the Pacific Northwest, a region rich with IWW history.

Finnish radicals were prolific writers and publishers, and indeed a large body of literature about Finnish-American socialist, syndicalist, and Communist newspapers has been written by historians.¹² While the number of Finnish-American IWW newspapers never reached the tremendous output of their socialist counterparts, these news organs, particularly the *Sosialisti*, *Industrialisti*, and *Tie Vapauteen*, were all popular organs read by thousands of IWWs and their supporters.¹³ Most important of these was the *Industrialisti*, which began publication in March 1917. The *Industrialisti* served as an official Wobbly newspaper between 1917 and 1919 and retained a close affiliation with the IWW until it ceased publication during the 1970s. Later Finnish-language IWW

¹⁰ Paul George Hummasti, *Finnish Radicals in Astoria, Oregon: A Study in Immigrant Socialism, 1904-1940* (New York: Arno Press, 1979). A second exception is Peter T. Alter's article "The Creation of A Multi-Ethnic Peoplehood: The Wilkeson, Washington Experience," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 15:3 (Spring 1996): 3-21.

¹¹ James P. Leary, "Yksi Suuri Union: Field Recordings of Finnish American IWW Songs," *Journal of Finnish Studies* 14:1 (Summer 2010): 6-17; Gary Kaunonen, *Challenge Accepted: A Finnish Immigrant Response to Industrial America in Michigan's Copper Country* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2010); See also J. Peter Campbell, "The Cult of Finnish Spontaneity: Finnish-Canadian Bushworkers and the Industrial Workers of the World in Northern Ontario, 1919-1934," *Labour/Le Travail* 41 (Spring 1998): 117-146.

¹² Paul George Hummasti, "'The Working Man's Daily Bread': Finnish-American Working Class Newspapers, 1900-1921," in *For the Common Good: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America*, ed. Michael G. Karni and Douglas J. Ollila, Jr. (Superior, WI: The Tyomies Society, 1977): 167-197.

¹³ On the circulation of Finnish-American Communist periodicals, see Auvo Kostainen, *The Forging of Finnish-American Communism, 1917-1924: A Study in Ethnic Radicalism* (Turku: Turin Yliopisto 1978), 144.

publications, including *Tie Vapauteen*, *Luokkataistelu* (Class Struggle), and *Ahjo* (The Forge) also found eager audiences.¹⁴

The *Industrialisti* was a daily publication printed in Duluth beginning in March 1917. The newspaper included news, opinions, advertisements, editorial cartoons, jokes, sections written by local correspondents across North America, and a youth page. As befitting any IWW organ, the *Industrialisti* included a wide range of voices. Articles and editorials were penned by members of the full-time staff, but far more representative of the movement as a whole were the correspondents' reports that came to the paper from across North America. Columns featuring Aberdeen, Hoquiam, and Grayland news were published semi-weekly between the 1910s and 1930s in the "Laaneltta" (From the West) section.¹⁵ Reports ranged from relatively mundane information concerning donations to defense funds to a detailed report of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's May 1917 speeches in Aberdeen and Hoquiam.¹⁶ Scores of Aberdeen and Hoquiam Finnish-American businesses advertised in the *Industrialisti*, which carried a weekly "Grays Harborin Ilmuituksia" (Grays Harbor Advertisements) section.¹⁷ The section contained anywhere from a dozen to more than thirty business notices.¹⁸ Although most of the businesses that advertised were owned by Finns, large Harbor companies such as the department store J. C. Penney and Aberdeen Motors supported revolutionary industrial unionism through

¹⁴ Hummasti, 183-184; Archibald E. Stevenson, *Revolutionary Radicalism: Its History, Purpose and Tactics, with an Exposition and Discussion of the Steps Being Taken to and Required to Curb It, being the Report of the Joint Legislative Committee Investigating Seditious Activities, Filed April 24, 1920, in the Senate of the State of New York* (New York: J. B. Lyon, 1920), 865-866, 2006; Kostianen, *The Forging of*, 91.

¹⁵ *Industrialisti*, 15 May; 3 July 1917; 7, 28 January 1920; 29 January 1921; 14, 20, 24 January 1931;

¹⁶ *Industrialisti*, 15 May 1917; 17, 19 January; 3 February 1920.

¹⁷ The number of "Greetings" issued to Grays Harbor workers by the *Industrialisti* remained steady from its first Christmas Greetings issue in 1917 to 1935. See, for instance, *Industrialisti* 14 December 1935.

¹⁸ *Industrialisti*, 3 July 1917; 3 February 1920; 20 January 1931; 3 December 1935.

their advertising dollars as well.¹⁹ These advertisers were partly responsible for the ability of the Finnish-language section of the IWW to run the *Industrialisti* as a daily for much of its history, something the *Industrial Worker*, which refused capitalist advertisements, was unable to accomplish.²⁰ The *Industrialisti* also printed a “Young People’s Section,” a part-English, part-Finnish page that included news articles, literary reviews, and a regular supply of witty treatises on scabs. Junior Wobblies, including Grays Harbor youngsters, read and wrote to the *Industrialisti*, thereby remaining in contact with IWW locals across North America and contributing their own unique perspective to this new organ.²¹ The *Industrialisti* was a major success on the Harbor among the numerous radical Finnish workers. In July 1917, a mere four months after the founding of the *Industrialisti*, Harbor Wobblies had “broken all records for a single amount raised by any part of the IWW for the support of the press,” in their feverish rush to support the new Finnish-language IWW organ.²²

Finns comprised the largest part of Grays Harbor IWW membership from 1912 to 1935; their funds and fundraising activities sustained the movement as it withstood the repeated blows of state and capital repression. Beginning in 1917 when the *Industrialisti* published annual Christmas greetings lists, it is possible to observe with some precision the makeup of the Grays Harbor Finnish syndicalist movement. In its first year the organ listed the names of 162 men, women, and children in Aberdeen, another 138 in Hoquiam,

¹⁹ *Industrialisti*, 20 January 1931.

²⁰ Kostianen, “A Dissenting Voice.” The *Industrial Worker* was published as a daily briefly during September 1923.

²¹ The “Young People’s Section” was a daily feature of the *Industrialisti*. Attacks on scabs were made in *Industrialisti*, 5 April; 21 May; 8 June; 14 December 1935. Violet Nurmi, of Aberdeen, Washington, was contacted in the 29 January 1931 edition of this section.

²² The *Industrialisti* began publication in March 1917. See Hummasti, 183; *Industrialisti*, 7 July 1917.

and nine more in the beach community of Grayland.²³ Evidence of the movement's continuity is seen by the fact that by December 1921, 513 Harbor residents received greetings from the *Industrialisti*.²⁴ The movement was maintained throughout the 1920s and all the way up until 1935 when more than six hundred greetings were issued and at which point, the industrial unions that would later form the Congress of Industrial Organizations were gaining popularity in this IWW stronghold.²⁵

Finnish-American workers also injected their money into the movement. Indeed, defense, publicity, and newspaper contributions all thrived among Finnish Wobblies. Political prisoner relief and defense funds reveal a healthy level of fund-raising activity from individual Grays Harbor Wobblies such as Kalle Riipinen and Jack Maki, whose fundraising enabled them to donate more than a hundred dollars at one time.²⁶ Indeed, fellow workers from Aberdeen occasionally led the nation in subscription receipts to the *Industrialisti*.²⁷ Financial support was particularly strong among Wobbly auxiliaries like the Finnish Workers' Association, Aberdeen Support Club, Finnish Women's Circle, and the *Industrialisti* Supporting Circle of Hoquiam, all of which donated dozens -- and sometimes hundreds -- of dollars to the IWW in a single swipe.²⁸ For example, on 6 July

²³ *Industrialisti*, 19 December 1917.

²⁴ *Industrialisti*, 14 December 1921.

²⁵ *Industrialisti*, 15 December 1927; 15 December 1928; 14 December 1935. On the rise of the CIO in the Grays Harbor lumber industry, see Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*; Hughes and Beckwith, *On the Harbor*, 80-85.

²⁶ *Industrialisti*, 17 January 1920; *General Office Bulletin*, December 1922-January 1923, 31, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 31, Folder 8, WSU.

²⁷ *Industrialisti*, 16 February 1920.

²⁸ "Financial Statement of the General Defense Committee for the Month of December 1923," *General Office Bulletin for the Month of January 1923*, 23, Box 31, Folder 8, WSU; "Financial Statement of the General Defense Committee for the Month of December, 1924," *General Office Bulletin*, 25, Box 31, Folder 31, WSU; "Financial Statement of the General Defense Committee for the Month of December, 1923," 19, Box 31, Folder 19, WSU. Notably, Fred Hendricks, a resident of Aberdeen, donated \$225 to the General Defense Committee on 18 December 1923. See "Financial Statement of the General Defense Committee for the Month of December, 1923," 19, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 31,

1924 the Finnish Support Club hosted a picnic near Hoquiam. The event generated nearly \$200 dollars for the IWW's defense work and "\$100 in prizes was given away for the athletic events."²⁹

Finnish Wobblies' most important and longest lasting contribution to syndicalist culture was the Finn hall. Before building their own hall in 1924, Wobbly Finns joined socialists and other IWWs in holding social functions at one of the other Grays Harbor halls, usually those of the "Red" Finns or the smaller structures owned by the IWW.³⁰ When in May 1909, Hoquiam socialists hosted Big Bill Haywood, a leading figure in the American socialist and syndicalist movements, it was the Finnish Socialist Federation (FSF) brass band that greeted his arrival along the streets and in the theater, playing two consecutive performances of the "Marseillaise," as well as other numbers.³¹ By 1917 the locus of Finnish radicalism had shifted from the FSF to the IWW, and the Wobbly Finns had their own brass band, one that played at picnics, funeral parades, fundraisers, and strike meetings. The *Industrial Worker* recorded an appearance by the Wobbly Finn band during an appearance by the "Rebel Girl," writing: "Elizabeth Gurley Flynn spoke in Aberdeen and Hoquiam for the benefit of the Everett Prisoners and cleared some \$60.00. The Finnish band donated the music and brought a large crowd from the streets."³² Finnish-American Wobblies exerted a significant -- and sometimes dominant -- presence at Grays Harbor IWW functions held between 1911 and 1923 at the various Wobbly halls rented out for Wob use.

Folder 19, WSU; Receipts, Publicity, Defense, and Jail Relief Records, 6, 14, 22, 46, 52, 58, 118, 134, 136, 186, 198, 200, 201, 206, 220, 242, 250, 264, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 134, WSU.

²⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 16 July 1924.

³⁰ Auvo Kostainen, "For or Against Americanization? The Case of the Finnish Immigrant Radicals," in *American Labor and Immigration History: 1877-1920s: Recent European Research*, Dirk Hoerder, ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 261-263.

³¹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 29 May 1909.

³² *Industrial Worker*, 12 May 1917.

The Finns' great role in local IWW culture was testified to by testimony of friend and foe. At one meeting in December 1917, an anonymous Wobbly writer captured the Finnish character of the movement:

Altho most of the program was in Finnish, there was a large attendance of English speaking workers at an entertainment given on December 23, by Domestic Workers' Industrial Union No. 122, at Aberdeen, Wash. The hall was jammed and the revolutionary spirit was indeed inspiring. . . . In Hoquiam, the Domestic Workers held a Grand Auction on the same date and some sofa pillows were sold for as high as \$9. No one kicked at prices as the proceeds of the auction amounting to \$175 were divided between the Finnish paper "Industrialisti" and the General Defense Fund.³³

Thus, Finnish-American Wobblies crafted their own, in some ways distinct, brand of Wobbly culture, one that blended the anarcho-syndicalism of the IWW with the "hall socialism" of the "Red" Finns.³⁴ The Finnish IWW hall, dubbed the Uusi Halli (New Finn Hall), built in late 1924 after a struggle with the Aberdeen city council over its construction, provided salvation for the Grays Harbor Wobblies. The New Finn hall gave rebel workers a large meeting hall, library, theater, gymnasium, and offices to conduct Wobbly business. Finnish-American worker-intellectual Reino Nikolai Hannula remembered, "Show business was the first item on the agenda in the Finn hall. The class struggle, basketball, and other matters had to wait in the wings of all Finn halls -- the IWW hall, the socialist hall, and the communist hall -- until the drama society was done."³⁵ Indeed, along with housing IWW speakers and strike rallies, the Finnish Wobbly hall was known for its theatrical performances. Grays Harbor's Finnish Wobblies were intensely devoted to their dramatic pursuits, trekking across town to

³³ *Industrial Worker*, 19 January 1918.

³⁴ The 1920 Census for Grays Harbor County listed more than 2,200 Finnish Americans. United States Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census for the Year 1920*, Washington State, Grays Harbor County.

³⁵ Hannula, *Blueberry God*, 191.

practice six days per week, often on top of their already overworked wage and domestic labor schedules.³⁶

The Finnish IWW halls were only one part of the impressive array of Finnish-American syndicalist culture contributions. Wobbly music and the *Little Red Song Book* have gained international fame. For Finnish-American syndicalists, no less committed to cultural production than other IWWs, the creation and performance of IWW songs gave them an outlet to condemn their exploitation and oppression they saw all around them. The IWW affiliate, Socialist Publishing Company in Duluth, published Finnish-language songbooks such as the *Proletaari Lauluja* (Songs of the Proletariat) in 1918, *Raatajain Lauluja* (Songs of the Toiler) in 1920, and *Palkkaorjain Lauluja* (Songs of the Wage Slave) in 1925.³⁷ Sixteen- and twenty-piece Finnish Wobbly bands played at the rebel workers' celebrations, mass meetings, and funeral marches. IWW Mike Ladiach's funeral in 1917 featured a sixteen-piece Finnish Wobbly band that led the funeral parade of "at least 500" who marched to the cemetery to commemorate Ladiach, "who had done his part in the world as a workman and as a member of society."³⁸ When Fellow Worker Holmes died, "a victim of the speed up system," Grays Harbor's Finnish Wobbly band led the funeral parade of three hundred Wobblies with "each one wearing a red carnation" to the deceased man's resting place.³⁹ At the graveside of their fallen fellow workers, Wobs expressed a more somber tone through the use of funeral orations and piano solos. However, even these solemn occasions proved useful excuses for sing-a-longs, such as

³⁶ *Industrialisti*, 17 January 1931; Charette, "The Finns in Aberdeen Before 1915." Further analysis of the importance of the IWW's Finn hall in Aberdeen can be found in Goings, "Hall Syndicalism," 18-28.

³⁷ *Raatajain Lauluja* (Duluth: Workers Socialist Publishing Company, 1923); Industrial Workers of the World, *IWW Songs to Fan the Flames of Discontent*, Facsimile Reprint of the Popular Nineteenth Edition, 1923 (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1989), 25, 36-37. See also Leary, "Yksi Suuri Union."

³⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 9 June 1917.

³⁹ *Lumberjack Bulletin*, 16 March 1918.

the one held at the grave of Holmes, where “the ceremonies concluded with the singing of ‘The Red Flag’ and ‘Joe Hill.’”⁴⁰ Indeed, Wobbly songwriters using Finnish were just as prolific as their English-language counterparts, even if North American labor historiography has mostly ignored the Finns’ contributions.⁴¹

Among Finnish Americans, Matti Valentine Huhta, more commonly known as T-Bone Slim, went unrivaled in the amount and quality of his creative output. An itinerant laborer and IWW activist, Huhta’s great intellectual achievements earned him the title the “poet laureate” of the IWW.⁴² Perhaps more familiar to Finnish Americans were Hiski Salomaa, a Finnish immigrant tailor, singer, and composer, and Arthur Kylander, a western logger, itinerant, and Wobbly based in Portland, Oregon, during the 1920s.⁴³ Kylander’s songs, including his famous “Lumber Jakki” (Lumberjack), certainly made their way onto the Harbor, a hotbed of Finnish-American IWWs and lumberjacks during the 1920s.⁴⁴ Written in 1914 by Kaarle Krusberg, “The Loggers’ Song” was deeply telling of the shared work experiences of loggers, ones struggled against by Wobblies like Krusberg. One verse told of woodsmen’s rough conditions working under the yoke of capitalism:

⁴⁰ *Lumberjack Bulletin*, 16 March 1918.

⁴¹ One notable exception to this rule can be found in the book written about Matt Valentine Huhta, also known as T-Bone Slim, T-Bone Slim and Franklin Rosemont, *Juice is Stranger Than Friction: Selected Writings of T-Bone Slim* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1992).

⁴² Slim and Franklin, *Juice is Stranger Than Friction*.

⁴³ Helvi Impola and Miriam Leino Eldridge, “The Life and Songs of Arthur Kylander,” *New World Finn* 2 (October – December 2001): 14; Juha Niemala, “Hiska Salomaa (1891-1957),” in *The American Midwest: An Interpretive Encyclopedia*, ed. Richard Sission, Christian K. Zacher, and Andrew Robert Lee Cayton (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2007), 396; Victor Green, *A Singing Ambivalence: American Immigrants Between the Old World and the New, 1830-1930* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2004), 56.

⁴⁴ James P. Leary, *Polkabilly: How the Goose Island Ramblers Redefined American Folk Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 217; W. K. McNeil and James P. Leary, “Folk Song,” in *The American Midwest: An Interpretive Encyclopedia*, ed. Richard Sission, Christian K. Zacher, and Andrew Robert Lee Cayton (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2007), 392; Victor R. Greene, *A Passion for Polka: Old-Time Ethnic Music in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 108-110.

We the logger knights
And defeaters of the huge pines
We are working all the time
As the worms
We know that from our works
They will gather the billions
Of which we can't rejoy
That would be the first step
Who could count all that
Who had taken away
Our billions⁴⁵

Less well-known than Huhta, Salomaa, and Krusberg were the dozens of Finnish Wobbly musicians who comprised Grays Harbor's Finnish IWW band, orchestra, and choir. The English-language *Industrial Worker* acknowledged the significance of these Finnish-language entertainers, and advertised "talent both in Finnish and American" languages for a "grand entertainment" fundraiser in August 1923.⁴⁶ One of the best-known musicians among this group was August Niemi, a first-generation Finnish-American and IWW musician. He was a member of the Finnish IWW chorus and "expressed his musical nature" by playing the mandolin and violin.⁴⁷

During the early 1920s, as IWWs were being repressed in both Grays Harbor and around the nation, the Finnish IWW branches in Aberdeen, Hoquiam, and nearby Raymond remained in a thriving condition. Evidence of the Finnish syndicalists' strength could be seen at one Humptulips logging camp, where a group of ten Finnish Wobblies were employed during late 1921. While no evidence of these specific men's activities is available, an advertisement purchased for the 1921 Christmas issue of the *Industrialisti* hinted at their previous year's accomplishments:

⁴⁵ Juha Niemela, "Finnish American songs describing the immigrant life of the Finns during 1900-1940" (Unpublished manuscript, University of Turku, Institute of Migration, 2008).

⁴⁶ *Industrial Worker*, 1 August 1923.

⁴⁷ *Industrialisti*, 14 December 1921; Smits, Fisher, and Kari, "The Finns in Hoquiam."

Defiance to Those Who Whip Us,
Freedom for the Soldiers of the Working Class!!

Our war cry

Peace, fortune and happiness are dreams, which can only be achieved by “class warriors” when the world is won for the workers. Therefore the memories of 1921 will give us buoyancy to advance our cause in 1922.⁴⁸

Additionally, Wobbly strike bulletins, flyers, and pamphlets distributed in Grays Harbor were regularly printed in both English and Finnish, while Finnish-language addresses regularly accompanied their English counterparts during IWW meetings.⁴⁹ When Grays Harbor logging foreman Ed Brinn threatened to replace striking lumberjacks “with Finlanders” in December 1917, a Wobbly writer responded sarcastically: “Good night, Brinn. Don’t you know that the Finns have a daily IWW paper and Finnish workers who don’t pack red cards are as scarce as hens’ teeth?”⁵⁰

One indication of the level of Finnish-American involvement in the Grays Harbor IWW was the number of Finns who faced employer and state repression for their activities. Axel Hendrickson, a Finnish-American IWW organizer, was arrested by Aberdeen police in 1917 because of “his IWW activities” and the “activities among the people of his own nationality in that town,” according to a memorandum written for Hendrickson’s deportation case in 1919.⁵¹ Between 1919 and 1922 at least sixteen Finnish-American Wobblies were arrested and charged with violating criminal

⁴⁸ *Industrialisti*, 16, 19 June; 28 August 1917. Cited in *Industrialisti*, 14 December 1921, trans. Roy Vataja. According to Auvo Kostiainen, while membership and influence of the IWW declined nationally during the 1920s, membership in the Finnish-American IWW was rising. See Kostiainen, *The Forging of*, 137.

⁴⁹ *Daily Washingtonian*, 10 July 1917; *Grays Harbor Post*, 15 November 1919.

⁵⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 15 December 1917.

⁵¹ United States Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *IWW Deportation Cases*, 27-30 April 1920 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1920), 32.

syndicalism statute in Grays Harbor County alone.⁵² Finnish Fellow Worker Vaino Aho, who was arrested and jailed in Grays Harbor before his removal to Portland's Willamette Sanitarium, received more than one hundred dollars from Aberdeen IWWs in late 1922 as part of the annual Finnish Christmas drive for class war prisoners.⁵³ During one of a series of August 1921 Aberdeen police raids made against the IWW, the Finnish Cooperative Store was raided, its bundles of *Industrial Workers* were confiscated by the police, and Finnish-American Aron Happanen was arrested for his involvement with the union.⁵⁴ A year later, during the 1922 Aberdeen free speech fight, which was declared to pose a direct challenge to the use of the Washington State criminal syndicalism law in Grays Harbor County, at least five of the twenty-two IWW men and women held in the county jail were Finns.⁵⁵

Practically all female Wobblies on Grays Harbor were Finns. Indeed, beginning in 1912 and stretching into the 1920s, Finnish-American women were at the front of IWW picket lines and protests, and joined their male fellow workers on the inside of Grays Harbor jail cells.⁵⁶ Especially prominent among female Finnish Wobblies were a number of Aberdeen and Hoquiam domestic workers who founded Local 122 of the IWW

⁵² Brief of Appellants, State of Washington vs. Matt M. Passila et al., Appeal from the Superior Court of Pacific County, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Accession No. 544, Box 2, UW; Chehalis/Grays Harbor County Jail Record – Civil/Criminal, 1913-1922, Acc. No. 86-1-19, Box 245D, SWA.

⁵³ Chehalis/Grays Harbor County Jail Record – Civil/Criminal, 1913-1922, Acc. No. 86-1-19, Box 245D, SWA. Even more troubling was the treatment afforded Matt Rico Finnish-American Wobbly, and one of those free speech fighters arrested in May 1922. After being acquitted of his criminal syndicalism charge in October 1922, Rico, along with Greek American IWW Gust Tsoostes, were immediately re-arrested by federal authorities with the intent to deport the radical immigrants. *Industrial Worker*, 21, 28 October 1922; Chehalis/Grays Harbor County Jail Record – Civil/Criminal, 1913-1922, Acc. No. 86-1-19, Box 245D, SWA.

⁵⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 21 August 1921.

⁵⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 10 June 1922.

⁵⁶ For women's activism in the 1912 IWW lumber strike, see Chapter 7.

Domestic Workers' Industrial Union (DWIU) in June 1917.⁵⁷ The union was composed entirely of women. Much as today, domestic work was among the lowest paying jobs for women laborers.⁵⁸ According to Finnish-American historian Ida Kari Smits, "Finnish cleaning women were in constant demand. They worked hard for low wages and were strong and dependable."⁵⁹ Finnish-American Wobbly singer Hiski Salomaa told of the frenzied work pace and abusive employers faced by domestic servants in her tune "Tiskarin Polkka" ("Servant Girl's Polka,") which describes:

Those hags are yelling, eating and drinking
Here I am only washing the dishes
The coffee is nearly boiling over
'Cause I can't fly after everything.⁶⁰

Although Salomaa's song does not hint at any acts of sabotage perpetrated by Wobbly domestic or food workers upon an employer's kitchen, tools, or food, "Haywire Mac" McClintock's song "The Hymn of Hate," affronts members of the ruling class with a haunting revelation that "when you dine in your gay café the waiter spits in your soup."⁶¹ The lure of retribution against her boss must have been particularly attractive for Wobbly domestic worker Lempi Ellila, who was employed "in the home of Judge W. H. Abel," a labor-baiting attorney known for opposing the IWW in court.⁶²

⁵⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 23 June 1917. The Aberdeen domestic workers' union was not the first IWW union comprised of Finnish-Americans maids. A Finnish Domestic Workers Union was formed in Duluth, Minnesota during 1909. See Karvonen, 200; Hudelson and Ross, *By the Ore Docks*, 83.

⁵⁸ On the wages of domestic workers in the US, see Leslie Woodcock Tentler, *Wage-Earning Women: Industrial Work and Family Life in the United States, 1900-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 140-141. 170-171.

⁵⁹ Smits, "The Finns in Hoquiam."

⁶⁰ Niemala, "Hiska Salomaa," 396.

⁶¹ Kornbluh, *Rebel Voices*, 29-30

⁶² Smits, "The Finns in Hoquiam"; Financial Records, 1917-1919, Aberdeen, Wash, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 36, Folder 1, WSU. W. H. Abel was so opposed to the IWW that he refused to serve as Wobbly Frederick Meischke's attorney in 1917, stating that "there was not sufficient money to hire him to defend such a case." *Aberdeen Daily World*, 12 July 1917. On Abel, see also Chapter 13.

Members of Local 122 were not only Harbor women, but also the Finnish-American maids who comprise such a major part of that ethnic group's historiography. Domestic work was the primary occupation for young Finnish-American women.⁶³ Statistics of Grays Harbor Finnish women largely conform to national patterns. In 1910, of the 187 domestic servants living in Aberdeen, thirty-three were Finnish Americans.⁶⁴ With their great presence within the local IWW as a whole paired with the large numbers working as maids, Finnish Americans dominated the union. Forty-four of fifty-seven of those who paid dues between June 1917 and February 1919 had Finnish surnames. Of those Local 122 members I located on census records, all but one was born in Finland or born to one or more Finnish immigrant parents.⁶⁵

The mostly Finnish DWIU worked at local eateries such as the Wobblies' "No Graft restaurant," which offered "appetizing meals" served by "active Woblettes." In keeping with a prescribed gender code that not even the IWWs completely challenged, it was these "girls" of DWIU 122 who arranged for, prepared, and served the food at certain IWW gatherings.⁶⁶ In spite of their relegation to service roles at Wobbly

⁶³ Carl Ross, "The Feminist Dilemma in the Finnish Immigrant Community," in *Women Who Dared: The History of Finnish-American Women*, ed. Carl Ross and K. Marianne Wargelin Brown (St. Paul, MN: Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, 1986), 73; K. Marianne Wargelin Brown, "Three 'Founding Mothers' of Finnish America," in *Women Who Dared: The History of Finnish-American Women*, ed. Carl Ross and K. Marianne Wargelin Brown (St. Paul, MN: Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, 1986), 136-141; Marsha Pentti, "Piikajutus: Stories Finnish Maids Told," in *Women Who Dared: The History of Finnish-American Women*, ed. Carl Ross and K. Marianne Wargelin Brown (St. Paul, MN: Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, 1986), 55-72. Local studies also emphasize the importance of domestic work for Grays Harbor's Finnish-American women. See, for instance, Smits, "The Finns in Hoquiam"; Charette, "The Finns in Aberdeen before 1915."

⁶⁴ United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Washington State, Chehalis County, Aberdeen.

⁶⁵ United States Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920*, Washington State, Grays Harbor County.

⁶⁶ *Industrial Worker*, 20 October 1917. For a thorough analysis on the gender politics of the IWW, see Kristin Schachtel, "Kitty Malloys and Rebel Girls: Representations of the Woman Worker in Vancouver's Early 20th Century Mainstream and Radical Labour Newspapers" (MA Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2010).

meetings, these “girls” were not peripheral to the movement. In fact, the *Industrialisti* ran long, detailed articles praising the work by DWIU delegates Irma Hendrickson, Anna Strong, and Hanna Ross, while the local also held activities to raise funds for the movement.⁶⁷ The union held regular business meetings and it was clear that these maids served as a radical beacon for much of Finnish-American syndicalist population. Writing to the *Industrialisti*, one member, using the cryptic pen name, “___ ___?” implored upon fellow IWW women across the West to write to the Aberdeen branch asking advice about setting up their own Wobbly local.⁶⁸

Official records detail a sharp decline in DWIU 122’s fortunes, coinciding with the postwar repression of all American radical groups. The local declined from thirty-three members in good standing in July 1917 to thirty by the start of 1918, and only twenty members in June 1918. In February 1919 only four workers remained affiliated. After July of that year the local halted its record-keeping.⁶⁹

Finnish IWW women were also influential members of the Foodstuffs Workers’ Industrial Union (FWIU) 460, a mixed-gender local formed in Aberdeen in 1923. Despite the presence of both sexes in the union, Finnish-American waitress, widow, and former criminal syndicalism prisoner Jennie Sipo served as the union’s organizer and

⁶⁷ *Industrialisti*, 3, 28 August 1917. The importance of rank-and-file leadership was evident in comparisons between the IWW’s DWU 122 and an earlier Grays Harbor waitresses’ union, organized by AFL organizer and former shingle weaver Fred Stilson. According to Stilson’s son Harold, the AFL union failed because the women “didn’t understand unions.” Judging by the DWU example, when women ran their own affairs and self-organized in a fighting union, their need for solidarity was not beyond their comprehension. See *Western Red Cedar*, 66.

⁶⁸ *Industrialisti*, 3 August 1917.

⁶⁹ Financial Records, 1917-1919, Aberdeen, Wash, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 36, Folder 1, WSU.

headed the list of the union's charter members.⁷⁰ Sipo's prominence in the IWW was most visible during the IWW's 1922 free speech fight. During the conflict, Sipo and Finnish Wobbly Hilma Ray were jailed alongside more than twenty of their male fellow workers on criminal syndicalism charges.⁷¹ Significantly, Sipo was charged with "having in her possession the minute book of the meeting" of the IWW, an indication that Sipo had earned a measure of responsibility within the union, while three others were "accused of carrying red cards."⁷² Hilma Ray, along with IWW Andrew Haymiskey, received an early release from jail, but Sipo refused such treatment, earning her the honorary title as a "real rebel girl" from the free speech fighters' jail committee.⁷³ Sipo married Robert Benson, an Aberdeen longshoreman, in November 1924, and her name does not appear in the *Industrial Worker* following her marriage.⁷⁴ However, Jennie's and her son's names continued to appear in the *Industrialisti* "Greetings" section as late as 1935, signifying a continued support for, if not activism in, the union.⁷⁵

Female radicals gained more than just a union card by joining the IWW. In fact, women from a wide range of backgrounds joined and contributed their diverse talents to the movement. Middle-class women such as social worker Hilma Ray and Aberdeen

⁷⁰ Charter, Aberdeen Branch of Industrial Union 460, Industrial Workers of the World Papers, 26 October 1923, Box 17, Folder 4, WSU; United States Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920*, Washington State, Chehalis County, Aberdeen.

⁷¹ Chehalis/Grays Harbor County Jail Record – Civil/Criminal, 1913-1922, Acc. No. 86-1-19, Box 245D, SWA. Two other IWWs, loggers William Newman and Henry McCoy, joined their fellow workers in jail on criminal syndicalism charges in August 1922. See also *Grays Harbor Post*, 4 November 1922; *Industrial Worker*, 21, 28 October 1922.

⁷² *Industrial Worker*, 10 June 1922.

⁷³ *Industrial Worker*, 24 June 1922.

⁷⁴ Robert Benson and Jennie Sipo, Certificate of Marriage, State of Washington, County of Clark, 3 November 1924, Marriage Records, GHG; United States Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1930*, Washington State, Chehalis County, Aberdeen. After her marriage to Benson, Sipo's last name appeared as "Benson" in the United States Census.

⁷⁵ *Industrialisti*, 14 December 1935.

deputy city treasurer Ester Olson joined domestic servants as members of the IWW.⁷⁶ Additionally, a number of working-class widows, including Sipo, carried red cards. In fact, the 1935 list of *Industrialisti* “Greetings” contained the names of no fewer than thirteen IWW widows.⁷⁷ One such working-class woman was Amanda Niemenen who became the hall caretaker of the United Finnish Kaleva Brothers and Sisters, a Finnish fraternal lodge, after her husband Frank, an Aberdeen longshoreman, hanged himself after a “prolonged debauch” in 1928.⁷⁸ Finnish-American IWW women also formed sewing clubs, which they used to craft goods to be sold to earn money for Wobbly defense and literature fundraisers.⁷⁹ According to the *Industrialisti*, Aberdeen’s IWW Finnish sewing club hosted entertainments and sold hand-made goods in late-1919 in support of class war prisoners.⁸⁰ The *Industrial Worker* recorded how these crafts were put to good use in July 1923 when “real rebel girl” Jennie Sipo donated a pillow that was auctioned off \$39.86 to help with the defense of the Centralia prisoners.⁸¹

Finnish-American Wobblies such as Sipo were only one part, albeit the largest and most important part, of the Grays Harbor IWW movement in the late 1910s and early

⁷⁶ In 1935 Hilma Ray worked as a “visitor” at the Washington Emergency Relief Association. *Polk’s Cities of Grays Harbor Directory*, 1935; Charter, Aberdeen Branch of Industrial Union 460, Industrial Workers of the World Papers, 26 October 1923, Box 17, Folder, 4, WSU.

⁷⁷ This figure does not count Jennie Sipo, who was listed in the 1935 *Industrialisti* and was a widow, but who, by the mid-1930s, had remarried.

⁷⁸ Merle A. Reinikka, “Death Certificates of Finns in Chehalis [Grays Harbor] County, 1907-1947,” Aberdeen History Collection, AHM.

⁷⁹ “Financial Statement of the General Defense Committee for the Month of December 1923,” *General Office Bulletin for the Month of January 1923*, 23, Box 31, Folder 8, WSU; “Financial Statement of the General Defense Committee for the Month of December, 1924,” *General Office Bulletin*, 25, Box 31, Folder 31, WSU; “Financial Statement of the General Defense Committee for the Month of December, 1923,” 19, Box 31, Folder 19, WSU. Notably, Fred Hendricks, a resident of Aberdeen, donated \$225 to the General Defense Committee on 18 December 1923. See “Financial Statement of the General Defense Committee for the Month of December, 1923,” 19, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 31, Folder 19, WSU; Receipts, Publicity, Defense, and Jail Relief Records, 6, 14, 22, 46, 52, 58, 118, 134, 136, 186, 198, 200, 201, 206, 220, 242, 250, 264, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 134, WSU.

⁸⁰ *Industrialisti*, 10 November 1919.

⁸¹ *Industrial Worker*, 21 July 1923.

1920s. The Finnish IWW hall, as well as the “Red” Finn hall owned by socialists and later Communists, proved to be the most common and stable sites for social functions for the Wobbly movement. In addition, Finnish Wobbly songs and music were both prevalent at IWW social functions on the Harbor from the 1910s to the 1930s. Conceivably of greater importance, the daily reports on Grays Harbor IWW activities printed in the *Industrialisti* provide the most detailed picture of the movement’s history available.⁸² Finally, many of the most-dedicated and longest-serving IWWs on the Harbor were Finnish Americans, the men and women who made the unique form of IWW “hall syndicalism” as it was experienced in Grays Harbor. However, while the Harbor’s Wobblies frequently spoke in Finnish or with Finnish accents, the Grays Harbor IWW was not merely an ethnic institution, but a radical movement that persevered throughout the “lean” years of the 1920s and into the early part of the Great Depression. How the region’s Wobblies were able to accomplish this feat while their movement was widely believed to be in a period of rapid decline is the subject of the next chapter.

⁸² Since I am unable to read Finnish, my observation that *Industrialisti* articles “provide the most detailed picture of the movement’s history available” is based upon my examination of the *Industrialisti* alongside historians Gary Kaunonen and Roy Vataja who read and translated some of the articles for me. These articles frequently included details about Finnish Wobblies’ hall activities, strikes, trials, and fundraising.

CHAPTER XIII

WOBBLIES IN THE 1920S:

COMPOSITION, CULTURE, COMMUNITY, AND COMPETITION

On 11 December 1929, a large group of Finnish-American radicals met in Aberdeen, Washington, to hold a benefit concert and dance on behalf of their fellow workers imprisoned around the nation. There, members of the IWW gathered to sing labor songs, dance, and listen to radical speeches. Before concluding, the rebel men and women collected \$105.65 for the defense of class war prisoners. As with most local IWW activities during the 1920s and 1930s this event occurred at the Uusi Halli (New Finn Hall) deep in the heart of Aberdeen's Finn Town.¹

The December 1929 meeting was but one example of the rich cultural activity that pervaded the IWW's history in Grays Harbor during the 1920s. It is thus an appropriate starting point for this chapter, which will trace the history of the IWW's movement culture during the 1920s. In the pages that follow I focus specifically on the Wobbly movement's composition and cultural activities, its community-centeredness, and the group's early interaction with and competition against members of the IWW's breakaway organization known as the Emergency Program (EP) and local Communists.

The IWW was not teetering on the edge of oblivion during the early 1920s, as has been argued by some historians.² It was particularly vibrant in the Pacific Northwest, where the May 1923 general strike was followed up by several smaller strikes throughout the year. In 1924 the Lumber Workers' Industrial Union (LWIU) was the largest affiliate

¹ *Industrial Worker*, 21 November 1929.

² This is the view of historians Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 464-466; Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 153-155; Conlin, *Bread and Roses*, 140-146 and "Industrial Unionist," 128-130.

of the IWW.³ During the mid-1920s, the IWW in Aberdeen, a town of approximately twenty thousand residents, the *Industrial Worker* ordered weekly bundles of 350 copies, the EP's *Industrial Unionist* and *New Unionist* were likewise carried in the region, while the Finnish-language Wobbly organs *Industrialisti* and *Tie Vapauteen* registered more than ten thousand and six thousand national subscribers respectively.⁴ These official figures can hardly account for the full readership of the periodicals, as dog-eared, second-hand copies were doubtlessly shared among workers who used the libraries housed at the radicals' halls.

Thus, the Wobblies were not dead by the mid-1920s. This supports the conclusions of historians Richard Rajala, Greg Hall, Paul Buhle, Peter Cole, and others who have argued that the Wobblies did not fall into an irreversible decline after 1919.⁵ However, even the most attuned of these scholars have failed to push the demise of the IWW beyond 1924, where, in historian Nigel Sellars' words, "internal weaknesses and a

³ Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 466; *Twenty-Five Years of Industrial Unionism* (Chicago: Industrial Workers of the World, 1930); *Industrial Worker*, 8, 12, 13, 15, 22 September 1923. During the September 1923 IWW strikes in the Pacific Northwest, the *Industrial Worker* was briefly published as a daily news organ.

⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 12 January 1924; Kostianen, "Finnish-American Workmen's Associations," in *Old Friends - Strong Ties: The Finnish Contribution to the Growth of the USA*, ed. Vilho Niitemaa, et al. (Turku: Institute of Migration 1976), 205-234. The *New Unionist*, the second and final of the IWW's Emergency Program newspapers, was likewise circulated and read among Grays Harbor radicals during its publication between 1929 and 1931. On *Tie Vapauteen*, see *Minutes of the Convention of the Industrial Workers of the World, Held at Phoenix Hall, Chicago, ILL., May 9-27, 1921* (Chicago: Workers Industrial Union No. 450, IWW, 1921), 22, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 1, UW. *Tie Vapauteen* editor T. Kekkonen wrote in October 1923 that the circulation of that magazine had recently "passed the six thousand mark," and with "only a small increase in its circulation would make seven thousand run too small." At that same point, the editor of the *Industrialisti* reported having about eight thousand daily subscribers. See *Minutes of the Fifteenth General Convention of the Industrial Workers of the World, Held at Emmett Memorial Hall, Chicago, ILL., November 12-December 3, 1923* (Chicago: Workers' Industrial Union No. 450, IWW, 1923), 20, 41, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 1, UW; Kostianen "A Dissenting Voice of Finnish Radicals in America," 83-90.

⁵ Rajala, "A Dandy Bunch of Wobblies"; Hall, *Harvest Wobblies*; Buhle and Schulman, ed., *The Wobblies*; Cole, *Wobblies on the Waterfront*. See also, James G. Newbill, "Yakima and the Wobblies, 1910-1936," in *At the Point of Production: The Local History of the IWW*, ed. Joseph Robert Conlin (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 167-190; Ronald McMahan, "'Rang-U-Tang': The IWW and the 1927 Colorado Coal Strike," in *At the Point of Production: The Local History of the IWW*, ed. Joseph Robert Conlin (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 191-212; McClurg, "The Colorado Coal Strike."

changing world brought it down.”⁶ Plagued by blacklists, the shift to “gyppo” logging in the woods, and internal schisms, the Wobblies lost significant ground during the mid-1920s both nationally and in the Pacific Northwest. But they were far from a lost cause or the “enfeebled organization” depicted in Melvyn Dubofsky’s *We Shall Be All*.⁷ In the cities of Grays Harbor, where the Wobblies had deep roots in the community, the state and employer repression detailed in earlier chapters loosened the bond of local workers to the Wobblies. But these bonds were not broken, particularly among the Finnish rebels, who built their IWW hall in 1924 and continued to organize throughout the 1920s and 1930s.⁸

One significant element of the IWW was its dramatic inclusiveness as the movement drew heavily from several ethnic, occupational, and age groups. The IWW of the 1920s was a diverse group, comprised of first- and second-generation immigrants, native-born radicals, and workers steeped in the indigenous radical traditions built on the Harbor during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The movement, too, resembled more a compilation of families than a group of white, male, blue-collar workers. Women took on several prominent positions within local IWW branches. Children and young adults joined and led radical youth groups and activities in the region. Understanding who joined the IWW, how they forged their movement, and why it gained such a wide audience during the 1920s and 1930s are the central objectives of this chapter.

In order to get at the composition of the IWW on the Harbor during the 1920s and 1930s I compiled lists of Wobblies and those who supported the IWW strongly enough to

⁶ Sellars, 163.

⁷ Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 455.

⁸ *Industrialisti*, 14 December 1935.

be listed in their publications. The sources for these lists include court and jail dockets, newspaper accounts, union membership lists, petitions, newspaper subscription and fundraiser contribution lists, and the lists of “Greetings” published annually by the IWW’s *Industrialisti*.⁹ In the years between 1921 and 1935 I was able to locate the names of more than 1,300 men, women, and children affiliated with the Grays Harbor IWW. Cross-checking these lists with census data, city directory lists, and mortuary records, I identified one or more of the following characteristics for 599, or roughly one-half of the radicals: sex, address, class, occupation, and marital status. Nearly three decades ago, historian William Preston argued, “What kinds of men and women joined the Wobblies is, of course, extremely significant to the overall judgment eventually made about radicalism.”¹⁰ Largely unheeded by subsequent historians, Preston’s hopes of understanding who “joined the Wobblies” has been followed, albeit in modest form, below.

The IWW movement on the Harbor during the 1920s and 1930s was at least half-Finnish, one-quarter female, and included a healthy number of activist youths, rebels of the future. But the most notable feature of the IWW movement is that during the decade covered in this chapter a marked spatial shift occurred, as practically all of the IWWs included in my sample lived and worked in the cities, labored in non-migratory occupations, and lived with their spouses and children. Wobblies maintained a strong presence on the docks, fishing boats, and lumber mills of Aberdeen and Hoquiam. Much as they had for more than two decades, scores of radicals labored in Aberdeen lumber mills during the Twenties and Thirties. Iver Johnson, a Norwegian-born drop man at the

⁹ Kostianinen, *The Forging of*, 144-145.

¹⁰ William Preston, “Shall This Be All? U.S. Historians Versus William D. Haywood, et al.,” *Labor History* 12:3 (Summer 1971): 441.

American mill in Aberdeen, served as chairman of the LWIU 120 General Organizing Committee during the late 1920s and early 1930s, and published the *Bulletin*, a one-page newsletter for the LWIU in 1933.¹¹ Wobblies also worked along shore in the 1920s and 1930s. Fifty-six of the men identified in my sample listed their occupation as longshoremen. One of these men was Otto Maki, a Finnish-American member of the Aberdeen branch of the IWW's Marine Transport Workers' Industrial Union (MTWIU), who kept his job on the docks until the mid-1930s until he left to become a cranberry grower in the beach community of Grayland.¹² Still other IWWs held skilled positions at various companies around the Harbor. For example, Hugo Niemi, who moved to Grays Harbor in 1910, was a painter in Aberdeen with Filander and Niemi contractors, while August Niemi worked as a lineman for the Grays Harbor Railway and Light Company, and following its creation in 1938, with the Grays Harbor County Public Utilities Department before his 1950 retirement.¹³ Others earned their wages in white collar trades, including social work and municipal administration.¹⁴ Finally, twenty-six

¹¹ United States Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1930*, Washington State, Chehalis County, Aberdeen; *Bulletin No. 1: Lumber Workers' Industrial Union No. 120 of the IWW* (Aberdeen, WA), 1933, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 46, Folder 9, WSU; *Industrial Worker*, 5 December 1933. Although there is only one copy of the *Bulletin* known to exist, Johnson did ask that "Donations and articles, for the support of this bulletin, should be sent to Iver Johnson, Chairman of the G.O.C., 110 North F. Street, Aberdeen, Wash.," thereby implying that more issues were to follow.

¹² *Industrial Worker*, 23 November 1929; Elerding Mortuary, Inc. Death Record for Otto Maki, No. 7196, Year No. 1950-1951, Elerding Mortuary Company Records, Grays Harbor Genealogical Society, Aberdeen, Washington (Hereafter GHG); Industrial Workers of the World, Financial Statement for the Month of January 1930, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 28, Folder 15, WSU.

¹³ Elerding Mortuary, INC., death record for Hugo Niemi, number 10711, year number 1961, Elderding Mortuary Collection, GHG; *Polk's Cities Directory for Grays Harbor County*, 1935; Elerding Mortuary, INC., death record for August Niemi, number 12626, year number 1966, Records of the Elderding Mortuary Company, GHG. On the creation of the Grays Harbor Public Utilities Department in 1938, see Hughes and Beckwith, ed. *On the Harbor*, 153.

¹⁴ In 1935 Hilma Ray worked as a "visitor" at the Washington Emergency Relief Association. *Polk's Cities of Grays Harbor Directory*, 1935; Charter, Aberdeen Branch of Industrial Union 460, Industrial Workers of the World Papers, 26 October 1923, Box 17, Folder, 4, WSU.

Wobblies -- almost entirely Finnish Americans -- labored as fishermen during this decade.¹⁵

The number of migrant workers in the Pacific Northwest IWW fell off rapidly during the 1920s due to a combination of employers' blacklists, the "gyppo" (piece work) system, mechanization of logging, and frustrations over the schisms within the IWW.¹⁶ Thus, only three of the 130 employed male IWWs whose names were listed in the 1935 *Industrialisti* and whose occupation I could discern, were loggers, and of that figure two were married, had children, a permanent address, or some combination of the three.¹⁷

Still, the migratory radical did not disappear completely from Grays Harbor during the 1920s. In 1929, C. E. "Stumpy" Payne, one of the founders of the IWW, sometimes editor of IWW periodicals, and long-time migratory worker and agitator returned to Aberdeen, the site of his participation in the 1911-1912 free speech fight.¹⁸ Born in 1869 in Minnesota, Payne worked as a farm hand, railroad worker, and stump rancher, whence he derived his moniker "Stumpy," all before the age of twenty. Thereafter, though Payne's work as a writer and propagandist dignified him as one of foremost IWW autodidactic intellectuals, he remained, in the words of IWW General Secretary-Treasurer Carl Keller, "primarily, a manual worker. . . . He was a carpenter. It was from work at this trade that he earned his living during the greater part of his

¹⁵ J. Murphy to Jack Stachel, 9 May 1933, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 3873. The Fishermen's Industrial Union was given the number 130 as a result of the October 1920 re-numbering of all IUs by the GEB. See *One Big Union Monthly*, October 1920. The most common jobs for Grays Harbor Wobblies between 1921 and 1935 went as follows: Laborers in lumber mills, 102; longshoremen: 56; loggers: 31; fishermen: 26.

¹⁶ Hall, *Harvest Wobblies*, 222-229; Rajala, "A Dandy Bunch of Wobblies," 231-232; and "Bill and the Boss," 171.

¹⁷ *Industrialisti*, 14 December 1935; *Polk's Cities Directory for Grays Harbor*, 1935; United States Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1930*, Washington State, Chehalis County.

¹⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 23 November; 28 December 1929; 19, 26 April 1930.

lifetime.”¹⁹ “Stumpy” followed a common route into the IWW through the Socialist Party before attending that fateful conference in Chicago during June 1905 with no credentials, affiliated with no organization, and in his own words, knowing “nothing about unions.”²⁰ While far less is known of “Stumpy” than other notable IWWs like Haywood, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, and Joe Hill, “Stumpy” nonetheless wrote more articles, edited more Wobbly newspapers, and remained within the One Big Union far longer than most of his famous fellow workers.²¹ At age eighty-five, Payne served a six-month term as editor of the *Industrial Worker*. That year he claimed the honor of being the sole member of the IWW to have attended both its first convention in 1905 and its fiftieth convention a half-century later.²² Payne also spent two years in the Washington State penitentiary under a criminal syndicalism conviction, and wrote on subjects ranging from IWW free speech fights to the need for what he called an “industrial government.”²³ During the early Depression years, however, “Stumpy” served mostly as a local commentator in Grays Harbor. “The interest in the IWW is rapidly increasing around the Grays Harbor country again,” commented Payne in a letter to the *Industrial Worker* in 1929.²⁴

Guy B. Askew, Wobbly logger, hobo, and prolific letter writer, worked and organized for the IWW during the 1920s and 1930s. Born in 1896, in New Salem,

¹⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 23 October 1963.

²⁰ The best single source on the thought of Payne comes in his pamphlet C. E. Payne, *Industrial Government* (Vancouver, WA: 1945).

²¹ Renshaw, *The Wobblies*, 204-206.

²² Kornbluh, *Rebel Voices*, 102. Payne’s obituaries appeared in the *Columbian* (Vancouver, WA) 2 October 1963 and the *Industrial Worker*, 23 October 1963.

²³ *Industrial Worker*, 19 September 1922; In the Supreme Court of the State of Washington, *State of Washington v. C. E. Payne*, Appeal from the Superior Court of Pend Oreille County, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Accession No. 544, Box 2, UW. Payne’s case was appealed to the Washington State Supreme Court, which subsequently denied his appeal.

²⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 9, 30 November 1929.

Illinois, Askew remained in his hometown until the 1920s.²⁵ He first joined the IWW during 1917 and in 1922 he penned a poem entitled “When the Crimson Flag is Flying,” dedicated to Wobbly “songbird” Katie Phar.²⁶ A Wobbly for twenty-five years, Askew worked as an itinerant laborer across the US for more than four decades before landing in a Seattle Skid Road hotel in the early 1960s where he spent the remainder of his days. During his years on the road, Askew worked in the harvest fields of the Yakima Valley, a Staten Island hospital, and the forests of Grays Harbor. The travelling Wobbly showed up on the Harbor sporadically during the 1920s and 1930s, witnessing concerts at the Aberdeen IWW hall; opposing the activities of the 4Ls, which he considered to be a “finkified, scabby form of organization”; writing to the *Industrial Worker* and *Industrialisti*; and leading an unorganized logging strike on the Harbor in 1933.²⁷

Askew and “Stumpy” Payne shared much in common. Both men were longtime IWWs, energetic fighters for the release of class war prisoners, and anti-communists; in fact, Askew labeled communists “Commie gible[s]” and Payne knew them to be a “gang of cut throats.”²⁸ Payne and Askew captured the best traditions of libertarian socialist praxis. This was illustrated in their anti-communism and their struggles to retain the decentralized, rank-and-file character of the IWW. Even as editor of the *Industrial*

²⁵ United States Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920*, Illinois, City of Rock Island; Richard Ellington, “Fellow Worker Guy Askew,” in *Songs About Work: Essays In Occupational Culture, For Richard A. Reuss* ed. Archie Green (Bloomington, IN: Folklore Institute, Indiana University Bloomington, 1993), 307.

²⁶ Paul Buhle and Nicole Schulman, eds. *Wobblies! A Graphic History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (London: Verso Press, 2005), 238; *Industrial Worker*, 22 March 1922. Askew’s poem is also mentioned in Franklin Rosemont, ed. *Joe Hill: The IWW and the Making of a Revolutionary Workingclass Counterculture* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2003), 421. Samples of Askew’s writings also appear in Kornbluh, *Rebel Voices*, 439; Rosemont, *Juice is Stranger than Friction*, 14.

²⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 9 November 1929; Ellington, “Fellow Worker Guy Askew,” 307. Askew’s migrations took him from Grays Harbor to nearby Centralia, Washington, where he penned an unusual letter to the “Young Peoples Section” of the *Industrialisti* on 22 January 1931 in which he declared that “I am known as Happy Jack; the timber beast. I am 34 years old, single and have never been married, and so having no family cares, I have lots of time for correspondence.”

²⁸ Cited in Renshaw, *The Wobblies*, 204. Ellington, “Fellow Worker Guy Askew,” 308.

Worker, Payne used his platform to publish articles written by the International Workingmen's Association, and advocated the desirability, even necessity, of the IWW rank-and-file themselves dictating the policies of the union. He wrote, "But can the longshoreman of San Pedro write of what the carpenter of Albuquerque has to contend with? I'll say he cannot! Neither can an editor in an office chair write of what the workers have to contend with on the job. That is something the workers themselves must report. There is no one else who can do it."²⁹

But itinerant male Wobblies like Payne and Askew were less significant to the Grays Harbor IWW than they had been a decade earlier. In fact, many of the Harbor's IWWs were women, children, and men with families. One notable feature of the "late" IWW was the number of wage earning and unpaid female laborers who joined the movement. Of the 275 adult women identified in my sample, 129 worked in the home, providing the domestic laborers necessary to sustain their wage-earning husbands.³⁰

The most prominent female Wobblies on the Harbor were the rebel maids, women who labored in the food and domestic service industries during the mid-1920s. During the Aberdeen Free Speech Fight of 1922, two women were arrested under the Washington State criminal syndicalism statute, both of the women worked in the domestic sphere: one paid, one unpaid.³¹ Additionally, three waitresses at the Donovan-Corkery logging camp joined a loggers' strike in September 1923 after hearing the strikers sing "I'm too old to be a scab." According to one of the striking loggers, the

²⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 12 January 1924; 4 March 1925. Payne's use of material written by the International Workingmen's Association came under fierce fire from the communist elements within the IWW.

³⁰ The number of paid and unpaid women Wobblies does not equal the total. This is due to the fact that my count of the total number of adult women IWWs included those for whom no occupational data could be gathered from the US Census or city directories.

³¹ *Industrial Worker*, 5 May 1923.

women's involvement in the strike was contagious. He wrote, "When the men saw that the girls would not go out, they also refused."³² The next year, Aberdeen domestic and food service workers formed a local of the IWW's Foodstuffs Workers Industrial Union (FWIU) 460, a mixed-gender local comprised of both rebel maids and former lumber workers who took jobs in the food industry.³³ Of the twenty Aberdeen IWWs who founded a branch of the Foodstuffs Workers Industrial Union (FWIU) 460 in October 1923, at least fourteen were women.³⁴ In addition, it was Jennie Sipo, a Finnish-American domestic worker, who occupied the main leadership positions within Aberdeen's FWIU local, much as women ran the political, cultural, and social activities of the Aberdeen Domestic Workers' Industrial Union 122 between 1917 and 1919.³⁵

Young rebel workers also contributed to the lively cultural traditions of the IWW. They wrote letters to the *Industrialisti*, spoke and performed at meetings, and stood alongside their parents and fellow workers during demonstrations.³⁶ IWW "children" and "girls" took part in all types of radical activity, ranging from funeral parades to picnics, political speeches to strike demonstrations.³⁷ IWW logger Guy Askew described the participants in these festive celebrations of the "cutest bunch of girl and boy Junior IWWs you could ever want to meet or hear its songs." He observed a group of children during a gathering at the IWW's "large hall" in Seattle during 1928 and wrote, "These wonderful little Junior Wobblies sang 5 or 6 songs at each show and they was given free

³² *Industrial Worker*, 19 September 1923.

³³ See also Chapter 12.

³⁴ Charter, Aberdeen Branch of Industrial Union 460, Industrial Workers of the World Papers, 26 October 1923, Box 17, Folder, 4, WSU.

³⁵ On the leadership role of Finnish-American women within the Aberdeen IWW, see Chapter 12.

³⁶ The Junior Wobblies Union also published the *Young Recruit* from Chicago during the 1930s. See *Industrial Worker*, 5 December 1933.

³⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 11, 18, 25 April 1912; 30 June; 10 November 1923; 12 January; 30 August; 13 December 1924.

lunches and candy bars for their wonderful cooperation.”³⁸ The stock that the Wobs placed in the revolutionary possibilities of the next generation was evinced on the Junior Wobblies’ red cards, which carried the inscription: “The youth of our age have an important mission to fulfill if social progress is to continue. The youth of the working class must recognize that only as organized members of their class can they hope to achieve success.”³⁹

The presence of many women and children in the Grays Harbor IWW contradicts the view of the Wobblies as a band of migratory male hoboes without families or homes, the “bindlestiff” and “timberbeast” of Wobbly lore.⁴⁰ In fact, during the 1920s and 1930s the Grays Harbor IWW was a family-based movement, and Wobblies’ families, like their communities, provided support for the movement. One measure of the number of families involved in the Harbor IWW movement comes from the *Industrialisti* Christmas and May Day “greetings” lists. These lists recorded IWW members and supporters as parts of family units such as Elvi, Reino, Hellen, and Jack Jaskari of Aberdeen.⁴¹ In the 1920, 1921, 1926, 1927, 1928, and 1935 Christmas lists, as well as the 1935 May Day list, a majority of Finnish IWWs and Wobbly supporters had their names printed alongside members of their families.⁴² Thus while many historians, as well as prominent IWWs, believed that the “weather-tanned husky of the Northwestern woods” was the prototypical Wobbly, and thus loggers were the group best-suited for involvement in this

³⁸ Ellington, “Fellow Worker Guy Askew,” 312. See also Charette, “Finns in Aberdeen before 1915.”

³⁹ Junior Wobblies Card belonging to Mary E. Gallagher, dated 28 September 1931, Labor – International Organizations – IWW – Junior Wobblies, Vertical Files, Labadie Collection, Special Collections, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

⁴⁰ Chaplin, *The Centralia Conspiracy*, 11; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 128-130.

⁴¹ *Industrialisti*, 16 April 1935.

⁴² *Industrialisti*, 15 December 1920; 14 December 1921; 15 December 1926; 15 December 1927; 15 December 1928; 14 December; 16 April 1935.

revolutionary organization, in Grays Harbor the IWW consisted primarily of working-class families.⁴³

The kin-based nature of the IWW was visible in the case of Helen and August Niemi, a dynamic wife and husband pair at the heart of the Finnish left on the Harbor. The Niemis began their IWW activism during the mid-1910s, when they appeared as active contributors to the *Sosialisti*, the first Wobbly-affiliated newspaper to be written and published by Finns.⁴⁴ Like so many Finnish-American women, Helen worked as a domestic servant during her early years in Grays Harbor, and was one of the founding members of the Domestic Workers' Industrial Union (DWIU) 122 in 1917.⁴⁵ August, a utilities worker, was a prominent member of the local Finnish IWW choir, and in 1920 was recognized as one of the nation's top *Industrialisti* fundraisers.⁴⁶ During the subsequent decade, Helen registered high numbers of donations to the IWW General Defense Committee and recorded the highest number of *Industrialisti* subscriptions in the nation.⁴⁷ In addition to the Niemis, the names of scores of Grays Harbor wife-husband pairs -- with the wife's name usually appearing first -- appeared in the annual *Industrialisti* "Greetings" lists each December.⁴⁸

Joining the Niemis in maintaining the urban Wobbly movement on the Harbor were Bert Banker and W. I. "Windy" Fisher, native-born industrial workers. Banker served as an IWW newsboy, fundraiser, and delegate during 1929-1930 before moving to

⁴³ Chaplin, *The Centralia Conspiracy*, 11-15.

⁴⁴ *Sosialisti*, 28 November; 21 December 1916; "News and Views," *International Socialist Review* 15:4 (October 1914): 252; Hudelson and Ross, *By the Ore Docks*, 65. The most thorough treatment of the history of the *Sosialisti* comes in Auvo Kostianen's article "A Dissenting Voice," 83-90.

⁴⁵ Aberdeen Women's Union Records, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 36, File 1, WSU.

⁴⁶ Ina Kari Smits, Sylvia Niemi Fisher, and Paul Kari, "The Finns in Hoquiam Written for the Polson Museum, Hoquiam, Washington, 1984," ATL; Kostianen, "A Dissenting Voice," 89-90; *Industrialisti*, 5 January 1920.

⁴⁷ *Industrialisti*, 2, 8 March; 21 December 1935.

⁴⁸ For example, see *Industrialisti*, 15 December 1920; 14 December 1921; 14 December 1935.

Portland where he worked as a driver.⁴⁹ Fisher, one of the founders of the Grays Harbor IWW, had returned to the Harbor during the Great War, where he logged and loaded ships while organizing for the IWW's LWIU and MTWIU throughout the 1920s.⁵⁰ Fisher remained active in the IWW well into the Great Depression, working with the IWW's Unemployed Union on the West Coast during the 1930s.⁵¹ Finnish-American fellow workers like Charles Sitta, Otto Maki, and August Kunto likewise represented the Grays Harbor "Home Guard," a term traditionally used to mock those workers who some Wobblies viewed as a man "burdened with the responsibility of family life [who] takes his job more seriously, works more steadily, and is less apt to exhibit those admirable -- but to the bosses undesirable -- qualities of independence and rebellion than the unencumbered migratory worker."⁵² In Aberdeen and Hoquiam, however, the "Home Guard" represented the key links between the IWW and their larger community, links that enabled these workers to build and maintain a syndicalist movement on the Harbor.

As my analysis of the Grays Harbor IWW's membership indicated, during the decade following 1923, a dramatic spatial shift occurred as the Grays Harbor IWW moved from the logging camps and beaches to the docks, sawmills, and Finn halls of the

⁴⁹ Petition to the Honorable Roland H. Hartley, Governor, State of Washington, and the Honorable C. B. Clausen, the Honorable B. F. Wells, and the Honorable R.M. Kinnear, Members of the Parole Board of the Washington State Penitentiary, 1929, Governor Roland Hartley Papers, 2K-1-28, Insurance Commission-IWW, IWW (Centralia Massacre), WSA; *Industrial Worker*, 12 October; 14 December 1929; Industrial Workers of the World Financial Statement for the Month of March 1929, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 28, Folder 15, WSU; *Fifteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1930*, Washington State, Grays Harbor County.

⁵⁰ On Fisher's previous work in Grays Harbor, see Chapter 7.

⁵¹ In 1920 Fisher advocated that the IWW should join the Third International in order to "unify in one body all the class-struggle unions." However, his membership in and advocacy for the Communist Party is not clear-cut. In the *Industrial Worker*, 16 October 1920, Fisher concluded that the Wobblies should join the Third International in order to "divert them from the nonsense of planning an armed insurrection" so as to turn them towards organizing unions on a revolutionary basis. See also Gamba, *The Decline of the IWW*, 181; *Portland Worker*, 30 January 1932. The only known copies of the *Portland Worker* can be found in RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2909.

⁵² Rowan, *The IWW in the Lumber Industry*, 7-9; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 4, 121.

Harbor's urban spaces. The shift appeared most visible in strikes. During 1923 alone, several thousand loggers struck in three general strikes and several localized strikes, including those waged at the company town of McCleary and on the Quinault Indian Reservation.⁵³ This continued a tradition of the rural radicalism that emerged on the Harbor during the mid-1910s and that reached fruition in the 1917-1918 upsurge among loggers, logging camp workers, and clam canners. In contrast, between 1924 and 1930, urban mill workers struck in all but two years on the Harbor, while logging strikes were virtually absent.⁵⁴

The shift from country to city was equally apparent in working-class cultural traditions. By the mid-1920s many of the "footloose rebels" of Wobbly lore were gone from the woods, either because of the blacklist, the shift to individual "gyppo" bargaining, or death and debilitation, an all-too-common fate for loggers.⁵⁵ As a result, gone were most of the campfire Wobbly meetings, the bunkhouse concerts, the strikes on the job, and the itching powders in the scab's boots. However, the "rebels of the woods" did not all die off; many of them just moved into town.⁵⁶

Thus, in the cities of Grays Harbor, the local IWW underwent something of a cultural renaissance during the years 1923-1924. Harbor Wobblies hosted four meetings per week, including Sunday night mass meetings open to the public.⁵⁷ The meetings were held at several different locations, including the Wobblies' Market Street hall in

⁵³ *Industrial Worker*, 10 March; 11 April; 12, 13 September 1923.

⁵⁴ For a thorough analysis of these strikes, see Chapter 10.

⁵⁵ Cited in *Industrial Unionist*, 24 March 1926. On the successes of lumbermen's blacklist against the IWW, see Rajala, "A Dandy Bunch of Wobblies," 231, 232.

⁵⁶ The problems with this argument are most apparent among those scholars who equate the term lumber worker solely with loggers, thereby ignoring the largest number of lumber workers: those who worked in mills. As must be apparent from this thesis, the IWW was also popular among mill hands and longshoremen, who were derisively labeled the "Home Guard" by many IWWs. Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*.

⁵⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 5 April 1924.

Aberdeen (1922-1925), Finnish Workers'/IWW hall (1924-1938), "Red" Finn (Communist) hall (1906-1939), ethnic halls, pool halls, street corners, and open fields. Harbor workers also received a long line of IWW speakers. James Rowan, Elmer Smith, James P. Thompson, and Arthur Boose each gave numerous talks to Harbor audiences during 1924 alone.⁵⁸ At one 1923 concert a "fine looking, highly intelligent colored boy," named Paul Walker appeared at the front of the IWW hall to belt out the lines to the only Wobbly song known to be penned by a Grays Harbor IWW. More significantly, "A Wobbly Good and True," was the only known Wobbly song to be penned by an African-American IWW member:

I was riding one day on a train far away,
Wishing there was a Wobbly near,
When it did just seem,
Like someone in a dream,
Came a Wob with a hearty cheer.

Chorus

With someone like you,
A Wob good and true,
We'd like to rule this world
And all that it produces.
Day and night, for the greedy parasites,
Just to give each slave his right.
And then we'll have peace,
The master class will cease
To divide us while we're on the job.
The boss will be surprised
To find us organized
And every slave will be a Wob.

Now he said, Look here, Son,
I don't know where you're from,
But I know that you're true blue.
Let us hope that some day
All wage slaves will say,

⁵⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 9, 12 January; 23 April; 7, 28, 31 May; 3 June; 6 July; 6 August; 19 November; 13 December 1924.

Hurrah for the OBU!⁵⁹

In one respect, Walker's performance at the IWW hall was unique. After all, African-American Wobblies were extremely rare on the Harbor; in fact, in 1920 Aberdeen and Hoquiam were home to a total of only sixty-three black men, women, and children.⁶⁰ However, Walker's participation in the IWW was indicative of the movement's diversity. Drawn from many ethnicities and occupations, men, women, and children came together at Wobbly events to discuss the pressing political matters of the day, sing IWW songs, read the *Industrial Worker* and *Industrialisti*, while "the kids sold IWW papers and literature at these entertainments."⁶¹

Inside the halls Wobblies and their guests enjoyed a great variety of cultural activities. These included theater performances, athletic competitions, music, dances, potlucks, poetry, operas, literary clubs, movie showings, and talent shows.⁶² On 22 June 1923, a crowd of five hundred witnessed an Aberdeen IWW performance of the "Kangaroo Court," a "one act burlesque" by IWW Walker C. Smith, which provided a semi-fictional account of the criminal syndicalism cases that plagued the nation.⁶³ Theater performances and dances doubled as fundraising opportunities for the radicals. During the 1920s Harbor Wobblies raised money for the Centralia Publicity Committee, bail and bond committee, general defense, press, propaganda, and hospital funds.⁶⁴ IWW

⁵⁹ Salvatore Salerno, Franklin Rosemont, David Roediger, and Archie Green, ed., *The Big Red Songbook* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Press, 2007), 18; Ellington, "Fellow Worker," 303-316.

⁶⁰ United States Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census for the Year 1920*, Washington State, Grays Harbor County.

⁶¹ Ellington, "Fellow Worker," 312.

⁶² Finnish IWW hall hosted a travelling Finnish opera group on 25 January 1931. See *Industrialisti*, 17 January 1931; *History of Aberdeen USKB&S Lodge No. 9*, 6, United Finnish Kaleva Brothers and Sisters Lodge 9 Collection, Aberdeen History Museum (AHM); *Industrialisti*, 14 December 1935.

⁶³ *Industrial Worker*, 30 June 1923.

⁶⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 23 September 1922; 21 July 1923; 13 December 1924; "Financial Statement of the General Defense Committee for the Month of December 1923," *General Office Bulletin for the Month of*

hall meetings were often lively affairs. For example, on 11 November 1923, a memorial meeting was held in Aberdeen to honor the memory of Wesley Everest and Joe Hill, which included “some excellent singing,” piano tunes, and violin numbers, as well as a speech by John I. Turner and a collection of \$33.90 for legal defense.⁶⁵ Fellow Worker Henry Gehrig, a Grays Harbor Wobbly, frequently joined in the singing.⁶⁶ Rarely content to keep their protests private, IWW crowds spilled out of their halls and into more public arenas. When the rains of Grays Harbor briefly abated, as they did on the afternoon of 6 July 1924, hundreds of Wobblies packed up and took an excursion to a local riverside for a picnic. With the sun shining, Wobblies participated in athletic events, sang alongside the Wobbly “songbird” Katie Phar, listened to a talk delivered by Arthur Boose, and raised nearly two hundred dollars for IWW publications.⁶⁷

Another significant characteristic of the Grays Harbor Wobblies was the community-centeredness of their movement. Their group’s public visibility during the early 1920s and the wide support they received for their activism around issues such as the release of class war prisoners, the eight-hour day, and an end to industrial violence gained the Wobblies a broad base of support among the Harbor’s working people and middle class. Significant too was their posture as a family based movement, one that included women and children in its activities; opposed industrial violence, unsafe

January 1923, 23, Box 31, Folder 8, WSU; “Financial Statement of the General Defense Committee for the Month of December, 1924,” *General Office Bulletin*, 25, Box 31, Folder 31, WSU; “Financial Statement of the General Defense Committee for the Month of December, 1923,” 19, Box 31, Folder 19, WSU. Notably, Fred Hendricks, a resident of Aberdeen, donated \$225 to the General Defense Committee on 18 December 1923. See “Financial Statement of the General Defense Committee for the Month of December, 1923,” 19, *Industrial Workers of the World Collection*, Box 31, Folder 19, WSU; Receipts, Publicity, Defense, and Jail Relief Records, 6, 14, 22, 46, 52, 58, 118, 134, 136, 186, 198, 200, 201, 206, 220, 242, 250, 264, *Industrial Workers of the World Collection*, Box 134, WSU.

⁶⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 23 November 1923.

⁶⁶ *Industrial Worker*, 31 May 1924. Gehrig was almost exclusively referred to as “Fellow Worker.” Here, however, his given name is listed as Henry.

⁶⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 16 July 1924. A second Wobbly picnic, featuring a talk by James P. Thompson was held August 31 at Davis Creek near Hoquiam. See *Industrial Worker*, 30 August 1924.

working conditions, the unchecked power of corporations, starvation wages and unemployment; and preached against the liquor trade, particularly because liquor dealers preyed upon striking workers and their families. But of the many community causes taken up by the IWW during the 1920s, three distinct but overlapping movements stand out: their efforts to end the sale of liquor during strikes, the campaign to raise money for and gain eventual release of the Centralia prisoners, and their efforts to combat industrial violence in the lumber industry. In response to the good works performed by the IWW on the Harbor, Aberdeen resident Josephine Smith wrote to the *Aberdeen Daily World* declaring that the IWWs were “honest working men” who were “helping them [the police] to clean up Aberdeen’s Filthiest dope and Gambling joints.”⁶⁸

The IWW had long opposed the sale of liquor during strikes, arguing that “you can’t fight the bottle and the boss at the same time.” Knowing that strikers were prone to waste their meager savings on booze and that liquor often breeds trouble on picket lines, the Wobs sought to close down the liquor trade in communities experiencing labor trouble.⁶⁹ Wobbly Guy Askew remembered the toll taken on workers’ lives by the bottle, “So many of the unfortunate wage slaves are victims of that foul social disease called ‘chronic alcoholism.’ . . . The winos in time became nothing but human wrecks. It is capitalist poison for the wage slaves; as they can’t fight the booze and their capitalist masters at the same time.”⁷⁰

⁶⁸ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 22 September 1923. Josephine Smith does not show up in the 1924 Polk’s Directory for Aberdeen. A Josie Smith shows up living in Hoquiam as a grocer for this year.

⁶⁹ Cited in Thompson, *The IWW*, 155. On the IWW dehorn movement, see Stewart H. Holbrook, “Wobbly Talk,” *The American Mercury* 7:15 (January 1926): 62. In 1917, Wobblies and other unionists unsuccessfully petitioned the Aberdeen city council to shut down the city’s bootleggers. On Grays Harbor Wobblies’ efforts to shut down saloons in 1917, see Testimony of Walter Horace Margason, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, File 3, 5719, WSU.

⁷⁰ Ellington, “Fellow Worker,” 310.

The so-called “de-horn movement,” the term applied to the IWW’s practice of shutting down saloons during strikes, however, should not be viewed as though it was the product of an old and tired IWW, one indicative of its “changed temper,” in which Wobblies were “defending the law against the constituted law-enforcers.”⁷¹ In fact, the Wobblies had little but disdain for capitalist laws and courts. After all, criminal syndicalism statutes made belonging to the IWW a de facto illegal act in Washington and several other states throughout the 1920s.⁷² It also must be remembered that agents of the law were able to physically assault, kidnap, and murder Wobblies for their political beliefs during this period, and equally free to refuse to prosecute the vigilantes who followed the lawmen’s examples.⁷³ Instead, Wobblies understood that laws such as those prohibiting liquor were practical realities, and thus the IWW made tactical use of prohibition laws and those state agents tasked with enforcing them. Wobblies could and did protest businesses that violated the Washington State prohibition law by advertising its violation. Merchants who sold liquor during a strike were subjected to fierce moral and economic pressure, usually involving boycotts, pickets, and negative press campaigns.⁷⁴ For example, in July 1923 William Randall, a secretary for the Grays Harbor IWW, wrote to the city councils of Aberdeen, Hoquiam, and Cosmopolis

⁷¹ Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 205. Anti-Wobbly writers have not hesitated to condemn the de-horn committees as an example of “puritanism” in the words of H. L. Mencken, and “comic improvisation,” and “defending the law,” according to historian Robert L. Tyler. These charges stem more from the writers’ middle-class liberalism than a legitimate understanding of the Wobblies’ goals. Fred Thompson corrected Mencken for incorrectly employing the term “Puritanism” to describe the IWW de-horn squads. See, Thompson, *The IWW-Its First Fifty Years*, 155.

⁷² The most thorough discussion of criminal syndicalism laws can be found in E. F. Dowell, *A History of Criminal-Syndicalist Legislation in the United States* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1939). See also Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 381-382; Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 149-153.

⁷³ We only need to examine the case of IWW logger William McKay, shot in the back of the head by a company gunman who was never punished for his crime, to see that the Wobblies had little hope of equal treatment under the law. See also Smith, *The Everett Massacre*; Chaplin, *The Centralia Conspiracy*; John McClelland, Jr., *Wobbly War: The Centralia Story* (Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society, 1989).

⁷⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 27 June; 19 September; 10, 20, 31 October 1923; 25 October 1924.

requesting that local officials “do all in their power to close gambling and drinking places in these cities, and by any and all means endeavor to find and prosecute those responsible for the liquor traffic and gambling in these cities.”⁷⁵

The opposition to bootleggers in Grays Harbor was further proof of the community base of the movement. Drunkenness had long been a problem in Grays Harbor, one that disproportionately affected destitute workers whose general health and medical care proved deficient when compared with dominant classes. So-called “dives” had functioned in Grays Harbor since the turn of the century. These establishments fell into disfavor with both teetotalers and workers who had seen their friends and family members drugged, robbed, and murdered in the infamous saloons of Aberdeen.⁷⁶ Local Sailors’ Union of the Pacific agent William Gohl led a campaign against the Harbor’s dive bars as early as 1909, positing that, “The fact remains that we will not lose anything should the ‘dive’ be killed and with it the parasites that fosters within.”⁷⁷ Despite the imposition of Washington State and federal prohibition measures in 1916 and 1920 respectively, working people continued to suffer the effects of alcoholism.⁷⁸ Between 1917 and 1929, the deaths of at least twenty Finnish-American workers were, according to Grays Harbor coroners, the result of chronic alcoholism.⁷⁹ Wobblies also argued that workers were prone to waste their money on booze, which forced them “to go back to the point of production immediately, regardless of conditions and pay, for they are in no

⁷⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 4 July 1923.

⁷⁶ Norman Clark, *The Dry Years: Prohibition and Social Change in Washington*, revised ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 108-127, 129, 134. The number of saloons climbed precipitously from eight in 1895, to twelve in 1899, to twenty-four in 1903-1904, to thirty in 1908, and all the way to thirty-seven the next year. See Van Syckle, *They Tried to Cut It All*, 173.

⁷⁷ *Aberdeen World*, 7, 14 February 1909.

⁷⁸ Norman Clark, *The Dry Years*, 108-127, 129, 134.

⁷⁹ Merle A. Reinikka, “Death Certificates of Finns in Chehalis [Grays Harbor] County, 1907-1947,” Aberdeen History Collection, AHM.

position to demand. They must take what they can get and by doing this they are lowering the standard of wages.”⁸⁰

Local Wobblies were able to bring mass community pressure to bear against the Harbor’s notorious saloons, gambling dens, eateries that served scabs during strikes, and, allegedly, even brothels patronized by strikers.⁸¹ “Carrie Nation direct action,” as IWW historian Fred Thompson called it, began in Aberdeen during the lumber strike of 1917, when a committee of twenty-five Wobblies shut down the city’s entire bootlegging industry.⁸² “The night before the strike the Committee notified all the restaurant men and hotel keepers,” noted Aberdeen IWW James Pezzanis in the midst of the 1923 general strike, “not to raise the prices on board and room, and also the bootleggers not to do any business with the strikers.”⁸³ In the novel *Break Their Haughty Power*, which was based on the life of IWW Joe Murphy, a group of Wobblies were designated as part of a dehorn gang that traveled between Aberdeen saloons during the 1923 general strike. They posted flyers reading, “NOTICE TO ALL BOOTLEGGERS AND GAMBLING HOUSES: You are hereby given notice to close up during the strike or drastic action will be taken against you.”⁸⁴ At one saloon, the “Murphy” character was harassed by a physically imposing bouncer, who tore down the flyer. After punching out the bouncer,

⁸⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 31 October 1923.

⁸¹ McClelland, *Wobbly War*, 48-49.

⁸² Testimony of Walter Horace Margason, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 110, Folder 3, 5715-5719, 5737, 5743-5747, WSU; *Industrial Worker*, 11, 14 July 1923; 8 April 1924; Thompson, *The IWW*, 147-148; *Industrial Worker*, 12 January 1924. In the *Industrial Worker* “BOYCOTTS” list, workers were advised to avoid the Smoke Shop for “it was the only gambling joint that ran during the strike.”

⁸³ *Industrial Worker*, 5 May 1923.

⁸⁴ The language used in these flyers was reprinted in Eugene Nelson, *Break Their Haughty Power: Joe Murphy in the Heyday of the Wobblies* (San Francisco: ISM Press, 1996), 181.

“Murphy” carried on with his work, re-posting the notice, and moving onward.⁸⁵

Arguing in December 1929 that the “price of a gallon of rotten booze will get you an IWW card stamped a year in advance,” one anonymous Aberdeen Wobbly penned a poem reminding workers that they had much more to gain through organization than drunkenness:

Oh, dehorn, why don't you get wise?
Cut out the booze and organize,
A sober mind will win the day,
The One Big Union points the way.⁸⁶

After closing down nearly the entire illegal liquor and gambling industries in Grays Harbor in May 1923, Wobblies ran a front page story exclaiming that in Aberdeen, “Feeling among the townspeople is favorable to the IWW.”⁸⁷

The Wobblies’ activism and popular community campaigns earned them the respect and support from diverse groups. Community support for the IWW was manifested in several ways, one of which was the great financial support they received from the small business community. For example, Harbor businesses donated money to IWW relief, labor defense, and literature funds. Harbor businesses gave liberally to fundraisers held by the IWW. Perhaps feeling some guilt over their own complicity during the heady days of the Red Scare or hoping to appeal to their working-class customers, local merchants proved especially willing to donate money and time to help liberate the IWW class war victims imprisoned during the early 1920s.⁸⁸ In November 1924, the proprietors of the Brooks and F Street cafes contributed money to the IWW.

⁸⁵ Nelson, *Break Their Haughty Power*, 181; Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 204. While *Break Their Haughty Power* is a work of historical fiction, the actions of the fictional Aberdeen “dehorn” gang conforms closely to the activities of IWW’s recorded in the *Industrial Worker*.

⁸⁶ *Industrial Worker*, 28 December 1929.

⁸⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 9 May 1923.

⁸⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 6 August 1924. In this article, the Wobbly writer thanked the “business men of Aberdeen [who] donated \$19 to the Centralia Publicity Committee.”

That same month Fellow Worker John McCarthy personally undertook a tour of all boarding houses, pool rooms, and cigar stores, and collected funds from the customers of Cars Cigar Store, the Pioneer Royal Cigar Store, Peto Wilson's lunch counter.⁸⁹ After hearing one speech by James Rowan in Aberdeen about the Centralia massacre in which the Wobbly "drew attention to the case as it now stands, with eight innocent men buried alive behind penitentiary walls while criminals of the blackest, lowest, most vicious and contemptible type – the attackers of the hall; the murderers of Wesley Everest; the rich grafters who stole the natural resources of the country," local employers were heard to say, "That man was telling the truth."⁹⁰ Local merchants also donated heavily to collections for workers outside their immediate locale, including the eight victims of the Centralia Tragedy and the defense of radical workers in Yakima, Washington.⁹¹ Following a September 1933 dance held at the Finnish IWW hall to raise funds for the defense of Yakima agricultural workers imprisoned during a hop and fruit growers' strike, Wobbly lumber worker Iver Johnson wrote, "The business men are quite liberal and have donated quite a sum for the Yakima defense."⁹²

Even more impressive was the direct participation of members of the small business community within the Wobbly movement. In December 1935 the *Industrialisti* issued at least sixteen "Greetings" to men and women who owned businesses.⁹³ Two charter members of the Aberdeen branch of the IWW's foodstuffs workers were members of the middle class. Elsie Koski was married to the owner of the California Pool Room,

⁸⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 19 November 1924.

⁹⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 17 May 1924.

⁹¹ *Industrial Worker*, 19 September 1933

⁹² *Industrial Worker*, 19 September 1933. On the Yakima strike, see Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 223-224; Hall, *Harvest Wobblies*, 231.

⁹³ *Industrialisti*, 14 December 1935. I cross-checked the names of those men, women, and children who received Greetings in this issue of the *Industrialisti* with city directory and census records to establish this conclusion.

while Aaron Haapinen was manager of the South Side Mercantile Company in Aberdeen.⁹⁴ The cross-class alliance clearly aggrieved the lumbermen, against whom the strikes were being waged. Voicing concerns over this type of cooperation between employers and radicals, lumberman Alex Polson warned his business partner R. D. Merrill that the “Reds are bending every effort under the sun now to re-organize, and I suppose that you are aware that this main strike on the railroad is brought about by the IWWs and it would astound you to know how many wealthy people are contributing towards them, and some of them close to home.”⁹⁵

Efforts to free the “eight men buried alive,” those Wobblies convicted and imprisoned for their roles in the 1919 Armistice Day Tragedy in Centralia, remained constant from their initial arrest in late 1919 until 1939 when Ray Becker, the final Centralia prisoner, gained his freedom.⁹⁶ The importance of the Centralia case was such that it drew in workers and non-workers alike, creating cross-class alliances in the defense campaigns organized to release the prisoners. As by far the strongest left-wing movement in the Pacific Northwest at the time, and the one most directly effected by the Armistice Day tragedy in Centralia, the IWW naturally took up a leading role in the workers’ defense.

At the head of the IWW’s defense efforts was the General Defense Committee (GDC). Founded in October 1917, the GDC coordinated national defense efforts and

⁹⁴ Charter, Aberdeen Branch of Industrial Union 460, Industrial Workers of the World Papers, 26 October 1923, Box 17, Folder, 4, WSU; *Polk and Company’s Grays Harbor Cities Directory*, 1924, 1935; *Industrialisti*, 16 April 1935; United States Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1930*, Washington State, Chehalis County, Aberdeen.

⁹⁵ Alex Polson to R. D. Merrill, 13 September 1922, Merrill and Ring Papers, Accession No. 726, Box 39, Folder 10, UW.

⁹⁶ *Eight Men Buried Alive: The Centralia Case Calls Every Decent Man and Woman in the State of Washington to Act Quickly* (Chicago: General Defense Committee, 1924), 1-32; Copeland, 185.

authorized the creation of local defense organizations to assist the national body.⁹⁷ With the GDC's efforts aimed towards the release of federal prisoners, and the Centralia victims sorely in need of full-time assistance, the Centralia Publicity Committee (CPC) was formed in 1921 under the capable handling of attorney Elmer Smith of Centralia, who was tried and acquitted during the trial in Montesano the year before.⁹⁸ As a member of the middle class who was attacked as though he were a "common criminal," Smith proved to be a sympathetic figure, a man who drew in members of his own class to support the Wobblies. Both the GDC and CPC held rallies, raised money for the prisoners, and issued news articles and pamphlets on what was fast becoming known among radicals as the "Centralia Conspiracy."⁹⁹

The cause of the Centralia prisoners drew the widespread interest and sympathy of middle-class liberals and socialists, including Upton Sinclair and Charlie Chaplin. Even liberals without Charlie Chaplin's or Sinclair's credentials -- some who had little or no interest in working-class radicalism -- lent their money and energies to the cause of liberating the Centralia Wobblies. In Grays Harbor this group included attorney and former Aberdeen Mayor James Phillips; W. H. Abel, one of the prosecutors at the Centralia trial; and most notably Captain Edward Coll, World War I veteran, insurance salesman, and head of the Hoquiam post of the American Legion.¹⁰⁰

In large part due to the tireless speaking tours of Elmer Smith and other activists, a number of veterans refused to join the Legion, and those who did often refused to

⁹⁷ Gombs, *The Decline of the IWW*, 56-57; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 428-429.

⁹⁸ Copeland, *The Centralia Tragedy*, 113.

⁹⁹ Chaplin, *The Centralia Conspiracy*; Copeland, *The Centralia Tragedy*, 147.

¹⁰⁰ Judge Phillips of Grays Harbor County delivered the eulogy for IWW attorney Elmer Smith at his funeral in March 1932. See *Aberdeen Daily World*, 22 March 1932; Copeland, *The Centralia Tragedy*, 125, 168, 173, 175, 185.

discuss their fellow veterans' violent acts in Centralia in 1919.¹⁰¹ This was most apparent among Hoquiam Legionaires, who, by the mid-1920s, wanted nothing so much as to forget about the Armistice Day Tragedy. When Coll initially moved to Hoquiam he discovered a beleaguered group of Legionaires, who were ashamed of their own complicity in the Armistice Day Tragedy.¹⁰² Upon learning in 1928 of the ample support among Grays Harbor veterans for the Centralia prisoners, Coll investigated the case for himself, learning that, "Many ex-service men refuse to join the American Legion on account of our reputed attitude towards the never-to-be-forgotten killings in Centralia on Armistice Day, 1919."¹⁰³ He immediately joined forces with Elmer Smith and the CPC, with whom he worked for years, giving speeches, writing letters, and petitioning Washington State Governor Roland Hartley on behalf of the prisoners.¹⁰⁴ Joining Coll was W. H. Abel. He visited the prisoners in their jail cells and offered apologies and promises of support.¹⁰⁵ That Abel was also the attorney for E. I. Green, the man who murdered IWW William McKay, made his support for the Centralia Wobblies all the more remarkable.¹⁰⁶

The most prominent subject in the historiography of the IWW's activities during the mid-1920s was not the composition of the union's membership, or the cultural activities or community base of the IWW, but that union's internal schism -- often dubbed "the split" -- between the IWW and the insurgent decentralization movement

¹⁰¹ Smith's speaking tours are covered extensively in Copeland, *The Centralia Tragedy*, 104, 142-143.

¹⁰² Copeland, *The Centralia Tragedy*, 164.

¹⁰³ Edwin Patrick Coll, "Open Letter to Members of American Legion on Centralia Case," 1 October 1928, Box 167, IWW Papers, WSU. See also Copeland, *The Centralia Tragedy*, 164-166.

¹⁰⁴ Copeland, *The Centralia Tragedy*, 160-170.

¹⁰⁵ Copeland, *The Centralia Tragedy*, 166.

¹⁰⁶ W. H. Abel's role in defending Green was discussed briefly in *Aberdeen Daily World*, 3, 4 May 1923.

known as Emergency Program (EP).¹⁰⁷ The division, which had been brewing for years as the result of a number of complex and intertwined issues, came to a head at the 1924 IWW convention in Chicago. At the convention, factions representing the decentralizers and centralizers both met and voted to expel the other group from the union.¹⁰⁸

According to most historians of the subject, the primary reasons for the schism was the division between those who favored a type of centralized IWW with most of its power vested in the General Executive Board (GEB) and those decentralizers who wished for more power to the individual Industrial Unions (IUs) and local branches.¹⁰⁹

Beyond the “split” itself, however, very little has been written in an attempt to understand the EP’s program, membership and activities. Instead, scholars have usually agreed that the schism rendered the Wobblies “divided and essentially directionless.”¹¹⁰ John S. Gambs, whose book *The Decline of the IWW* has become the standard treatment on the postwar Wobblies, argued that the IWW’s “activity between 1924-27 is hardly worth recording.”¹¹¹ In a thoughtful summary of existing literature, Greg Hall described the schism as the result of a “complicated” set of issues, including the debate between centralizers and decentralizers, the presence of communists within the union, and disagreements between those who accepted individual clemency from federal prison against those who refused to do so. Hall also classified the EP as a failed attempt to gain

¹⁰⁷ Many IWW scholars have explored the split, and some, including historians Greg Hall, John S. Gambs, and Jon Bekken have examined it in great detail. On the separation between the main body of the IWW and the EP, see Greg Hall, *Harvest Wobblies*, 208-213; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 465-467; Gambs, *The Decline of the IWW*, 99-116; Patrick Renshaw, *The Wobblies: The Story of Syndicalism in the United States*, 210-213; Kornbluh, ed., *Rebel Voices*, 351-352; Jon Bekken, “A Note from Labor History: The IWW’s Emergency Program Split,” *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review* 27 (Winter 1999): 23-24.

¹⁰⁸ Conlin, “Industrial Unionist,” 129; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 466.

¹⁰⁹ See, for instance, Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 466; Bekken, “A Note,” 23.

¹¹⁰ Sellars, 163.

¹¹¹ Gambs, *The Decline of the IWW*, 20.

either members or influence among the American working class.¹¹² An even more vitriolic stance was taken by IWW editor and historian Jon Bekken, who cast the EP as a band of “splitters” who spent their time launching public attacks on their former IWW allies, stealing funds from their fellow workers and IU treasuries, and disrupting IWW organizing campaigns in the American West.¹¹³

But, at least in the Pacific Northwest, the EP was not merely a band of thieves and disruptive personalities. Instead, EP members, including James Rowan, Matt Johnson, and Mortimer Downing concluded that far too much authority was vested in the IWW’s GEB, which possessed top-down authority over constituent IUs, branches, and individuals. According to the EP, the IWW’s centralization led to the empowerment of a “political machine” that took power from the rank and file.¹¹⁴ By weakening the GEB, the EP hoped to “render it impossible for agents of political parties or employers’ associations to worm themselves into official positions and disrupt the entire organization.”¹¹⁵ Rowan, Johnson, Downing, and scores of like-minded western workers institutionalized their program with the formation of the EP, which was made up of four industrial unions: LWIU 120, General Construction Workers’ Union 310, Metal Workers’ Union 440, and the Railroad Workers’ Union 520.¹¹⁶ Based first in Portland, Oregon, and later in Los Angeles, the EP published extensive literature, including two newspapers, the *Industrial Unionist* (1925-1926) and *New Unionist* (1927-1931), an array

¹¹² Hall, *Harvest Wobblies*, 208-212.

¹¹³ Bekken, “A Note,” 24.

¹¹⁴ *Industrial Unionist*, 25 April 1925. This issue of the *Industrial Unionist* included “fourteen reasons why all industrial union branches and members should adopt the emergency program.” According to this list, the EP had adopted a program superior to the main body of the IWW because it had removed political power from the IWW’s general administration, transferred “the activities of the organization from halls and street corners to the job,” and turned the union’s general headquarters into a “supply station.”

¹¹⁵ *Industrial Unionist*, 11 April 1925.

¹¹⁶ Gambs, *The Decline of the IWW*, 123; *Industrial Unionist*, 18 April; 4 July 1925.

of radical pamphlets such as *More Power To You* and *The Rank and File Versus Dictatorship*, and distributed specialized news organs such as a newsletter for Finnish-speaking members of the EP and another for members of the LWIU (EP).¹¹⁷

In March 1925 the *Emergency Joint Branch Bulletin, IWW* (EP) listed twenty-eight branches and four IUs as having joined the EP. Additionally, during its first year of publication the *Industrial Unionist* had an estimated 4,500 subscribers. In Aberdeen, the lumber workers' and construction workers' IWW locals joined the EP, while the local MTWIU remained wedded to the IWW.¹¹⁸ No membership figures for these branches are available, although considering that Grays Harbor always had among the largest LWIU memberships in the nation, Harbor EPs were likely a significant group.¹¹⁹ Among the dissident revolutionary unionists were the Harbor's most notable rebels, including former class war prisoners Richard Skoglund, Tom Murphy, and Matt Johnson.¹²⁰ Thus, in

¹¹⁷ No Author, *The Rank and File Versus Dictatorship* (Spokane: Industrial Workers of the World, 1925); No Author, *More Power to You*, 41; *New Unionist*, 27 August 1927. In Renshaw, *The Wobblies*, 129, he cites this work as having been written by James Rowan. The copy of this work held in the IWW collections at the Reuther Collection at Wayne State University lists no author, although judging its site of publication (Los Angeles) and ideology (anarcho-syndicalist) reinforces the belief that Rowan was its author. According to Solon DeLeon in *The American Labor Press Directory*, the *Industrial Unionist* had a circulation of approximately 4,500 in 1925, while the *Industrial Worker* circulation hovered around 5,000 issues. See Solon DeLeon, *The American Labor Press Directory* (New York: Department of Labor Research, Rand School of Social Science, 1925), 12. The Finnish-language EP newsletter was mentioned in the *Industrial Unionist*, 22 August; 12 September 1925; and the I.U. 120, E.P. Bulletin appeared in the *New Unionist*, 14 February 1931.

¹¹⁸ *Emergency Joint Branch Bulletin, IWW* (Portland, OR), 12 March 1925, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 19, Folder 43, WSU. Fred Ebel was listed here as the stationary delegate for the Aberdeen branch of IU 310, while Matt Johnson carried that position for LWIU 120, Aberdeen.

¹¹⁹ In the 11 November 1925 edition of the *Industrial Unionist*, five workers' names were listed as having contributed funds to class war prisoner Bob Pease's Christmas fund. These names, listed only by initials, were accompanied by Gust Casperson, local secretary and the IWW who was responsible for collecting these funds. One measure of the size of the Aberdeen branch of LWIU 120 came in March 1924 when that local contributed \$208 to the IWW General Defense Committee. This contribution was nearly twice the size of the next largest branch's contribution. See "Financial Statement of the General Defense Committee for the Month of March, 1924," *General Office Bulletin* (March 1924): 17.

¹²⁰ Chehalis/Grays Harbor County Jail Record – Civil/Criminal, 1913-1922, Acc. No. 86-1-19, Box 245D, SWA; *Industrial Unionist*, 22 August 1925. Skoglund was one of the victims of the criminal syndicalism raids of May 1922 by Grays Harbor authorities. One measure of Johnson's commitment to decentralized forms of organization came in his December 1925 resignation from his post as chairman of the GEB. He attributed his quitting to the fact that the "G.E.B. is a relic of the old form that is not needed in an

1925, the Aberdeen EP included a cadre of dedicated rank and filers, and one of the largest LWIU branches in the nation.¹²¹

The EP should also be viewed as an attempt by Wobblies to rethink their action and tactics. Indeed, while the IWW has been portrayed by some historians as having only some chiliastic faith in the general strike, rather than being a changing, evolving organization, the example of the EP demonstrates that at least some Wobblies pursued alternative forms of organization. These Wobblies opposed the formation of a permanent bureaucracy within the IWW, believing them to be “mere bumming institutions to support the ward heelers of the headquarters machine, and furnish \$50 a week pie-cards for bourgeois ‘intellectuals.’”¹²² The EP’s criticism of permanent paid officials within the labor movement is especially significant considering the rising influence among American leftists of the Communist Party (CP), a vanguard organization, during the 1920s. Indeed, the EP renegades had a special distaste for communism and Communists, and with good reason worried that IWW officials and activists, such as George Hardy, Harrison George, and Vern Smith, were maneuvering the IWW into an alliance with the “Reds.”¹²³ In addition, unlike the CP, a top-down, centralized organization with links to the Soviet state, local rank-and-file control over the union’s operations lay at the core of the EP’s ideology.¹²⁴

The EP also criticized the main body of the IWW for the ties between influential Wobblies and non-IWW sympathizers such as Communists and liberals. These ties,

organization composed of autonomous Industrial Unions with rank and file rule. To have a double set of officials (secretary-treasurers and chairmen) in the Industrial Unions is an unnecessary strain on the finances.” See also *Industrial Worker*, 23 April 1924; *Industrial Unionist*, 18 April 1925.

¹²¹ *Industrial Unionist*, 2 December 1925; 6 January 1926.

¹²² *Industrial Unionist*, 11 April 1925.

¹²³ Zimmer, “Premature Anti-Communists?: American Anarchism, the Russian Revolution, and Left-Wing Libertarian Anti-Communism, 1917-1939,” *Labor* 6:2 (2009): 60; Renshaw, *The Wobblies*, 210.

¹²⁴ Zimmer, “Premature Anti-Communists?” 60-61.

according to the EP, had caused the IWW to degenerate into a group that resembled their “decadent” enemies. Finnish-American Wobbly (EP) John Svoja worried in his article “The Larger Aspects of Our Present Internal Situation” that the bourgeoisie had infiltrated the unions of all countries because “the middle class is not able to gain social rule by itself, but must seek the economic power of the working class. . . . And wherever they have been helped to power by the workers they have turned about and used it against the workers.”¹²⁵ To reconcile Svoja’s and other EPs’ concerns about the potentially deleterious role that middle-class liberals and socialists might play within their organization, the LWIU (EP) expressly forbid “legislation by hall philosophers” and preferred to maintain “control of the union directly in the hands of the workers in industry.”¹²⁶ The *Industrial Unionist* boasted that within the EP “Politicians and ‘intellectuals’ are conspicuous by their absences,” and that “all delegates” to the EP’s LWIU 1925 convention “are practical lumber workers, straight from the point of production.”¹²⁷ Thus, the EP stressed that it was designed as a “job organization,” which focused on the point of production as “the place at which all of the wealth of the world is produced,” while the Four-Treys had become caught up in fundraising, defense work, and institution-building.¹²⁸

Characteristic of the EP membership were its organizers in the lumber industry such as James Rowan, Pat Cantwell, and Matt Johnson.¹²⁹ Johnson, a logger and mill hand, worked in various logging camps around Grays Harbor between 1922 and 1925,

¹²⁵ *Industrial Unionist*, 6 June 1925.

¹²⁶ *Industrial Unionist*, 13 June 1925.

¹²⁷ *Industrial Unionist*, 13 June 1925.

¹²⁸ *Industrial Unionist*, 11 April 1925.

¹²⁹ Renshaw, *The Wobblies*, 206.

and was one of the Wobblies jailed during the 1923 Raymond free speech fight.¹³⁰ Like many of his fellow workers in the EP, Matt Johnson worried about the concentration of too much power in the hands of union bureaucrats. Elected to many positions, including delegate to the IWW's national convention, chairman of the LWIU (EP), and chairman of the EP's General Executive Board during the 1920s, Johnson refused to leave the point of production to become engrossed in the permanent labor officialdom. He even went so far as to describe the "double set of officials (secretary-treasurer and chairmen) in the Industrial Unions . . . an unnecessary strain on the finances." Even after his resignation from a leadership position, Johnson remained one of the most active members of the EP throughout its history, and continued to publish articles in the EP press until the late-1920s.¹³¹

The EP functioned sporadically on Grays Harbor throughout the 1920s. Job reports issued by radicals and migratory EPs flowed into the *Industrial Unionist* and *New Unionist* throughout their runs.¹³² One extended piece written by Delegate L.8-13 in January 1928 provided an extensive history of the Wobblies in Grays Harbor. The delegate argued that previous lumber workers' organizations had all failed because of their "courting the AF of L." or because their "meeting places became cheap political debating clubs," the delegate concluded that lumber workers were "materialistic, direct actionists, and not much concerned about politics Let us not forget that 20,000 direct

¹³⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 14 October 1922; 12 May 1923.

¹³¹ *Industrial Worker*, 5 November 1924; *Industrial Unionist*, 2 December 1925; 19 May 1926. According to the *New Unionist*, 11 February 1928, Johnson's IWW number was 319929.

¹³² *New Unionist*, 18 June 1927; 14 January 1928; 18 May 1929.

actionists in Grays Harbor would be a good addition to the Lumber Workers' Industrial Union."¹³³

While the EP never came close to organizing the "20,000 direct actionists in Grays Harbor," its members did help to organize and lead a large lumber strike on the Harbor in 1925. The strike began on 28 September 1925, when 228 radical and conservative workers joined ranks at Donovan mill 1 in South Aberdeen to protest the firing of Martin Larson and John Schultz. The two men were selected by their crew to circulate a petition demanding that an across-the-board 50-cent raise take effect on 1 October.¹³⁴ Hearing of the discharge, representatives from the Donovan crew threatened to strike unless the men were reinstated. Flinching at the threat, Donovan management rehired the agitators. But, according to one worker, "the sense of organization had already been aroused and the men as a whole then demanded their four-bit raise."¹³⁵ To achieve the increase, Donovan workers walked out again. Hearing of the militant action taken at the mill, nearly four hundred workers at Donovan mill 2 joined the strike the following day. Two days later, crews of the Wilson and Aberdeen Lumber and Shingle Company mills, struck, which swelled the strikers' ranks to more than 1,200. Within two more days, the strike force peaked when approximately two hundred men walked off the job from Schafer's mill 4 in Aberdeen.¹³⁶ What is remarkable about these initial walkouts, though, was that they resulted not from pressure -- no pickets assembled during the strike's opening days -- but the self-organization of the mill hands, who struck "at 10

¹³³ *New Unionist*, 14 January 1928.

¹³⁴ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 28 September 1925; *New Unionist*, 14 January 1929.

¹³⁵ *Industrial Unionist*, 14 October 1925.

¹³⁶ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 2 October 1925.

o'clock in the middle of their shift" at Donovan mill 2 and "during the lunch hour tonight about 10:40" at Wilson's mill.¹³⁷

EP members who had been organizing in Grays Harbor's lumber industry throughout 1925 were at the head of the strike.¹³⁸ This group included Martin Larson, one of the main instigators at the fore of the strike, who circulated a petition for a wage hike among his fellow workers at Donovan Mill 1.¹³⁹ An unnamed longshoreman and "admitted member of the IWW" was also active, attending a mass meeting of strikers and urging that they oppose any union organization or conciliation with the boss until they formed "one big union" with the mill workers who had not joined the strike.¹⁴⁰ While the extent of IWW participation in the strike is unknown, strikers received guidance from members of the EP. The *Industrial Unionist* recorded the presence of "a few IWWs to be found amongst the strikers and they are doing everything possible to point out the advisability of industrial organization."¹⁴¹ EPs also warned the strikers to steer clear of the AFL, which offered to support the strike. At the Wobbly's urging, strikers refused the AFL officials' proposals, and "asked that no outsiders interfere."¹⁴² Thereafter, the strikers, their committees, and the union they formed in the wake of the strike remained "strictly independent."¹⁴³ In addition, from the start of the conflict, strikers met at the Finnish IWW hall in Aberdeen, the massive structure built the previous year.¹⁴⁴ Use of one of the Aberdeen Finn halls might not appear surprising considering the great number

¹³⁷ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 29 September 1925; *Daily Washingtonian*, 1 October 1925.

¹³⁸ Evidence of the EP's actions in Grays Harbor can be found in *Industrial Unionist*, 11, 18 April; 16 September; 9, 30 December 1925

¹³⁹ *Industrial Unionist*, 14, 21 October 1925.

¹⁴⁰ *Industrial Unionist*, 14 October 1925; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 2 October 1925.

¹⁴¹ *Industrial Unionist*, 7 October 1925.

¹⁴² *Industrial Unionist*, 14 October 1925; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 2 October 1925.

¹⁴³ *Industrial Unionist*, 25 December 1925.

¹⁴⁴ *Grays Harbor Post*, 10 October 1925; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 9 October 1925

of Finnish-American mill hands, but it was nonetheless significant considering the availability of less threatening spaces, including Aberdeen's abundant fraternal, ethnic, and trade union halls. Some strike participants even considered this conflict to be an IWW strike. Egbert S. Oliver, a tallyman at one of Donovan's mills who scabbed on his fellow workers during this strike, recalled that it had been "fostered by the IWW," whose "rag-tag picket lines and small groups of men at the entrance to the mill vocally harassed workers reporting for work."¹⁴⁵

The impressive solidarity of the strikers brought lumber production in Grays Harbor to "a standstill," as the mills remained closed until its "unexpected" conclusion on 22 October.¹⁴⁶ The surprise end of the strike came when, at an assemblage of strikers at the Finnish Workers' Hall, the men voted to return to work in exchange for a raise in the minimum wage to \$3.75 and the promise of subsequent increases for more highly paid men, if they met employers' standards as "deserving employees." During a decade full of blacklists, the strikers also took home a rare piece of job security: the promise that all strikers could return to work under the new wage scale "without discrimination by employers."¹⁴⁷ The EP's *Industrial Unionist* congratulated the strikers for winning "their demands for a minimum wage of \$3.75 a day."¹⁴⁸

Institutionalizing what strike chairman Albert Phillips viewed as proof "that we can stand together without outside organization," strikers formed an independent union, the Pacific Coast Lumber Workers' Union (PCLWU), in December 1925. The new

¹⁴⁵ Oliver, "Sawmilling on Grays Harbor," 14. That Oliver, who later became a university professor, would recall the verbal abuse directed against he and his fellow strikebreakers, and declare the strike "a futile, unorganized, and disruptive strike," was of little surprise considering the prostrate position he took in relation to his employers.

¹⁴⁶ *Daily Washingtonian*, 2 October 1925; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 23 October 1925.

¹⁴⁷ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 23 October 1925.

¹⁴⁸ *Industrial Unionist*, 4 November 1925; J. J. Dunning, "The Lumber Industry: Will Its Workers Awaken?" *Industrial Pioneer* 3:10 (February 1926): 6-7.

organization boasted over 1,600 members, all in Grays Harbor, with a near unanimous membership in the recently struck mills.¹⁴⁹ The unionists also established their own labor journal, the *Pacific Coast Lumber Workers' Journal*, published in Aberdeen.¹⁵⁰ However, the new union was not a radical organization, and in spite of the leading role played by Wobblies in the conflict, the unionists declared that they wanted “no radicalism among our ranks.”¹⁵¹ Nor did these new union members launch much in the way of a movement. Though the PCLWU published its own newspaper and the strikers held “mass meetings” throughout the conflict, they also followed a strictly conservative course, both in their attacks on “radicalism” as well as one observer’s insight that “only when a strike business meeting is on do the idle strikers assemble.”¹⁵² Members of the IWW believed that it was the institutionalization of this union, and the efforts of “high lights among its members [who] started courting the AF of L,” which drove the union out of business, “and that was the last of it.”¹⁵³

The 1925 lumber strike marked the high point in the EP’s existence on the Harbor. Although the EP managed to retain small pockets of influence in Grays Harbor throughout the 1920s, the inability of the radical organization to maintain any type of urban movement doomed that organization on the Harbor much as it did around the nation. To cite but one example, the LWIU (EP) expressly forbid its locals from owning “buildings, printing plants, dance halls, parks, etc.”¹⁵⁴ However, it was precisely at this time that Finnish-American syndicalists in Grays Harbor were thriving in their recently

¹⁴⁹ *Industrial Unionist*, 30 December 1925; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 23 October 1925.

¹⁵⁰ *Industrial Unionist*, 14, 21 October 1925.

¹⁵¹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 13 October 1925.

¹⁵² *Industrial Unionist*, 14, 21 October 1925.

¹⁵³ *New Unionist*, 14 January 1928.

¹⁵⁴ *Industrial Unionist*, 13 June 1925.

built hall in Aberdeen. James Rowan voiced his concerns with the level of activity occurring at IWW halls, which he believed had distanced the Wobblies from the class struggle. He bluntly stated that the “object of the EP is to take the organization out of the halls and put it on the job.”¹⁵⁵ In keeping with this prohibition, the Grays Harbor EP never established its own hall, and the only local EP meeting places that were listed in its literature were the Harbor’s logging camps and lumber mills.¹⁵⁶ In addition, the closest thing to an EP “address” in Grays Harbor was the post office box where its local secretaries could be reached.¹⁵⁷ Thus, unfortunately for the EP, while the Grays Harbor IWW survived during the lean years of the 1920s through their sturdy links to the community and a lively movement culture, EPs eschewed this type of activity, focusing only on the job.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ *Industrial Unionist*, 11 April 1925.

¹⁵⁶ *Industrial Unionist*, 27 January; 17 February; 10, 24 March 1926

¹⁵⁷ *Industrial Unionist*, 4 July 1925; 27 January 1926.

¹⁵⁸ *Industrial Unionist*, 25 April 1925. In their “Fourteen Reasons Why All Industrial Union Branches and Members Should Adopt the Emergency Program,” the *Industrial Unionist* agreed that Wobbly halls figured too prominently in that group’s activities. It argued that the EP’s purpose was to remove “the activities of the organization from the halls and street corners to the job.”

CHAPTER XIV:
BATTLE ON THE LEFT:
WOBBLIES AND COMMUNISTS IN GRAYS HARBOR

In the long run, the EP's influence on Grays Harbor radicalism was not as great as that of the Communist movement. Indeed, pushing the chronology of the IWW into the 1920s and 1930s necessitates undertaking an analysis of the relationship between IWWs and Communists at the local level as the two groups competed for revolutionary supremacy. And I do stress that this was an active competition. During the 1920s, the IWW remained the most potent left-wing force in the Pacific Northwest. Moreover, for scholars to assume, as some have, that there was any neat transition or that the Wobblies faded while the Communists grew is to be committing a gross simplification.¹ In several important historic Pacific Northwest centers of radical unionism, including Seattle, Centralia, Pacific County, and Grays Harbor, Wobblies remained the largest, most energetic revolutionary group throughout the 1920s.² Throughout this decade, Grays Harbor Wobblies and Communists argued, struggled, and cooperated with one another on street corners, on the shop floor, and in union hall meetings. Both authored news articles and editorials, led strikes and marches, and commanded the attention of hundreds, and sometimes more than a thousand, from soapboxes and podiums. And it was not until the

¹ See, for instance, Patrick Renshaw, *The Wobblies*, 211. Verlaine Stoner McDonald's book *The Red Corner: The Rise and Fall of Communism in Northeastern Montana*, one of the rare studies of communism in the American West, makes no connection at all between the IWW and CP. Instead, the author devotes an entire chapter to IWW activities during the 1910s, and then abandons her analysis of the union, leaving readers to assume that the Wobblies were insignificant by 1920 when the first Northeastern Montana residents joined the CP. See, McDonald, *The Red Corner: The Rise and Fall of Communism in Northeastern Montana* (Helena: Montana State University Press, 2010).

² On the Wobblies activities in Centralia, see Copeland, *The Centralia Tragedy of 1919*; McClelland, *Wobbly War*. On Pacific County see *Industrial Worker*, 10, 17 May 1924.

early 1930s -- not 1919 or 1924 -- when Party activists began to supersede those of the OBU in their membership, influence, and revolutionary vigor.

Throughout the Cold War some American scholars of the Communist Party (CP) mirrored the official stance taken by US policy makers. Arguing that Communist activists in the US were agents of the Soviet Union, these studies oversimplified the CP and grossly underestimated the commitment and initiative of individual Communists. After a series of withering attacks from the left during the 1980s, anti-Communist dominance of the field became open to more interpretation as scholars -- including many labor historians -- examined Party activists on their own terms, dropping the anti-CP dogma in favor of studies looking at what individual Communists actually accomplished. At the same time numerous studies have appeared on the local or regional history of the early American CP. These social histories challenged Cold Warrior historians, arguing persuasively that the Party was not merely a tool of the Kremlin, controlled on high by Party apparatchiks in New York or Moscow.³ These analyses undoubtedly benefited from the work of British Marxist historians such as E. P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm, as well as American labor historians such as David Montgomery and Herbert Gutman, who took seriously the cultural milieu in which working people formed their movements.⁴ Through the revisionist CP scholarship, best exemplified in the work of Bruce Nelson and Robin D. G. Kelley, these studies argued that far from being a monolithic bloc, the CP was driven by scores of individual activists operating at the local

³ Studies falling into this category include Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*; Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront*; Storch, *Red Chicago*; Maurice Isserman, *Which Side Were You On? The American Communist Party During the Second World War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Roger Keeran, *The Communist Party and the Auto Workers Unions* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980).

⁴ E. P. Thompson, *The Making*; Gutman, *Work, Culture, and Society*; Montgomery, *Workers' Control*.

level who brought their own “activity and consciousness” into their efforts.⁵ Rather than simply following Party lines, responding to dictates from above, and serving as “malleable objects” in need of shaping from the Kremlin, American Communists were also products of their local and occupational cultures, eager to channel their lived experiences into the strategies adopted by union and community activists.⁶ A still more nuanced approach, recently issued by historians Randi Storch and Bryan Palmer, rejects both the hard line anti-Communist and revisionist approaches, arguing that while Communist activists usually adapted Party strategy to local conditions -- not unlike a latter-day IWW -- the CP was part of a worldwide authoritarian system, one committed to extinguishing free thought and dissent, as well as maintaining a strict Party line.⁷ Thus, while it is tempting to argue that the CP functioned “similar[ly] to the old Wobbly vision,” the fact remains that the Party was distinct from the One Big Union.⁸

All three schools of Communist historiography provide valuable insights into the activities into the activities of Party members on the Harbor. In fact, as this chapter and the next will show, the movement was the product of both outside agitators with little to no local experience and the actions of Grays Harbor residents who responded to their daily, lived experiences in a capitalist society by forming, joining, and sustaining Communist organizations with limited external assistance. Indeed, as the actions of

⁵ Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront*, 75.

⁶ “Malleable objects” was the well-known term used by Irving Howe and Lewis Coser to ridicule any notion that American Communists acted by their own initiative for radical causes. See Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party: A Critical History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), 506.

⁷ Randi Storch, *Red Chicago*; “Review of *The Soviet World of American Communism*,” by Harvey Klehr, John Earl Haynes, and Kyrill M. Anderson, *Labor/Le Travail* 44 (Fall 1999): 272-274; Bryan D. Palmer, “Rethinking the Historiography of United States Communism,” *American Communist History* 2 (December 2003): 139–173; and *James P. Cannon and the Origins of the American Revolutionary Left, 1890-1928* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Bryan Palmer, ed., *A Communist Life: Jack Scott and the Canadian Workers’ Movement, 1927-1985* (St. John’s: Committee on Canadian Labor History, 1988).

⁸ Lembecke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 20.

Grays Harbor Communists demonstrate, American communism was at times both a movement commanded from the top-down in the interests of a global authoritarian movement and a decentralized movement run by working-class radicals who saw the Party as a vehicle for challenging the boss and improving their material existence.

The Party entered Grays Harbor in a series of waves beginning during the early 1920s and lasted as a major presence in the local left for more than two decades.⁹ Notably, during the 1920s the left wing of the Socialist Party of America (SPA), which had played such a central role in the political and cultural life of the Harbor's working class during the first two decades of the twentieth century, dropped from the scene as a significant political force, as was true elsewhere. The remnants of the SPA formed two factions of American Communists, the Communist Party (CP) and the Communist Labor Party (CLP). The CP was comprised primarily of eastern European ethnic groups, especially Finns, Russians, and South Slavs, while the CLP included mostly English-speaking radicals, including the radical journalist John Reed.¹⁰ The two parties merged in May 1921 and formed the Workers' (Communist) Party of America (WCPA) later in the year.¹¹

By far the largest and most important of the language federations of the emergent WCPA was the Finnish Socialist Federation (FSF). Founded in 1906, the FSF was the largest of the language federations within the SPA until it departed for the WCPA at the

⁹ For examples of CP activity in Grays Harbor during the middle and late-1930s, see Hughes and Saltvig, 100-123; Robert Saltvig, "The Tragic Legend of Laura Law," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 78:3 (April 1987): 91-99.

¹⁰ Ottanelli, 10; Theodor Draper, *The Roots of American Communism*, Transaction Edition (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 176-196. In Aberdeen, where SPA members were elected to a number of city council positions between 1912 and 1919, their influence waned considerably in the immediate postwar period. Socialist council member Anton Pista resigned in January 1919. E. E. Wieland, the only remaining socialist council member, was defeated in the April 1919 election, amid energetic anti-radicalism so prevalent during the American Red Scare. See *Grays Harbor Post*, 4 January; 12 April 1919.

¹¹ Ottanelli, 10.

start of 1922.¹² During their first three years, members of the Finnish Federation comprised between forty and fifty percent of the entire WCPA membership.¹³ The largest concentration of Finnish Communists in Washington State lived in southwest Washington, specifically in Aberdeen, Hoquiam, Raymond, and Ilwaco, towns that contributed 99 of the 212 state members in 1923.¹⁴ Internal records of the WCPA show between twenty and thirty dues-paying members in the Aberdeen local of the Finnish socialist organization in late 1921, more than either the Seattle or Portland branches.¹⁵

In their competition for supremacy of the revolutionary left in Grays Harbor, one of the Communists' advantages came from their ownership at the start of the 1920s of the Aberdeen "Red" Finn hall, a large four-story structure towering over the surrounding residences. This hall was the center of Harbor communism and a site of intense cultural production. The FSF, WCPA, CP, and the numerous Communist auxiliaries each utilized the hall to host dinners, sports, political speeches, and fundraisers of many types.¹⁶ Party business was also transacted in the hall's offices. For example, Aberdeen Party leader Lydia Laukkanen used the hall as a headquarters for her committee that investigated the

¹² Hummasti, *Finnish Radicals*, 164. On the early history of the FSF, see Chapter 6.

¹³ Kostianinen, *The Forging of*, 126, 137-138.

¹⁴ Kostianinen, *The Forging of*, 220; *Tyomies* (Superior, WI), 20 December 1922; 16 December 1923.

¹⁵ Finnish Federation Dues for November 1921, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 75; Finnish Federation Dues – December 1921, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 75.

¹⁶ "Contributors to Christmas Campaign of ILD," *Labor Defender* (March 1929): 62; *Labor Defender* (October 1928); Resolution to Governor Roland Hartley on behalf of Centralia Prisoners, Jugo Slav Branch ILD No. 332, Aberdeen, Wash., Governor Roland Harley Papers, Accession No. 2K-1-28, Insurance Commission-IWW, 1929, WSA; Resolution to Governor Roland Hartley on behalf of Centralia Prisoners, 15 April 1932, Young Communist League, Aberdeen, Wash., Governor Roland Harley Papers, Accession No. 2K-1-28, Insurance Commission-IWW, 1929, WSA; Report of Central Commission on the Miners Relief Case to the Polcom, 4-7 December 1928, 1-4, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1433; Resolution of District #12, Convention, Sept. 30 – Oct. 1, 1932, 2-3, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2907; Sidney Bloomfield to Org. Dept., 18 May 1931, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2318.

fiscal malfeasance of Seattle organizer R. P. Forrest during the 1927-1928 Miners' Relief campaign.¹⁷

Relations between local Wobblies and Communists were in a near-total state of discord. In fact, one can read ad nauseum in the partisan press of both groups hurling epithets at one another. Wobblies called Party members a bunch of “Com-rats,” the “Comical Party,” or a “fakaloo outfit,” and Wobblies were dubbed “social fascists.”¹⁸ More pointedly, the Wobblies and Communists belonged to two very different ideological traditions: anarchism and Marxism. As is well-documented, the Wobblies were comprised of diverse groups of radicals, including socialists, anarchists, and militant trade unionists.¹⁹ But in union structure, philosophy, and tactics, what is most noticeable about the Wobblies was, as Salvatore Salerno argues, the “ubiquitous presence of anarcho-syndicalist beliefs within the workers’ culture of struggle.”²⁰ The IWW was committed to a type of democratic federalism in which loosely knit local bodies operated with a great deal of autonomy, all while committed to building the “new world from the ashes of the old.” High-ranking officials were often unaware of the work being done by local branches and individual groups, and in true anarchist fashion, enjoyed little to no coercive power over their fellow workers. In a vivid expression of this ideology, one anonymous IWW argued, “We, in the Columbia river district, want local autonomy to

¹⁷ Report of Central Commission on the Miners Relief Case to the Polcom, 4-7 December 1928, 1-4, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1433. This report includes several letters written by Aberdeen Communist and YCL leader Lydia Laukkanen to the Party’s Central Commission throughout December 1928. For an overview of the social and cultural activities at the Aberdeen “Red” Finn hall, see Charette, “Finns in Aberdeen,” 9-10.

¹⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 11 January 1930; S. B. to Org. Dept., 26 May 1931, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2318; *Industrial Worker*, 2 November; 21 December 1929.

¹⁹ See Chapter 7 above. See also Schmidt and van der Walt, *Black Flame*, 159-160; Salerno, *Red November*, *Black November*; Conlin, *Bread and Roses Too*.

²⁰ Salvatore Salerno, *Red November*, 123; Schmidt and van der Walt, *Black Flame*, 159-164.

deal with local affairs, including organization funds and all. No more national or international jackpots.”²¹

In contrast, the WCPA and CP were bastions of centralized socialism, with a rigid structure comprised of bureaucratic hierarchies, districts, units, and fractions, all overseen by high-level officials who determined the “correct line” to which the rank and file were expected to adhere.²² The fact that many Pacific Northwest radicals had strong syndicalist tendencies, and hence resisted the Party’s top-down dictates, caused much dismay among official Party apparatchiks in Seattle and New York. In 1923, Communist Max Bedacht toured the Pacific Northwest and reported to WCPA Executive Secretary Charles Ruthenberg on the Party’s achievements in the region. After visiting Aberdeen, Bedacht wrote, “In Aberdeen [WA] I found conditions quite similar to those in Astoria [Oregon]. All Finns. In Astoria, fishermen – in Aberdeen, lumbermen. And in Aberdeen they are infected with the disease of IWWism. We had some samples of the species in our meetings.”²³ Eight years later Seattle CP organizer Sidney Bloomfield ran into similar problems with the Northwest’s syndicalists. He wrote, “In our most important organization, the TUUL [Trade Union Unity League], we have several comrades who are too old to reorient themselves away from their IWW past, and altho [sic] they are sincere comrades, it is extremely difficult to work with them as it is almost impossible for them to develop along the correct line of the Party.”²⁴

²¹ *New Unionist*, 5 January 1929.

²² Sidney Bloomfield to Org. Dept. R. Baker, 11 March 1931, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2318.

²³ Max Bedacht to C. E. Ruthenberg, 30 September 1923, “Notes from the Road: September 13 – October 17, 1923,” <http://www.marxisthistory.org/history/usa/parties/cpusa/1923/1017-bedacht-notesfromroad.pdf> (21 March 2011).

²⁴ Sidney Bloomfield to Org. Dept. R. Baker, 11 March 1931, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2318. As late as 1934-1935, when by most accounts the CP was at its height of influence in the Pacific Northwest, the presence of Wobblies in the Party’s ranks continued to frustrate Party leaders. “IWW ideology . . . is an ideology that we must conduct a bitter fight against inside and outside of our ranks,” despaired District

To improve Party discipline, officials were urged to take “drastic measures,” suspending comrades and utilizing “ideological campaign[s]” against those who deviated from the CP policies. Responsibility for maintaining the Party line fell to the control commissions, bodies set up to ensure that members acted in accordance with proper Communist ideology, kept proper financial records, and did not denigrate the Party’s actions.²⁵ When members strayed from these standards they were subjected to a control commission trial and if convicted, to discipline meted out by the Party. In the Pacific Northwest, control commissions investigated Party activists such District 12 organizer Aaron Fislerman and R. P. Forrest.²⁶ One Aberdeen Communist named Brady faced a Party trial and expulsion for “leaving the district without permission and not accounting for funds,” as well as making public attacks against a WCPA official.²⁷ Even the prominent Communist journalist Charlotte Todes faced “severe action” for reducing her level of activity within the Centralia Liberation Committee.²⁸

The WCPA, and its successor the CP, also functioned something like the oft-cited caricature of the Wobblies in that top Party organizers awaited a strike or related conflict, rushed to the scene, and maneuvered to take control of the situation with little to no understanding of local cultures or history.²⁹ Both Communist federations were divided into geographic districts with each district assigned a headquarters in a large urban area. District 12, comprised of the Pacific Northwest and based in Seattle, was consistently one of the Party’s smaller regions, containing only a fraction of the members of the New

Twelve leader M. Raport in August 1935. See M. Raport to the Pol Buro, 2 August 1935, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 3873.

²⁵ Storch, *Red Chicago*, 79-80.

²⁶ Sorenson Report – Jan. 20, 1929, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1790, II. 15.

²⁷ Minutes of Control Commission, District #12, 3 August 1929, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d.1788.

²⁸ Minutes District Twelve Buro Meeting, 17 June 1929, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d.1788; Todes, *Lumber and Labor*.

²⁹ For this caricature of the IWW, see Chapter 7.

York or Chicago districts.³⁰ To conduct strikes, District 12 organizers and “responsible comrades” were sent “from the centre” in succession “to go there and organize or attempt to organize the strikers” in Grays Harbor in 1927, 1930, 1931, 1932, and 1933.³¹ At other times, Party activists condemned the Wobblies’ advocacy of “rank and file’ control” over revolutionary organizations because it stood in the way of establishing the “correct Party line.”³² While this top-down and center-out organizational form differed dramatically from that of the IWW, it was not necessarily unpopular with radicals based in Grays Harbor. In fact, at times, local Communist activists remained hopeful of advice from above. For instance, in 1934 Grays Harbor CP activists complained that “directives from the district have been coming too late to be of benefit . . . There have been times when these directives have arrived after the time when they were supposed to be carried out.”³³ This top-down form of activism lies in stark contrast to the Wobblies, whose ideology and tactics were primarily, if not entirely, shaped more by their communities and local conditions rather than any dictate from on high.

On occasion, Communist internal communications dropped their opposition to the Wobblies to praise the syndicalists’ activism. This most often occurred among Finnish radicals, particularly when Finnish IWWs and Communists reconciled their differences and sought to work together. Letters from the Finnish Bureau of the WCPA referred to a

³⁰ Draper, *The Roots of American Communism*, 391.

³¹ Report of District Organizer, Aaron Fislerman to the District Convention Held Sunday, August 21, 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1166; Minutes of the District Buro Meeting of the C.P. August 10, 1933, Seattle, WASH., 254/3288; “from the centre” comes from Sidney Bloomfield to Org. Dept. R. Baker, 11 March 1931, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2318.

³² M. Rupert to Central Committee, 7 June 1934, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 3605.

³³ Aberdeen Report, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2908

“most successful United Front with IWW’s in supporting Colorado strike” and that “appeal has been almost 100%” for this attempt at cross-organizational solidarity.³⁴

However, preventing the possibility of a “United Front” among the IWW, Communists, and other leftist groups was the fact that the Wobblies believed that the Party was an authoritarian body. IWW representatives had traveled to the Soviet Union only to be “repelled” by what they witnessed, a reaction further justified after anarchist revelations about Soviet atrocities became public.³⁵ Wobblies also believed that the Communists were devious. For example, one member of the IWW’s EP complained that “many Communists joined for the purpose of ‘boring from within’” the IWW during the early 1920s. “Their policy was to place their members in official positions, to get control of the press, to suppress free speech within the organization, to sabotage and obstruct all efforts to build up a union on the job, to stir up dissension among the members, to fill the official publications with camouflaged Communist propaganda . . . to sidetrack the will of the rank and file at business meetings, to control conventions by fraud and intimidation,” concluded the EP writer.³⁶ Indeed, the CP’s union federation, the Trade Union Educational League (TUEL), was founded in 1920 specifically as a vehicle for radicals to “bore from within” trade unions, and made no secret of its members’ infiltration of trade unions and the IWW in their attempt to steer them down the proper

³⁴ Secretary Finnish Bureau to Comrade Lovestone, 8 December 1927 RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1054; Secretary of Finnish Bureau to Jay Lovestone, 20 December 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1166.

³⁵ Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 464. Emma Goldman, *My Disillusionment in Russia* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company: 1923); Augustin Souchy, *Beware Anarchist! A Life for Freedom: The Autobiography of Augustin Souchy*, ed. and trans. Theo Waldinger (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1992), 22-39; Alexander Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, comp. William G. Nowlin Jr. (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1976).

³⁶ *Industrial Unionist*, 16 May 1925.

Party course.³⁷ The 1927 national convention of the TUEL reported sixty workers “boring from within” the IWW.³⁸ District 12 organizers actively participated in covert actions against the IWW during the late 1920s. One notable case of an attempt by Communists to subvert the IWW involved A. S. Embree, the long-time Wobbly, veteran of the Bisbee deportation, and the most noted of the IWWs to take part in the 1927 Colorado coal strike.³⁹ Writing to Communist Harrison George in November 1924 while Embree awaited release from prison, District 12 Organizer Norman H. Tallentire, celebrated the possibility that their convert who is “very, very favorably disposed to us” might be elected general secretary of the IWW. But, continued Tallentire, “this must be held as strictly confidential, as it will entirely destroy everything we have done if a single member of the IWW become aware of our connection with C. S. Embree (sic).”⁴⁰

Among the earliest conflicts between the IWW and Communists involved the latter groups’ efforts to control the relief operation for the Centralia prisoners. In Grays Harbor, the Wobblies carried out nearly all defense work between 1919 and 1927. The WCPA, active among Grays Harbor Finns since 1921, had largely failed to extend its program into the English-speaking population of Aberdeen and Hoquiam, and did little in the way of relief work for the Centralia prisoners.⁴¹ Its wedge into that population, and

³⁷ Communist infiltrators within the IWW included George Hardy and Harrison George. For illustrations of the Wobblies’ dislike of these two men, see Nelson, *Break Their Haughty Power*, 210. On attempts by Communists to infiltrate the IWW, see Gambs, *The Decline of the IWW*, 88-89.

³⁸ Trade Union Educational League National Conference for 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1192.

³⁹ Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 387-389, 476-477; Gambs, *The Decline of the IWW*, 149. In his investigation of the records of Industrial Union 210-220 during the summer of 1928, Wobbly Fred Thompson became suspicious of the possibilities of Embree’s “boring from within” the IWW on behalf of the CP. Embree and two other IWW officials had corresponded with William Z. Foster about the possibility of creating a Communist union in the coal fields. The new union’s formation was to be assisted by Embree and his colleagues’ avoidance of issuing IWW cards to striking Colorado miners during the 1927 IWW-led coal strike in that state. See, Fred Thompson, *Fellow Worker*, 62.

⁴⁰ N. H. Tallentire to Harrison George, 18 November 1924, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 325.

⁴¹ Finnish Federation Dues for November 1921, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 75; Finnish Federation Dues – December 1921, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 75.

indeed to the entire Harbor, came largely as a result of the work of the International Labor Defense (ILD), a defense organization founded in 1925 that focused on the release of those class war prisoners who remained behind bars during the mid-1920s.⁴²

Maneuvering into Grays Harbor, a region thick in syndicalist traditions, was neither quick nor simple. The first ILD locals in the Pacific Northwest were established in Seattle during 1925-1926, but the organization had nearly no success in Grays Harbor during its first two years.⁴³ Dozens of supporters in southwest Washington and the Olympic Peninsula made individual contributions to the organization. Included in this list were Pearl Laine, a Finnish-American homemaker and wife of Aberdeen pool hall owner Oscar Laine, Aberdeen longshoremen William Ketola, and long-time Grays Harbor socialist Joseph Thomas.⁴⁴ By 1928 the defense organization had made significant headway in the Pacific Northwest. It had solid locals established in Portland, Tacoma, and Astoria, while the Seattle ILD branches sold hundreds of copies of the *Labor Defender* each month.⁴⁵

The ILD had only a minor presence in Grays Harbor until 1927, when the organization lent support to a group of striking shingle weavers. During the strike ILD activists travelled to the Harbor, raised donations, and contributed to the strike fund, thus making the first major inroads of the Party into the Pacific Northwest lumber industry. The assistance rendered by the ILD to strikers and their families succeeded in bringing Grays Harbor workers into the organization.⁴⁶ Thus, during the twenty-five months between July 1925 and July 1927, only two Grays Harbor residents donated money to the

⁴² Palmer, *James P. Cannon*, 252-284.

⁴³ *Labor Defender*, October 1926.

⁴⁴ *Labor Defender*, August 1925; March 1926; November 1927.

⁴⁵ "The Labor Defender on the Pacific Coast," *Labor Defender* (July 1928): 158.

⁴⁶ Todes, *Lumber and Labor*, 182.

Labor Defender, house organ of the ILD. But, during November and December 1927, shortly after the successful conclusion to the weavers' strike and when ILD support was fresh on their minds, sixteen Harbor residents gave a total of \$50.15 to the ILD organ.⁴⁷ The numbers of Grays Harbor ILD supporters continued to grow as the *Labor Defender* welded a solid base of support among local workers. By December 1928 there were three ILD branches operating on the Harbor.⁴⁸ By 1929 local ILD members were holding public meetings and distributing the *Labor Defender* around Grays Harbor.⁴⁹

Grays Harbor ILD members were not content to devote all their time to organizing workers and collecting donations for defense work. Instead, this defense group, like many Communist organizations, mobilized its members to disrupt Wobbly gatherings and tarnish the syndicalist organization's name in hopes of eliminating their competition on the left. The ILD-IWW conflict at the local level provides a lens into the relationship between the two organizations during the late 1920s. Unfortunately, few scholars have addressed why Party activists were so intent on combatting non-Communists leftists, or examined how Communists carried out these attacks. However, the pre-Cold War anarchist perspective, as articulated by Wobbly Ralph Chaplin, argued that Communists, regardless of whether they were stooges of the Kremlin or community activists responding to local conditions, viewed themselves and acted as the vanguard of the proletariat.⁵⁰ In practice, the Communists' vanguardism led them to attack non-Communist radicals on many fronts. Leftist organizations such as the IWW and Socialist

⁴⁷ *Labor Defender*, July 1925 – December 1927.

⁴⁸ "Contributors to Christmas Campaign of ILD," *Labor Defender* (March 1929): 62; "Building the I.L.D.," *Labor Defender* (October 1928); Resolution to Governor Roland Hartley on behalf of Centralia Prisoners, Jugo Slav Branch ILD No. 332, Aberdeen, Wash., Governor Roland Harley Papers, Accession No. 2K-1-28, Insurance Commission-IWW, 1929, WSA.

⁴⁹ *Industrial Worker*, 30 November 1929.

⁵⁰ Chaplin, *Wobbly*, 284-380; Cole, *Wobblies on the Waterfront*, 137-138.

Party were infiltrated by Communists who sought to steer them toward affiliation with the CP, individual non-Communist radicals were harassed and threatened, and both groups had their meetings disrupted by the obnoxious actions of CP members. In his memoir, Ralph Chaplin argued that American Communists were committed to destroying any competition on the left. This included Chaplin, who “as a non-Communist labor editor . . . had fallen heir to hatred previously lavished upon the waterfront employers and shipowners.”⁵¹ One Communist tactic was to disrupt IWW meetings. Chaplin recalled how a group of Communist youths responded to a speech in which he was critical of the Soviet Union. Chaplin wrote, “the young Stalinists moved indignantly to the opposite corner. ‘Don’t listen to that reactionary,’ a youthful comrade shouted to the Wobbly audience. . . . Then the youngsters tried to drown out the sound of my voice by singing ‘Solidarity Forever,’ the song I had written after the big mine strike in West Virginia.”⁵²

The Communists’ disruptive, obnoxious behavior described by Chaplin was repeated in Pacific Northwest towns such as Portland and Aberdeen. One Wobbly’s letter to the *Industrial Worker* described how Portland Communists combatted a meeting featuring IWW James P. Thompson. It read, “Five members of the new ‘religion’ whose only mission in life seems to be to discredit the IWW and make up lies came down the other night with the intention, evidently, of breaking up our meeting. Their shrieks and yells . . . would remind one of the shrieking jungles of prehistoric times in the dim past.”⁵³ In Aberdeen, the ILD held street rallies, hosted speakers, distributed their press, attended IWW meetings, and badgered non-Communist leftists during their orations to gain publicity for their own organization. In November 1929, a string of IWW meetings

⁵¹ Chaplin, *Wobbly*, 380.

⁵² Chaplin, *Wobbly*, 361.

⁵³ *Industrial Worker*, 15 March 1930.

were disrupted by Communists who handed out the *Labor Defender* and yelled at Wobbly speakers such as William Craig. The disruptions continued until, according to one Wobbly, members of “the fake revolutionary movement” were exposed by Craig and left without further disruptions.⁵⁴ Another tactic used by Communists to combat the IWW was to spread what one Aberdeen Wobbly called “false reports” about the union’s activities. For example, in March 1930, Grays Harbor Communists held street meetings during which they proclaimed “that the IWW is dead” and that the Wobblies had served as scabs during earlier strikes.⁵⁵

Wobblies and Communists also competed for members and influence during strikes in Grays Harbor. A large shingle mill strike waged in February 1927 revealed the complexities of this competition as both revolutionary groups attempted to organize the same group of workers and influence the strikers’ decisions, while the Communists sought to wrest control of the strike after it began.

The strike began during the 1 February 1927 night shift at the large Schafer shingle mill in Montesano when the crew walked out in protest against the imposition of a cut in wages for both shingle sawyers and packers, who were paid by the piece, and the hourly mill hands.⁵⁶ The immediate cause of the strike was a reduction in wages by between two and three cents per thousand shingles, bringing the average daily wage down by between fifty cents and one dollar. Within a week the strike had spread to the entire Harbor shingle industry, shutting down “nearly all plants in [the] county.”⁵⁷ The

⁵⁴ Disrupting IWW meetings was a common tactic employed by Grays Harbor communists. See *Industrial Worker*, 30 November 1929.

⁵⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 8 March 1930.

⁵⁶ *Daily Washingtonian*, 5 February 1927; *Montesano Vidette*, 4 February 1927.

⁵⁷ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 4 February 1927.

strike waged by these men escalated into the largest labor conflict in the Pacific Northwest lumber industry since the IWW general strike four years earlier.⁵⁸

Most of the 1,500 strikers belonged to no union when the strike began. The main exceptions to this rule were the IWW shingle weavers who were on hand at the onset of the conflict.⁵⁹ They reported in the *Industrial Worker* of the conditions that sparked the strike and urged workers to “stay away from Aberdeen until strikers win their demands.”⁶⁰ The strike was significant enough to the IWW for it to send a “special reporter” to Aberdeen to observe and write about the conflict. August Radtke, the IWW reporter, concluded that the “strikers are unorganized so far as any union influence goes.” But, he continued, the “strike is being directed by members of the IWW and may be properly called an IWW strike.”⁶¹

In spite of Radtke’s conclusion, there is little evidence of Wobbly leadership of the strike. Instead, the union did little more than advise the non-union strikers and advertise the conflict in the *Industrial Worker* in hopes of deterring potential scabs from crossing the weavers’ picket lines.⁶² One illustration of the IWW’s assistance came in their observation that the Grays Harbor shingle strike was instigated by their employers to serve as a test case for the Pacific Northwest as a whole. “Any strike in which a part of the working class is engaged is the battle of all the working class,” argued one IWW strike observer, “but the strike of the shingle weavers at Aberdeen, Washington, is particularly the fight of all workers of the Northwest, since it was intended by the bosses

⁵⁸ Solon DeLeon and Nathan Fine, ed., *The American Labor Yearbook* (New York: Rand School of Social Science, 1929), 135.

⁵⁹ Howd, 101; Fred Thompson and Patrick Murfin, *The IWW, Its First Seventy Years* (Chicago: Industrial Workers of the World, 1975), 146. The last stand of the AFL timber workers in the region, in fact, had been five years earlier at Klamath Falls, Oregon.

⁶⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 12 February 1927.

⁶¹ *Industrial Worker*, 12, 19 February 1927.

⁶² *Industrial Worker*, 12, 19 February 1927.

of the lumber industry of the Northwest as an entering wedge in their proposed wholesale attempt to reduce wages.”⁶³ This article was indicative of the IWW’s involvement in the strike: Wobblies advised the weavers and raised public awareness of the conflict. M. T. Rice, editor of the *Industrial Worker*, captured the relationship between the IWW and strike when he asked, “The editor of the *Industrial Worker* is not fully acquainted with the status of the shingle mill workers who are now on strike at Grays Harbor, but if you are connected with the AF of L will you kindly allow me to give you warning and a bit of advice?” He continued by writing, “Don’t let the AF of L sell you back to the bosses mill by mill. Stand together until all of you win at one step. That is what the IWW calls solidarity and it is the only thing that will bring you true success. The IWW want you to win and it is warning all workers to stay away from Gray’s [sic] Harbor and Aberdeen until you have won.”⁶⁴

Unlike the Wobblies whose members worked and organized in the Harbor’s shingle mills leading up to the 1927 strike, the Communist presence came primarily from outside when a Seattle organizer travelled to the Harbor and urged the weavers to strike and form a Communist union. After receiving news of the strike in Grays Harbor, District 12 Communists recommended that their district organizer Aaron Fislerman “go to the shingle strikers at Grays Harbor.”⁶⁵ As the CP’s organizer for the Pacific Northwest, Fislerman was a seemingly reasonable choice to be tasked with this responsibility, but the Communist leader lacked even a basic knowledge of the region, its

⁶³ *Industrial Worker*, 12, 19 February 1927. The shingle manufacturers agreed with the IWW that they intended to lower wages because shingle profits were declining throughout the region. In fact, shingle-manufacturing interests aggressively made the argument that “market conditions” were “so deplorable” that the “only alternative” was to lower costs. See *Daily Washingtonian*, 1 March 1927; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 1 March 1927.

⁶⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 12 February 1927.

⁶⁵ Workers’ Party of America, District Twelve, POLCOM Session of 14 February 1927, RTsKHIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1166.

culture, and the strike situation. His status as an outsider created difficulties for Fislerman, who complained how difficult it was “to make any connections with the strikers having been a total stranger to them.”⁶⁶ From Grays Harbor, Fislerman remained in contact with his comrades in Seattle and Party headquarters in Chicago. The organizer’s orders included that he keep his association with the Party confidential so as to keep its influence secret. In fact, Fislerman was told by the national chairman of the WCPA to “be very careful as to giving away any information as to the role of the Party in this work.”⁶⁷ Thus, unlike the Wobblies who lived, worked, and organized openly in Grays Harbor, and boasted of these facts in their national newspaper, Communists operated in secret and received their orders from a Party functionary who lived thousands of miles away from the site of the strike.

In spite of Fislerman’s lack of familiarity with the embattled region, his efforts met with remarkable success among the striking weavers. In fact, whereas the IWW was left to mostly cheerlead during the strike, the Communists built a following among the shingle weavers’ leadership that led to their eventual control over the union. One key to Fislerman’s success in Grays Harbor came from his cultivation of a relationship with O. P. Allison, a Harbor weaver with a large following in the region’s mills. Allison and Fislerman provided much of the impetus for the weavers’ unionization efforts. At a strike meeting in Hoquiam on 20 February, Fislerman encouraged the weavers to unionize. According to the Communist, the weavers responded to his call for a union “by a unanimous rising vote . . . [that] decided that shingle weavers union included all

⁶⁶ Workers’ Party of America, District Twelve, POLCOM Session of 21 February 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1166.

⁶⁷ Acting General Secretary to A. Fislerman, 18 May 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1042.

workers skilled and unskilled in the union.”⁶⁸ Their union was named the International Shingle Weavers Union (ISWU) with its headquarters in Aberdeen and four branches on the Harbor.⁶⁹ Fislerman also succeeded at recruiting Allison into the Party, and on 20 February the Communist weaver was elected as the first president of the new union. Thus, the Communists gained their first toehold in the region’s lumber industry.⁷⁰ The CP organizer later reported to his fellow Communist officials that he was responsible for the union’s formation, declaring that, “I have been there for some time and succeeded to organize them into a union.”⁷¹

A month into the strike the balance of forces was clearly on the workers’ side, and by all accounts the outcome of the conflict had been decided. Mill after mill yielded to the workers’ demands. On 27 February, three mills were running.⁷² The next week, a total of seven had been brought to bear by the strikers’ demands.⁷³ Finally, on 11 March the strike ended in total victory for the weavers when the Saginaw, Aloha, and Hoquiam Shingle Companies, three of the largest mills in the region, began operations with the demanded pay increase.⁷⁴ Within five months of its formation, the new union had four branches in Grays Harbor alone. The Harbor weavers were, according to Fislerman,

⁶⁸ Workers’ Party of America, District Twelve, POLCOM Session of 21 February 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1166; *Daily Washingtonian*, 12 March 1927. Along with President O. P. Allison, the first ISWU executive committee included C. R. Barton, Vice President and Recording Secretary; R. F. Lovelace, Treasurer; and Trustee Johnny Walker of Hoquiam.

⁶⁹ *Daily Washingtonian*, 3 March 1927; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 3 March 1927; Workers’ (Communist) Party of America, District Twelve, Report of District Organizer, Aaron Fislerman to the District Convention held Sunday, August 21, 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1166.

⁷⁰ Aaron Fislerman to C. E. Ruthenberg, General Secretary, 25 February 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1042; Workers’ Party of America, District Twelve, POLCOM Session of 21 February 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1166.

⁷¹ Aaron Fislerman to C. E. Ruthenberg, General Secretary, 25 February 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1042; “Minutes of Meeting, Workers Party of America, District Twelve, Seattle Washington, 21 February 1927,” RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1166.

⁷² Aaron Fislerman to C. E. Ruthenberg, 25 February 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1042.

⁷³ Workers’ Party of America, District Twelve, POLCOM Session of 14 March 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1166.

⁷⁴ *Daily Washingtonian*, 11, 12 March 1927; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 12 March 1927.

“100% organized.”⁷⁵ Celebrating both the Party’s organizing achievements and the victory of the striking shingle weavers, Fislerman declared: “We shall not stop there with this single union. But we must proceed with the organization of the rest of the shingle and lumber workers and connect them together.”⁷⁶

The unionization of the weavers was a rare success for the Trade Union Educational League (TUEL), a Communist trade union federation formed in 1920. The TUEL encouraged its members to “bore from within” existing trade unions in hopes of channeling Communists into AFL unions and thus radicalizing the unions’ memberships. But from its founding the TUEL failed to recruit heavily in the Pacific Northwest lumber industry, a casualty, in part, of the lack of AFL unions in which the “Red” unionists could bore “from within.”⁷⁷ What successes the TUEL experienced in lumber, however, involved the shingle weavers. At the 1927 District 12 convention of the WCPA, for instance, nearly the entire written discussion under the “Organize the Unorganized” heading fixed attention on the Party’s successes among the shingle weavers in Grays Harbor.⁷⁸ Thus, the unionization of the weavers, and their affiliation with the TUEL, represented one of the only successful campaigns waged by the Communist union federation.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Workers (Communist) Party of America, District 12, Report of District Organizer, Aaron Fislerman, to the District Convention held Sunday, August 21, 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1166.

⁷⁶ Workers’ Party of America, District Twelve, POLCOM Session of 21 February 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1166; Trade Union Educational League National Conference,” 3 December 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1192.

⁷⁷ Ottanelli, 12-14; Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 20.

⁷⁸ Workers (Communist) Party of America, District Twelve, Report of District Organizer, Aaron Fislerman to the District Convention held, Sunday, August 21, 1927, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1166.

⁷⁹ “Least acknowledged” might, unfortunately, be too generous to historians of the TUEL, who, with the exception of Charlotte Todes, have completely ignored their successes among the Pacific Northwest shingle weavers.

The 1927 strike and union organizing drive helped to politicize the weavers, who turned to their union newspaper, the *Shingle Weaver*, to advocate their fellow workers' interests. The lone extant copy of the *Shingle Weaver* was published in May 1929. It is a lively, four-page sheet, complete with news, opinions, jokes, and poetry, the equal of its predecessor *Shingle Weaver* (1903-1918).⁸⁰ Between shifts at the mills, activist weavers contributed to their newspaper, but they also found time to host mass meetings and serve on the executive committee for the Centralia Liberation Committee (CLC), a Communist body organized by the ILD.⁸¹ Representative of the activist weavers was Ralph E. Lovelace, Aberdeen shingle weaver, union president, and frequent contributor to the *Shingle Weaver*. Born in Cottage Grove, Oregon, in 1889, Lovelace had spent more than a decade as a weaver, working at various sites throughout the Olympic Peninsula, before climbing into the executive of the ISWU.⁸² Like many in his craft, his wages provided the sole income for the steady, if not luxurious, life for his family, which included his wife Viretta and their six children who lived together in a rental home in Aberdeen.⁸³

Lovelace's work experiences with "conditions bad as Hell" steeled a determined, radical class consciousness, one that earned him the admiration and votes of his fellow weavers. He had come to public light first during the 1927 shingle weavers' strike in

⁸⁰ *Shingle Weaver* (Ballard, WA), January 1903; *Shingle Weaver* (Aberdeen, WA), May 1929. Harbor shingle weavers increased their wages again in 1927, as the result of "another strike" directed by these militants. See Activities of the TUEL, District 12, 1929, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1790.

⁸¹ Resolution Calling upon the Governor and the Parole Board to Release the Eight Centralia Victims, Unanimously Adopted, 2 December 1928, Governor Roland Harley Papers, 2K-1-28, Insurance Commission – IWW, Folder: "IWW (Centralia Massacre) 1927-1928," Washington State Archives, Olympia, Washington.

⁸² Ralph Earl Lovelace, United States, Selective Service System. *World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*, Ancestry.com. *World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918* [database on-line].

⁸³ The Lovelace family lived at 1306 Pacific Avenue, Aberdeen, WA. United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*, Washington State, Grays Harbor County, City of Aberdeen.

which he served as head of the strike committee and representative to the press.⁸⁴ Later, with a small, largely informal union staff, President Lovelace also took on duties usually delegated to organizers, walking delegates, and editors. He steadfastly pursued new members, settled grievances between unionists and their employers, traveled between work sites ensuring that members remained in good standing, and contributed liberally to the *Shingle Weaver*.⁸⁵ Echoing the traditions of his predecessors in shingle weavers' unions, Lovelace also put his support for the union to verse:

When the sun begins to shine
And King Winter bids adieu,
Honey Bees begin to swarm,
And the shingle weavers too.

Wages in the mills are low,
Conditions bad as Hell you know;
But what's the use to kick and moan
Where unity is a thing unknown.

Get together, join the crowd,
Organize and speak out loud.
When you strike, do it with a will;
Then stay away from the dam'd old
mill.

Sneak away to some wild brook,
There feel as free as any man;
Catch a fish upon a hook,
And watch it sizzle in the pan.⁸⁶

Along with Lovelace, at least ten Grays Harbor shingle weavers served as ISWU officials during 1929 alone. The ranks of the ISWU included men like Communist O. P. Allison, executive in both the CLC and ISWU, and *Shingle Weaver* editor W. H. Holloway, who

⁸⁴ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 8 February 1927.

⁸⁵ *Shingle Weaver*, 3 May 1929.

⁸⁶ *Shingle Weaver*, 3 May 1929.

kept the membership up to date with a running, favorable commentary on issues of international communism.⁸⁷

The weavers maintained strong ties with the WCPA between 1927 and 1929. But it was a financial emergency on the part of the ISWU in 1929 that officially wed that body to the TUEL. In October 1929, with a global financial crisis developing, the TUEL took over the \$180 debt of the *Shingle Weaver* in exchange for gaining shared control of the organ. The deal stated that three TUEL members would join three ISWU officials in controlling the union's newspaper. In addition, the three non-Communist weavers were required to join the TUEL, giving the Communist union federation de-facto control over the union.⁸⁸ Thus, the Pacific Northwest shingle weavers, based institutionally in Grays Harbor, became as of late 1929 the first Communist union established in the Pacific Northwest lumber industry.⁸⁹

During the 1920s, Communists and Wobblies spent nearly as much time fighting against each other as they did against the boss. The two radical organizations engaged in lively struggles throughout local Grays Harbor workplaces and community spaces. Both groups experienced success at organizing Harbor lumber workers during the mid-1920s with the IWW enjoying its greatest influence in local lumber mills and Communists

⁸⁷ *Shingle Weaver*, 3 May 1929; Resolution Calling upon the Governor and the Parole Board to Release the Eight Centralia Victims, Unanimously Adopted, 2 December 1928, Governor Roland Harley Papers, 2K-1-28, Insurance Commission – IWW, Folder: "IWW (Centralia Massacre) 1927-1928," WSA.

⁸⁸ Activities of the TUEL, District 12, 1929, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1790; *Industrial Worker*, 28 December 1929. According to District Organizer Aaron Fislerman, O.P. Allison joined the TUEL during the 1927 strike.

⁸⁹ Like much of the "hidden history" explored in this chapter, labor historians have not probed deeply into the efforts of the shingle weavers to form radical unions. See, especially, Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, which ignored the revival of the ISWU in the late 1920s. In fact, despite the fact that this is the major work on radical unionism in the lumber industry *One Union in Wood*, glosses over the entire decade of the 1920s in two paragraphs. Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 16, 18. Led by the CP's Lumber Workers' Industrial Union, shingle weavers waged a major strike at the Canadian Western Lumber Company in Fraser Mills, BC. See Jeanne Meyers, "Ethnicity and Class Conflict at Maillardville/Fraser Mills: The Strike of 1931" (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1983).

centered among shingle plants.⁹⁰ However, as the experiences of the Grays Harbor shingle weavers demonstrated, by the late-1920s the CP was ascendant. Even on the Harbor, where the IWW retained possession of a massive union hall and enjoyed the support of hundreds of local residents, the Party served as the most influential leftist organization during the early Depression era. Still, as the next chapter will demonstrate, the Grays Harbor left of the early 1930s defied simple categorization, for, in fact, both the Communists and Wobblies were significant forces in the local labor movement. Indeed, both organizations were capable of organizing workers and strikes, mobilizing large crowds of supporters, and provoking repression from the state.

⁹⁰ See Chapter 13.

CHAPTER XV

WORKPLACE AND COMMUNITY: WOBBLIES,

WEAVERS, AND COMMUNISTS IN THE EARLY DEPRESSION

On the evening of 25 July 1933, more than one thousand striking mill workers and loggers turned out to Aberdeen's "Red" Finn hall to protest police abuses and share strike news from the Grays Harbor district. There they declared a commitment to continue picketing local mills, blamed the strike on the "unfair practices of logging and mill operators," and issued a resolution to Governor Clarence Martin demanding the recall of the state patrolmen, who were dispatched to Grays Harbor to quell the strike.¹ For the first time in more than a decade, Harbor mill workers and loggers were striking in concert against their common enemy, the lumber barons. These strikers replicated much of the community-based unionism that lay at the heart of earlier upsurges. Echoing the Wobbly strikes of years prior, strikers issued a list of demands that included the six-hour workday, a minimum wage of fifty cents per hour, the abolition of the speedup and blacklist, and workers' control over hiring.² Throughout July and August, loggers joined mill workers at mass meetings and on the picket line. Merging with the strikers was a vast network of community groups, highly trained at organizing, agitating, and fundraising. This "alternative unionism" of the early 1930s closely resembled the revolutionary activism of the 1910s and early 1920s. Gone were the free speech fights, dehorn squads, and open talk of industrial sabotage. But the mass meetings, flying picket squadrons, radical rhetoric, and street meetings returned to the Harbor in force as the region's workers stood as the vanguard of Depression era militancy.

¹ *Daily Washingtonian*, 26 July 1933; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 26 July 1933.

² *Voice of Action*, 7 August 1933.

In the historiography of “lumber and labor” the key ingredients to bringing about the militant strikes of the 1930s were the federal legislative victories enacted by the labor-friendly Democratic Party. In this version of events, Pacific Northwest loggers, mill hands, and shingle weavers were paralyzed by the Depression. Incapable of self-organization, these workers were left hapless until the story’s hero, Franklin Roosevelt, opened with door to unionization with Section 7(a) of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) in 1933 and the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) two years later, allowing workers to form unions of their own choosing.³ But, as should be clear by now, Harbor workers did not wait for any legislative dictate to provide salvation from above. Time and again between 1923 and 1933, lumber workers, their families, and community supporters had openly struggled with their bosses. Proclaiming “Fight or Starve!” and “Organize and Fight: Against Wage Cuts! For Decent Conditions,” Communist and IWW radicals were consistently at the center of these struggles.⁴ But it was not leftists alone who joined these struggles and launched the unions they spawned. Instead, a penchant for militant direct action on the shop floor and picket line was at the heart of rank-and-file lumber workers’ ideology during the early 1930s, much as it had been during the previous three decades.

While ostensibly pro-labor New Deal policies are credited with the 1930s labor upsurge from one direction, the revolutionary élan of the CP is often assigned the key

³ Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 30-31. In his master’s thesis, Parks incorrectly states that the “National Industrial Recovery Act, passed in 1933, had given the lumber workers the needed impetus and protections” to organize the industry. Parks, “Labor Relations,” 28.

⁴ “Organize and Fight: Against Wage Cuts! For Decent Conditions!” Flyer issued by the National Lumber Workers Union, Local 2 – Grays Harbor; “Fight or Starve,” Flyer Issued by the National Lumber Workers’ Union, Aberdeen, Washington, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2180. Neither of these flyers have dates, but they were filed alongside other CP documents that are dated 1930. Considering that the CP files are organized in strict chronological order, it is reasonable to conclude that these flyers date from 1930.

role from the other.⁵ Certainly, Communists and other shop floor militants were at the heart of “Red” unionism in the 1930s, but as in decades prior, thousands of Grays Harbor lumber workers took part in these struggles. The fact that the number of local loggers and mill workers who officially joined the CP and its affiliates during the early 1930s could be measured in hundreds rather than thousands caused great consternation to CP functionaries. The prevalence of Wobblies within the lumber and maritime workplaces of Grays Harbor and the wider Pacific Northwest further inflamed the Communists, who complained of both IWW members and the influence of syndicalist ideology among lumber workers.⁶

This chapter will examine the history of radical community and labor organizations on the Harbor as they confronted and responded to the desperate conditions created by the Great Depression. At the heart of the Harbor’s community-based labor movement were Communists and Wobblies, who, despite their radical reputations, were committed to organizing for such “bread and butter” gains as higher wages, an end to piecework, and unemployment relief. However, the presence of revolutionary unionists in the local labor movement bore a decisive impact on the forms of class conflict waged during the Depression era. In fact, a marked feature of this period’s labor activism was the refusal of the picketers to confine their critique to wages and hours, those “bread-and-butter” demands so commonly associated with American workers’ aspirations.⁷ For so many Harbor workers, accustomed to wave after wave of joblessness, underemployment, and involuntary and unpaid medical leaves, it was not bread and butter alone that was

⁵ Lembecke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 20-22; Todes, *Lumber and Labor*, 184-192.

⁶ See below, page 431.

⁷ On working-class conservatism, see John Bodnar, *Workers’ World: Kinship, Community, and Protest in and Industrialized Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983).

sought, but deep, intrinsic change.⁸ Banners demanding free milk for babies were mixed in with signs reading “fight capitalism” as the system itself came under fire.⁹

The Great Depression officially began in late 1929, but the Pacific Northwest lumber industry experienced a significant slump beginning in the mid-1920s. The region’s gradual slide into the Depression, as well as the lumber industry’s previous “busts,” provided workers with plenty of experience at crafting critiques of the ills of capitalism.¹⁰ Anticipating the crash by six years, Wobbly Floyd Hyde addressed a large crowd of Aberdeen workers in December 1923, cast an alarming omen for future years:

A greater panic is coming than the world has ever seen, the whole system of production is going to collapse. He gave many economic reasons why this should be, such as inflated currency, overproduction here, and Europe’s inability to buy our surplus products. There is no power on earth that can stop the hard times from coming, and when the capitalist system shall have ceased to function, that is to fail to furnish food, clothing and shelter for the people, then shall the workers of the world step in and do what has to be done, namely, operate industry for the good of the people.¹¹

Predictions of the imminent self-destruction of capitalism provided by Wobblies did little to prepare Americans for the epic tragedy of the Great Depression. Even long-time residents of the Harbor, so accustomed to the booms and busts of the lumber industry, were unprepared for the widespread misery that befell the nation in the years following the October 1929 stock market crash.

⁸ Dreyfus, “Timber Workers,” 239. In their famous study *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture*, Robert and Helen Lynd demonstrated that frequent bouts with joblessness were the norm for American workers during the 1920s, the period in which their study took place. They wrote: “Among the working class, however, the business device of the ‘shut down’ or ‘lay off’ is a current phenomenon.” This lay in sharp contrast to “The most prosperous two-thirds of the business group . . . [who] are virtually never subject to interruptions of this kind.” Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1929), 55-57.

⁹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 29 January 1932.

¹⁰ Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 17-18; Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 151-152.

¹¹ *Industrial Worker*, 12 January 1924.

The impact of the Depression was especially disastrous on the Harbor, where, according to the US Department of Agriculture, forty percent of gainfully employed workers labored in forest industries, while another forty percent were dependent on related industries.¹² A 1934 unemployment study commissioned by the Washington State Planning Council, observed that, “Grays Harbor undoubtedly has the most severe unemployment problem of any county in the state . . . This is no doubt due to the fact that Aberdeen and Hoquiam are primarily one-industry cities, and that industry -- lumbering - - has declined greatly in recent years.”¹³ Statistics bear this out. During the early 1930s, most lumber manufacturing stopped. Those mills that ran did so only part-time, thus bringing about the staggering decline from 1.56 billion board feet of lumber cut in Grays Harbor during 1926 to only 232 million board feet six years later.¹⁴ During the especially rough winter of 1931-1932, lumber production in Grays Harbor ran at only five percent of its capacity, compared with twenty-four percent in the Pacific Northwest as a whole.¹⁵ At the Posey Manufacturing Plant, a wood products mill that specialized in producing piano sounding boards made of spruce, owner V. G. Posey’s inability to profit during the Depression led him to shut down the mill, throwing approximately one hundred workers “into the heartbreaking labor market of that early year of the depression.”¹⁶

¹² Parks, “Labor Relations,” 17.

¹³ Harris, 369.

¹⁴ F. L. Moravets, “Lumber Production in Oregon and Washington, 1869-1948,” United States Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experimentation Station Forest Survey, 1949 (Forest Survey Report, 100).

¹⁵ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 4, 8 April 1932. These figures were taken from the West Coast Lumbermen’s Association. During the entire year of 1932, harbor lumber manufacturing ran at only twenty percent of its 1929 level, compared with 34.7 percent for Washington State as a whole. See Parks, “Labor Relations in the Grays Harbor Lumber Industry,” 19.

¹⁶ On the Posey Manufacturing Company, see Van Syckle, *They Tried*, 210; J. V. G. Posey, “From Our Friend and Former Owner,” *Poseygram* (Hoquiam, WA), December 1935, 5; “By the Staff,” *Poseygram*, December 1935, 22. On the Michigan mill, see *Grays Harbor Post*, 13 February 1932. Much of the original run of the *Poseygram* is available in hard copy form in the Posey Manufacturing Company Records, Polson Museum, Hoquiam, WA.

On the Harbor, relief for the men, women, and children hurt most by the Depression was both insufficient and delivered alongside doses of upper-class condescension and Christianity. Municipalities blended public funds, granted through the county treasury, with private moneys collected through a series of fundraisers and not-so-voluntary contributions made by workers, extracted directly from their paychecks.¹⁷ City funds from the Aberdeen Public Welfare Society and Hoquiam Community Welfare Incorporated were distributed to a number of social service organizations with religious affiliations, including the Salvation Army.¹⁸ The Hoquiam Community Welfare Association found its standard-bearer in Frank Lamb, millionaire lumberman and founder of the Port of Grays Harbor.¹⁹ Lamb's thrifty policies allowed Hoquiam's relief bills to be handled through private donations. He insisted that these policies were designed to "be on a more or less temporary basis," to avoid distributing relief to those "people who sought relief who never did any great amount of productive work and never intended to," and to "get rid of the single men," thereby reserving relief payments for local homeowners.²⁰ Even though Lamb and his cohort rejected this group of desperate, single men, during its first year in operation the agency still provided relief to 7,317 residents of Hoquiam, an astonishing total considering the city's 1930 population was a mere 13,387.²¹ The Salvation Army drew fire for some of its policies, including its practice of forcing recipients to pray before receiving relief at its facilities.²² IWW member 493776 condemned the "Sally" of Aberdeen for "all such charity organizations as the Salvation

¹⁷ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 4 December 1931.

¹⁸ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 15, 24, 26 September 1931.

¹⁹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 24, 26 September 1931.

²⁰ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 12 April 1932; Lamb, 295-297.

²¹ Lamb, 297; 1930 Census Return.

<http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/10612982v3p2ch10.pdf> (accessed 24 March 2011).

²² *Industrial Worker*, 1 February 1929.

Army fatten on the miserable poverty of millions of unorganized wage slaves throughout the world. . . . This in the face of the fact that the crumbs with which it degrades the manhood of honest workers are but a pittance of the wealth stolen from them by the social pirates without whose good-will Sally and others of her kind could not survive.”²³

With state and private relief groups unable and unwilling to handle the extremity of the situation, many jobless and underemployed workers turned to creative direct action, seeking to fend off starvation by seeking out the rich bounty available from the woods and beaches of the Harbor. Working people left with little other choice poached deer, elk, and clams. But as the numbers of out-of-work people increased on the Harbor, so did the outrage among conservationists at the notion of working people acting for themselves by hunting food for their families. The exact numbers of illegally hunted game and dug clams are unavailable, although the amount of attention given the “problem” by the mainstream press and middle-class organizations tells much about the scope of these groups’ concerns. During the first six months of 1932, the *Daily World* ran several articles attesting to the seriousness of possibility that poaching was depleting the region’s herds of deer and elk. The newspaper also wrote of the urgent need of Aberdeen and Hoquiam authorities to step in and restrict poor families from migrating to the beaches to dig clams.²⁴

H. D. McKenney, a former labor spy who was appointed to the post of deputy game warden for Grays Harbor County, served at the fore of state efforts to stop workers from poaching deer and elk. McKenney used the same vigor with which he had attacked the IWW more than a decade earlier to guarantee that indigent workers would be unable

²³ *Industrial Worker*, 15 February 1930.

²⁴ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 22, 23, 29 January; 7 June 1932. On clam diggers see *Aberdeen Daily World*, 2, 5 February 1932; *Industrial Worker*, 15 March 1930.

to illegally hunt game. During the spring of 1932 he repeatedly brought poachers before the court. One offender was Edwin Scott, who was caught in possession of elk meat that he planned to use to feed his thirteen dependents.²⁵ For their crimes many of the poachers were fined \$250, a massive sum to unemployed workers unable to feed themselves or their families. Others were given long jail sentences.²⁶ Showing his insensitivity towards the plight of those worst hit by the Depression, Grays Harbor County Game Commissioner Dr. H. C. Watkins called upon “the people of Grays Harbor [who] should frown on these killings and help to preserve one of our greatest out-of-door attractions.”²⁷

Collective resistance to the starvation, homelessness, and unemployment of the Depression was mounted on the Harbor along multiple fronts. Grays Harbor veterans joined the thousands of “Bonus Army” members who travelled to Washington, D.C., to demand action over early payment of their bonuses earned during the Great War.²⁸ Letters from Grays Harbor Bonus Marchers appeared in the *Daily World* describing veterans’ experiences and explaining why they joined the trek. Sam Chiros, one of the Harbor veterans, described an encounter with a “little fellow” he had along his journey:

Mister, I understand your mission, for I have seen others, but what I wish to know is where is this here Grays Harbor located?

Sonny boy, I told him, Grays Harbor is way out there on the Pacific, state of Washington. Several little towns are nestling around its calm and canal-like rivers. . . . The chief product of Grays Harbor is lumber. Just a few years ago Grays Harbor boasted of being the outstanding shipping port of its kind in the whole world. But now, you’ll observe its numerous smoke stacks are smokeless, and all these little towns quiet, like enchanting beauty sleep. We love our Grays Harbor, and when our mission is over, we will go back there. We are not bums, although

²⁵ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 7 June 1932. On McKenney, see Chapters 3 and 9.

²⁶ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 29 January 1932.

²⁷ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 22 January 1932.

²⁸ Boyer and Morais, *Labor’s Untold Story*, 268.

we have been called such, and other things, like radicals, adventurers and whatnot. We are all veterans of the World war, who did our duty as expected. We were promised that that was a war to end all wars and bring peace and permanent prosperity to all nations. We cannot forgive these promises for we paid with our blood.²⁹

Even the Hoquiam Chamber of Commerce, which only a few short years earlier might have led resistance against the activities of the Bonus Marchers, wrote a supportive declaration urging the prompt “payment of the veterans’ adjusted compensation certificates in full at this time.”³⁰

At the center of the collective struggle to survive the Great Depression was the Communist movement. Among the most important community organizations formed by these “Reds” were the Unemployed Councils (UCs). Communist unemployed organizations were initially set up in US cities during 1929, but the composition, structure, and connections between local UCs were not established until a year later by the Comintern. In July 1930, 1,320 delegates met in Chicago to strengthen the UCs in part by rendering them independent from the CP. At this conference UCs were reorganized as decentralized units based in each town with neighborhood and block committees carrying on much of the agitation and educational work. By the time of the UC re-organization meeting, however, several large councils were already operational, with those in New York City and Chicago composed of more than one thousand members each.³¹ Local committees across the nation busied themselves by fighting evictions and demanding greater relief payments.³²

²⁹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 1, 4 June 1932.

³⁰ Resolution by the Hoquiam Chamber of Commerce, printed in the *Aberdeen Daily World*, 2 May 1932.

³¹ Storch, 102-105; Franklin Folsom, *Impatient Armies of the Poor: The Story of Collective Action of the Unemployed* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 1991), 264.

³² Folsom, *Impatient Armies of the Poor*, 261.

The UC movement in Grays Harbor, and specifically Aberdeen, was also up and running by July 1930. On 6 March 1930, which was declared International Unemployment Day by the Comintern, unemployed marches, involving thousands of workers, were held throughout the world.³³ That day more than 100,000 men and women gathered in protest in New York and Detroit, while 20,000 or more demonstrated in Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Youngstown.³⁴ In the Pacific Northwest the largest march occurred in Seattle where nearly one thousand activists marched through the city's Skid Road district before several of their numbers were arrested or beaten into submission by police.³⁵ In Aberdeen the meeting was led by soapboxers from the UC and IWW who harangued crowds throughout downtown during the afternoon and evening.³⁶ Reviving their own well-worn traditions of anti-radicalism, city authorities banned all future demonstrations, informing Communists and Wobblies that their activities would not be tolerated. Aberdeen police broke up a series of speeches put on by the CP and the IWW, and "all open air meetings" were put to "an end in Aberdeen."³⁷ Respecting the influence, if not necessarily the politics of his Communist fellow agitators, one Aberdeen Wobbly noted that "The fear of the unemployed demonstrations has probably prompted this action."³⁸

The most notable feature of Grays Harbor UC activity was its creative use of direct action. Activists like Joe Schroyer, Lydia Laukkanen, and Jesse Woodworth joined dozens of their comrades to agitate for concessions from city officials, landlords,

³³ Storch, 104-105; T. H. Watkins, *The Hungry Years: A Narrative History of the Great Depression* (New York: MacMillan, 2000), 118-122; Folsom, 244-260.

³⁴ Folsom, *Inpatient Armies of the Poor*, 255.

³⁵ *Seattle Times*; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 6 March 1930.

³⁶ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 6, 7 March 1930.

³⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 29 March 1930.

³⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 29 March 1930.

and the boss. These men and women gained notoriety when they diverted a water main to provide “free water” to destitute workers at the Aberdeen CP hall, held demonstrations within the Salvation Army to demand higher quality relief, and stormed the Aberdeen city council chambers to demand greater public relief.³⁹

As the depths of the depression grew, so did the level of UC activity. This was most clear during 1932 and 1933 when UCs held mass meetings and marches throughout the downtown streets of Aberdeen on a monthly basis. In late January 1932, at least two hundred unemployed workers staged a demonstration under the aegis of the UC carrying banners reading “fight capitalism.”⁴⁰ On May Day 1932, approximately one thousand workers attended a rally put on by the local CP.⁴¹ One year later, three hundred workers carrying “United Front banners” marched through downtown Aberdeen to the welfare commissioner’s office where the Finnish-American Communist leader Lydia Laukkanen delivered an impassioned speech and the group delivered its demands for a minimum wage, cash relief, free medical and dental care, and free milk for children to the commissioner.⁴² During the summer of 1933, amid Roosevelt’s First Hundred Days, Grays Harbor workers continued to be deprived of life’s basic necessities. Party activists were forced to apply pressure on municipal officials and local relief officers to provide basic necessities, such as free milk for school children; and food, clothing, and blood transfusions for indigent workers.⁴³ They also tapped into the indigenous radical

³⁹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 12 March; 7 May; 5 November 1932; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 5 May 1932; Ed Leavitt to Org. Dept., C.C., 13 May 1932, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2908; D. O. to the Secretariat, C.C. CPUSA, 16 August 1932, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2908.

⁴⁰ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 29 January 1932.

⁴¹ Ed Levitt to Org. Dept., C.C., 25 April 1932, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2908; Ed Leavitt to Org. Dept., C.C., 13 May 1932, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2908.

⁴² *Voice of Action*, 8 May 1933.

⁴³ Aberdeen Report, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2908; *Voice of Action*, 17; 24 April; 28 June 1933; *Grays Harbor Post*, 5 November 1932.

creativity of Harbor lumber workers who printed a shop paper called the *Grays Harbor Worker* in the latter part of 1931. The organ mixed strike and election news with opinion and youth sections. It also printed a comic featuring “T. Cat” and “I. Promise,” who represented “all capitalist candidates” and hence understood “nothing of the problems of the workers because he is not a worker.”⁴⁴

Women, particularly young Finnish Americans, were at the center of the local Communist movement. Party records for Grays Harbor prior to 1931 are relatively sparse, but those available clearly indicate that young Finnish women occupied a central role in maintaining the Party during the 1920s and early 1930s. Emma Sipila was the sole Grays Harbor delegate to the 1927 WCPA District 12 convention in Seattle, where she played a significant role as one of only three women among the twenty delegates. During the meeting Sipila was asked to keep District 12 leaders apprised of the progress of the women’s Communist paper printed in Aberdeen, a reference to a local Party organ I was unable to unearth.⁴⁵

As with the Wobblies, youth groups were essential to the CP’s movement. Branches of the Young Workers’ League (YWL), later renamed the Young Communist League (YCL), were already active in Aberdeen and nearby Ilwaco by the spring of 1922.⁴⁶ Finns were the dominant group in the local Communist youth movement throughout much of its history. In 1929, for example, thirty percent of the nation’s YCL members were Finnish Americans. Led by Finns, the Aberdeen branch of the Young Communists remained active throughout the 1920s. Finnish Communist leaders such as

⁴⁴ Alex Noral to Wn Weiner, 21 December 1931, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2318. *Grays Harbor Worker*, 13 November 1931. The only known copy of this newspaper is found in RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2494.

⁴⁵ Workers Party of America, POLCOM Session of 22 August 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1433.

⁴⁶ Kostianen, *The Forging of*, 175-177.

Lydia Laukkanen at the local level, as well as national organizers such as Yetta Stromberg, came up through the ranks of the YCL, where they gained the training for their future leadership roles in the party.⁴⁷ The Aberdeen branch of the YCL, as well as the Young Pioneers, another Communist youth organization, held weekly meetings at “Red” Finn Hall. There, the groups met to discuss issues of unemployment, imperialism, and war. Members held meetings, protested, and attended the party’s summer schools in Winlock and Woodland, Washington, in 1927 and 1928. The 1927 Winlock school was attended by 42 students, twenty-four female and eighteen males, ranging in age from 14 to 23. Twenty-eight of the students came from fifteen towns spread across Washington. This practically guaranteed that many of them hailed from Aberdeen and Hoquiam, two hotbeds of Finnish radicalism in the immediate vicinity of the site of the school. The 1927 meeting of the school so outraged local public school authorities that they contacted federal immigration officers, who then raided the school and dispersed its students.⁴⁸ Eight years later, CPUSA schools opened in Aberdeen, as well as four other Pacific Northwest towns.⁴⁹

Membership and leadership of the YCL and Young Pioneers was largely comprised of young Finnish-American women. Mary Laukkanen, a young Finnish-American woman, was active in the Aberdeen branch of the WPA during the early 1920s when membership in that organization on the Harbor was small and insignificant to the

⁴⁷ Sidney Bloomfield to Org. Dept., 18 May 1931, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1042; Resolution to Governor Roland Hartley on behalf of Centralia Prisoners, 15 April 1932, Young Communist League, Aberdeen, Wash., Governor Roland Harley Papers, Accession No. 2K-1-28, Insurance Commission-IWW, 1929, WSA; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 2 May 1931; Kostianen, *The Forging of*, 137.

⁴⁸ Kostianen, *The Forging of*, 176-177; Resolutions to Governor; *Industrial Worker*, 29 December 1929; Aaron Fislerman to Jay Lovestone, 17 May 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1042

⁴⁹ *Monthly Guide* (Seattle), November 1935, 4. The *Monthly Guide* served as an organ for District 12 of the CPUSA.

local labor movement.⁵⁰ However, by the mid-1920s, Mary's younger sister Lydia had eclipsed her, moving on to become one of, if not the, most effective Communist leaders in the region's history. Born on 29 November 1909 in Aberdeen, Lydia Laukkanen lived with her parents and four siblings at 1000 Marion Street, deep in the heart of South Aberdeen's "Finn Town." To get by, five of the six household members worked outside the home until losing their husband and father Abel, a mill hand at Donovan Lumber Company, to a stroke.⁵¹ Before her twentieth birthday, Lydia was already one of the best-known Communist organizers in the Pacific Northwest, and the Party showed its faith in Laukkanen by bestowing high-level duties upon her. She was a leader of local unemployed groups, a Party candidate for city and county office, and had the enormous responsibility of overseeing a high-level investigative committee into one of her comrade's fiscal malfeasance.⁵² Lydia also served as president and organizer for the Aberdeen YCL, while Ellen Rautio another Finnish woman, acted as secretary.⁵³ In fact, Laukkanen was at the fore of most Party activities, and she expressed her commitment to the class struggle in a straightforward, enthusiastic manner, writing, for example, "We . . . pledge ourselves to fight for the organization of the American toiling youth against

⁵⁰ According to the 1920 census, Mary Laukkanen was only thirteen years old, thus putting her in her middle-teens at the time *Tyomies* recognized her activities within the party. Like her parents, Mary was born in Finland.

⁵¹ United States Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1930*, Washington State, Chehalis County, Aberdeen; Merle A. Reinikka, "Death Certificates of Finns in Chehalis [Grays Harbor] County, 1907-1947," Aberdeen History Collection, AHM.

⁵² Report of Central Commission on the Miners Relief Case to the Polcom, 4-7 December 1928, 1-4, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1433; Resolution Calling upon the Governor and the Parole Board to Release the Eight Centralia Victims, Unanimously Adopted, 2 December 1928, Governor Roland Harley Papers, 2K-1-28, Insurance Commission – IWW, Folder: "I.W.W. (Centralia Massacre) 1927-1928," WSA; "Congressional Election Platform of the Communist Party," issued by the Grays Harbor Section Committee Communist Party, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 3605; RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 1433.

⁵³ Resolution Calling upon the Governor and the Parole Board to Release the Eight Centralia Victims, Unanimously Adopted, 2 December 1928, Governor Roland Harley Papers, 2K-1-28, Insurance Commission – IWW, Folder: "IWW (Centralia Massacre) 1927-1928," WSA.

bosses wars and the capitalist system of hunger, terror, and wars.”⁵⁴ Indeed, Laukkanen’s activism in the CP was only one indication of women’s high degree of involvement in the local Communist movement. Thus, while IWW member 983776 mocked the party’s “sex appeal,” the exploitation of a few “bobbed haired girls,” what he either ignored or misunderstood was that the “girls” were not only out in front at political rallies, they, too, were running the party apparatus behind the scenes.⁵⁵

As these examples indicate, Grays Harbor was a hotbed of radical activity during the Depression. But workers’ activism was by no means confined to the Harbor. Instead, the labor upsurge of the early 1930s was national in scope. Southern textile workers joined nut pickers in St. Louis and loggers in Grays Harbor in forming community-based, horizontally organized, and militant working-class institutions. Scholars on this topic have attributed the rise of this “alternative unionism” to a wide range of sources, including the leading roles played by Communists, socialists, Trotskyites, and “individual Wobblies or former Wobblies” in local and regional labor struggles.⁵⁶ Based primarily on the work of activist historians including Staughton Lynd and Len DeCaux, this concept rests largely upon the argument that the IWW exerted a residual impact on the struggles after its own demise through the activism of “former Wobblies” and those influenced by earlier IWW actions.⁵⁷ As Lynd argued, regardless of its sources, the new unionism of the period bore a stark “Wobbly resemblance.”⁵⁸ Surprisingly, no scholars

⁵⁴ Resolution Against Bosses Wars, submitted to Governor Roland H. Harley, 15 April 1932, Governor Roland Hartley Papers, Accession No. 2K-1-28, Insurance Commission-IWW, 1930-32, WSA.

⁵⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 11 January 1930.

⁵⁶ Lynd, ed., “*We Are All Leaders*,” 4. See also Feurer, *Radical Unionism in the Midwest*, 23-47.

⁵⁷ Lynd, “*We Are All Leaders*,” 4; Len DeCaux, *The Living Spirit of the Wobblies* (New York: International Publishers, 1978); Archie Green, *Wobblies, Pile Butts, and Other Heroes: Laborlore Explorations* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 422.

⁵⁸ Staughton Lynd, ed. “*We Are All Leaders*.”

have traced this “Wobbly resemblance” to its most likely source: the Wobblies.⁵⁹ But in Grays Harbor, of the several thousand workers who participated in the strikes of the early 1930s, many retained institutional and ideological affiliations with the IWW.⁶⁰ This fact was shown most explicitly in the opinions of Communists, who excoriated what they viewed as the “IWW ideology among the strikers” and the “syndicalist (mostly IWW and ex-IWW) leadership of the unemployed movement in the district.”⁶¹ Thus, active red card holders, and not just ex-Wobblies, were at the fore of strikes waged during the 1920s and 1930s in the woods and lumber mills, on fishing boats, and along shore.

In Grays Harbor, as throughout much of Washington State, the Wobbly influence on early 1930s labor activism was neither absent nor merely residual. IWWs had played roles as strike instigators, picketers, fundraisers, advocates, and advisors during the lumber and shingle mill strikes of the mid-1920s.⁶² In tandem with their syndicalist culture of solidarity forged around the Wobbly halls, IWW involvement in the lumber strikes of the Twenties enabled them to remain a vital, potent force within Grays Harbor. Their relevance within the local labor scene proved significant during the early 1930s when organizing conditions improved and rank-and-file workers the nation over began to construct the “alternative unionism” of the Thirties. The Wobbly presence in the Grays Harbor labor movement was evinced in their role in several of the strikes during the early

⁵⁹ Lynd states that he was “talking about the *character* of the alternative unionism of the 1930s, not its *causation*.” The studies included in “*We Are All Leaders*” do not focus on the organizational activities of the IWW during the 1930s.

⁶⁰ “Activity Questionnaire from September 1st to December 31st [1928],” RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d.1433; *Industrial Worker*, 22 March 26 April 1930; 8, 15 August 1933; *Voice of Action*, 7 August 1933; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 25, 28, 30 July 1930; 4, 5 13, 16 November 1931; “Fight or Starve,” Flyer Issued by the National Lumber Workers’ Union, Aberdeen, Washington, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2180.

⁶¹ Minutes of the District Buro Meeting Held on July 25th, 1933, Seattle, Washington, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 3289, II. 8; Resolution of District #12 Convention, 30 September – 1 October 1932, 2, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2907.

⁶² Thompson, *The IWW*, 173; *Industrial Unionist*, 2 May; 7, 21 October 1925; 24 March 1926; *Industrial Worker*, 10, 14, 17 May 1924; 12, 19 February 1927.

part of this decade. It too could be seen in the mass rallies they hosted in downtown Aberdeen, the strike meetings at their hall, and their challenges to street speaking prohibitions, which very much resembled those free speech fights of twenty years earlier.⁶³ Wobblies also showed up as devoted resisters against the Communists, those they called the “Comical Party” or “Fakaloo Outfit,” who were organizing lumber workers into their own “Red” unions.⁶⁴ While some scholars have argued that Communists in the early 1930s played roles very similar to those of the Wobblies two decades prior, Wobs themselves saw the matter differently. During the mill and logging strikes of 1932, for example, Harbor IWWs organized themselves and showed up at Communist meetings to hand out Wob literature, bait Party speakers into debates, and to urge rank-and-file resistance to the CP. But the Wobs were not merely disruptors, nor were they content to sit idly by while they were called “Social Fascists” by a new group claiming the mantle of American Revolution.⁶⁵ Indeed, when the working class of Grays Harbor took to the streets of Aberdeen and Hoquiam during the early 1930s, they did so with every bit as much of Joe Hill as Joe Stalin on their minds.

One clear site of Wobbly strength during the Depression years was on the docks, where the Marine Transport Workers’ Industrial Union (MTWIU) 510 retained something of its earlier vigor along shore through the work of local activists affiliated

⁶³ *Industrial Worker*, 8, 15 August 1933; *New Unionist*, 18 May 1929; *Bulletin No. 1: Lumber Workers’ Industrial Union No. 120 of the IWW* (Aberdeen, WA), 1933, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 46, Folder 9, WSU; *Industrial Worker*, 5 December 1933. Although there is only one copy of the *Bulletin* known to exist, Johnson did ask that “Donations and articles, for the support of this bulletin, should be sent to Iver Johnson, Chairman of the G.O.C., 110 North F. Street, Aberdeen, Wash.,” thereby implying that more issues were to follow.

⁶⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 2 November; 21 December 1929; 11, 18 January, 29 March 1930; 25 July; 8, 15 August 1933; *Voice of Action*, 7 August 1933.

⁶⁵ S.B. to Org. Dept., 26 May 1931, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2318.

with the Aberdeen branch.⁶⁶ While the MTWIU's record of achievement during these years is slim, their persistence on the waterfront during the 1920s, years of unprecedented lumber shipments, enabled the Aberdeen branch to emerge in 1929-1930 as one of the largest locals of the MTWIU in the nation.⁶⁷ Many of these workers were dual unionists who also belonged to the local branch of the ILA.⁶⁸ At least fifty-six Grays Harbor longshoremen from the 1921-1935 period were actively associated with the Wobblies. Still more impressive was the fact that there was a distinct IWW presence among the maritime militants who formed the International Longshoremen's and Warehouse Union (ILWU) in 1937. Notably, of the 416 longshoremen listed as having worked on the Grays Harbor docks between 1935 and 1938, at least seventeen of them carried both their ILWU and red cards.⁶⁹

The IWW also extended its presence off shore and onto the Harbor's fleet of fishing boats. Syndicalist fishermen received credit from their Communist enemies for organizing a union in Grays Harbor and initiating a major coast-wide fishermen's strike.⁷⁰ Wobbly direct action showed itself in April 1933 when these fishermen formed an IWW local and struck to rescind a cut in the price of fish. As the strike spread down the Pacific Coast and up the Columbia River, Communists gained key leadership positions within the union and were able to direct the strike. "The trollers are organized

⁶⁶ *Industrial Worker*, 18 April 1923; 14, 21 December 1929; Marine Transport Workers Industrial Union No. 510 of the IWW, Financial Statement for the Months of May, June, July, August and October, 1929, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 28, Folder 13, WSU.

⁶⁷ Marine Transport Workers Industrial Union No. 510 of the IWW, Financial Statement for the Months of May, June, July, August and October, 1929, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 28, Folder 13, WSU.

⁶⁸ *Industrial Worker*, 2, 30 November; 7, 14, 21 December 1929. On the perseverance of the Grays Harbor MTWIU during the mid-1920s, see *Marine Worker* (New York), 1 June 1925; 1 May 1926.

⁶⁹ Jeff Jewell, "History of Grays Harbor Longshoremen," International Longshoremen's and Warehouse Union Local 24 Archives, Aberdeen, Washington.

⁷⁰ *Industrial Worker*, 13 March 1934. On Finnish-American fishermen in Grays Harbor, see Laila Walli Silva, "River Stories: The Wishkah and the Chehalis," in *East Aberdeen Finns: Grays Harbor County, Washington*, Published by the Finnish-American Historical Society of the West 25:1 (December 1998), 4.

in a new union established by the union and officially called a strike. . . . The entire coast from Eureka, Cal. to southern Alaska responded to the call,” signaled the Communist National Lumber Workers’ Union (NLWU) president James Murphy.⁷¹

IWWs also remained active in the lumber industry, which IWW historian Fred Thompson called the site of the IWW’s “greatest triumphs.”⁷² Wobblies were particularly active during the 1925, 1932, and 1935 lumber strikes; Aberdeen was, in fact, a main hub of activity for the IWW’s Lumber Workers’ Industrial Union (LWIU), a site where rebel lumber workers held conventions, organized speakers’ series, printed newsletters, and penned strike reports for the single-industry region as it experienced the Depression Decade.⁷³ But their most visible role during a strike came in July 1933, when thousands of mill hands and loggers struck, paralyzing the Harbor’s lumber industry before spreading into the lumber regions of eastern Washington and southern Oregon. Much of the organizational impulse for the strike came from Harbor Communists, but most strikers were the “unorganized lumber workers of the Pacific northwest,” men who showed significant interest in the IWW.⁷⁴ Throughout the strike, Wobblies held “large and enthusiastic” strike meetings and organized strikes at individual workplaces. On 23 July, loggers, some of whom were Wobblies, at one Grays Harbor Merrill and Ring logging camp determined by “rank and file vote” to “strike for the six-hour day, 50¢

⁷¹ J. Murphy to Jack Stachel, 9 May 1933, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 3873.

⁷² Fred Thompson, *The IWW*, 173; *Industrial Unionist*, 2 May; 7, 21 October 1925; 24 March 1926; *Industrial Worker*, 10, 14, 17 May 1924; 12, 19 February 1927.

⁷³ Thompson, *The IWW*, 173; *Industrial Unionist*, 2 May; 7, 21 October 1925; Dunning, “The Lumber Industry: Will Its Workers Awaken?” 6-7; *Industrial Worker*, 25 July; 8, 15 August; 5 December 1933; *New Unionist*, 18 May 1929; *Bulletin No. 1: Lumber Workers’ Industrial Union No. 120 of the IWW* (Aberdeen, WA), 1933, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, Box 46, Folder 9, WSU. Although there is only one copy of the *Bulletin* known to exist, Johnson did ask that “Donations and articles, for the support of this bulletin, should be sent to Iver Johnson, Chairman of the GOC, 110 North F. Street, Aberdeen, Wash.,” thereby implying that more issues were to follow.

⁷⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 18 January, 29 March 1930; 8 August 1933; *Voice of Action*, 7 August 1933.

minimum per hour and no increase in board.” The strike was set to begin two days after the vote, but after one particularly active IWW was fired, “90 per cent of the rigging crew walked out with him, the buckers and fallers followed the next day after getting scaled up.”⁷⁵

Wobblies played visible roles as organizers and picketers in the strikes that shook the lumber industry during the 1930s, and the revolutionary syndicalists’ numbers working in lumber continued to grow after the 1933 strike, prompting Fred Thompson to write that the LWIU “recovered to a peak in 1936 and declined again.”⁷⁶ And while it would be incorrect to speak of the great industrial conflicts of the 1930s as Wobbly strikes, it is equally mistaken to write off the IWW as irrelevant during this period. Indeed, amid the dramatic strikes of the mid-1930s, the Grays Harbor Wobblies boasted more than 600 members and supporters in Aberdeen and Hoquiam alone, and the richly detailed depictions of the great lumber strike of 1935 that can be found in the IWW press showed Wobbly involvement in, if not leadership of, the conflict.⁷⁷ Even the lifelong Grays Harbor Communist “Brick” Moir, who started logging during the early 1930s, recalled that at the start of his career everyone in the woods carried a red card.⁷⁸

Like the Wobblies, whose form of unionism was rooted heavily in their local communities, Grays Harbor’s Communist movement carried its radical program from the streets of Aberdeen to the point of production during the early years of the Great Depression. The CP’s efforts to organize the lumber industry were set in place during

⁷⁵ *Industrial Worker*, 8, 15 August 1933.

⁷⁶ Thompson, *The IWW*, 173. Thompson does not supply any sources for this conclusion. However, his study is the official history of the union and was produced with full access to the union’s membership lists and finances. As such, it is reasonable to expect that his assertions about the LWIU’s successes were based on evidence Thompson discovered in the union’s archives.

⁷⁷ *Industrial Worker*, 18, 25 May; 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 June; 6, 13, 20 July 1935; *Industrialisti*, 3, 10, 24, 25, 29 July; 14 December 1935.

⁷⁸ Gordon “Brick” Moir, interview by Gary Murrell, Audio Recording, Hoquiam, WA, 27 March 2000.

August 1929 with the formation of the National Lumber Workers' Union (NLWU).⁷⁹ The new union was the outgrowth of the Trade Union Unity League (TUUL), founded at the fourth convention of the TUEL in Cleveland held from 31 August - 1 September 1929.⁸⁰ The NLWU itself was an attempt to apply the TUUL's union strategy of dual unionism to the lumber industry where, with the exception of the International Shingle Weavers' Union (ISWU), Communists were notable mostly for their absence during the 1920s. The TUUL had been created as a direct result of the failings of the TUEL, which fell under heavy fire from the red-baiting from both within and outside of the AFL. By 1924, Communists had, as historian Fraser M. Ottanelli argued, lost their progressive allies, "and their enemies were quick to take advantage of the situation," by expelling the radicals from AFL unions and denying them from participating in the AFL convention.⁸¹ The move to dual unionism was also the American reflection of a shift in the strategy of the worldwide Communist movement, as parties around the world anticipated the eminent collapse of capitalism and made moves to form their own unions. By the time of its dismantling, the TUEL had failed to extend its ranks beyond the ethnic workers, particularly Russians and Finns, whose presence was well-established in the Party, and had led few strikes of any significance outside of the needle trades.⁸² And, outside of its successes among the Grays Harbor weavers, the TUEL strategy as a whole had yielded precious few victories in the Pacific Northwest.

⁷⁹ Todes, 188.

⁸⁰ Ottanelli, 21-23; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement, Volume X: The TUEL, 1925-1929* (New York: International Publishers, 1991), 270; Storch, 136-137. These Communist-led unions included the National Miners Union, National Textile Workers Union, Auto Workers Union and Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union.

⁸¹ Ottanelli, 13, 21.

⁸² Storch, 134-137; Irving Bernstein, *A History of the American Worker, 1920-1933: The Lean Years* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1960), 136-141; Lembcke and Tattam, 120.

The first major test of the NLWU and the Communist-affiliated shingle weavers' union came in July 1930 at several shingle mills in Aberdeen and at Moclips, Washington, a small beach community in the far northwestern corner of Grays Harbor County.⁸³ The strike arose as a protest by several hundred workers against a 20 percent wage reduction from \$3.40 per day to less than \$2.70. Although wage decreases were nothing new for shingle weavers, by the summer of 1930, with the Depression long underway, most men and women in the Pacific Northwest lumber industry had witnessed their work schedules and pay checks be drastically reduced. Mill owner Paul R. Smith, for one, boasted that he "was one of the pioneers in Grays Harbor in reducing wages."⁸⁴

The weavers were most successful in Aberdeen, where a large, militant, working-class community was mobilized for picket duty and strike relief. Action centered at the large Saginaw shingle mill in south Aberdeen.⁸⁵ Picket duty began on 24 July and strikers made it clear from the start that they intended to protect their jobs. Strikers physically attacked scabs on several occasions, and for the most part prevented strikebreakers from entering the mill during late July. Most effective were the strikers' mechanized picket lines, which consisted of groups of shingle weavers patrolling town in their automobiles. During one confrontation, the mobile picketers overtook and surrounded a bus the shingle mill owners were using as a scab carrier. Once they had stopped the bus, a "free for all" between strikers and scabs took place. Striker F. F. Hemeke forced his way onto the bus, abducted a seventeen-year-old scab, dragged him

⁸³ For a background on the town of Moclips, see Van Syckle, *The River Pioneers*, 212, 216.

⁸⁴ "Red Cedar Shingle and Shakes: The Labor Story, Interviews with Elwood R. Maunder," *Journal of Forest History* 19:3 (July 1975): 125.

⁸⁵ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 25 July 1930; *Industrial Worker*, 26 April 1930.

onto the street, and pummeled him.⁸⁶ Many scabs were herded in from Montesano, the county seat located ten miles east of Aberdeen. This proved too long a journey for the strikebreakers who “were attacked” while “enroute to their homes.”⁸⁷ Despite a large police presence and several arrests at the Saginaw mill, strikers largely succeeded in stopping production, and those men who entered the plant did so via a bus or tug boat.⁸⁸ The aggressive picketing worked especially well in Aberdeen, where the Saginaw Mill closed on July 29 “after operating less than a week.”⁸⁹

At the M. R. Smith mill in Moclips, strikers used violence to keep the number of scabs to a minimum, allowing only the Smith family members to operate the plant. Union member Harold L. Stilson recalled doing “things that were really terrible” to keep the strikebreakers out of the Smith mill, writing: “We went there [the mill] at night when the shifts changed. A man got on each side of the door where they had to come out to go to the mill. As the guys came through, we would clout them alongside the head. With four over there, two would catch one and the other two would catch the other one and drag them back and tell them to get out.” Many scabs, continued Stilson, were “put . . . in boxcars and send them back to Everett.”⁹⁰ With only bosses operating the machinery, strikers were precise in their aggression. The *Daily World* alleged that unionists attached dynamite to one shingle block that was to be cut at the mill. When Ira Smith and his son Leo ran a shingle saw through the dynamite, it exploded, injuring both men, particularly the elder Smith, who the *Daily World* reported, “may lose his eye.”⁹¹

⁸⁶ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 28 July 1930.

⁸⁷ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 30 July 1930.

⁸⁸ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 28 July 1930.

⁸⁹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 30 July 1930.

⁹⁰ “Red Cedar Shingles and Shakes,” 119.

⁹¹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 23 August 1930.

While only scattered fragments of evidence remain about striker violence, Communists ensured that no one would soon forget the abuses strikers suffered at the hands of police and imported gun thugs. Discussing employers' violent tactics used to quell the strike, District 12 CP organizer Sidney Bloomfield informed Party leadership in New York that, "now the terror of the Lumber Barons has busted out like a shot from the clear sky."⁹² NLWU President James Murphy concurred, declaring the "weavers capitulated before terrorism" and shingle manufacturers' "thugs employed tear gas among other forms of brutality" against their striking workers.⁹³ One strikebreaking tactic came by importing "association gun thugs," who arrested activists, physically assaulted strikers, and hurled tear gas bombs into their gatherings. Due to the distance from Moclips to the more populous towns of Aberdeen and Hoquiam, the conservative mainstream press was able to wholly ignore the strike, keeping Harbor residents ignorant of the attacks committed on strikers by company gunmen.⁹⁴ At least seven picket line activists -- all lumber or shingle workers -- drawn from the party and TUUL, were taken from the picket lines by county sheriffs between 25 and 27 June, charged with trespassing, carried off to the Grays Harbor County jail forty-five miles away in Montesano, and held on one hundred dollars bail each.⁹⁵

⁹² Letter from Sidney Bloomfield to the Secretariat, 16 September 1930, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d.1958.

⁹³ James Murphy, "History of the National Lumber Workers Union," *Voice of Action*, 6 July 1934.

⁹⁴ This struggle gained only limited ink in the mainstream press, and of that attention, nothing was said about what occurred in Moclips during the summer of 1930. Only years later, in the writings of Charlotte Todes and James Murphy would the true scope of this strike come to light. See Murphy, "History of the National Lumber Workers Union"; Todes, *Lumber and Labor*, 183.

⁹⁵ *Vanguard*, July-August 1930; Grays Harbor County Jail Record, Volume 5, 1930-1933. The seven men arrested in Moclips on charges of trespassing were laborers Frank Adken and Leo Pitkin, and shingle weavers Walter Eddy, Ralph Ray, Gerald Ray, Jess Newlan, and Dan Grant.

The NLWU and other Communists played the most active role in the strike. The Party had been hosting mass meetings for striking shingle weavers throughout the year.⁹⁶ According to NLWU President James Murphy, after experiencing the employers' terror at Moclips, non-Communist union leaders abdicated, only to be replaced by NLWU organizers who led "these strikers in their fight for a living wage."⁹⁷ Additionally, International Labor Defense (ILD) activists were called in to defend the strikers, while the International Workers' Relief, another CP auxiliary, put up the bail money.⁹⁸ In spite of these relief efforts and the weavers' great degree of solidarity, the strike had "petered out" by early September with ISWU members receiving none of their demands.⁹⁹

Gaining a following among the unionized shingle weavers, a group that consistently supported socialist politics, was one thing; influencing the masses of mill hands and loggers, whose syndicalist sympathies were a matter of general agreement, was another matter.¹⁰⁰ However, in the immediate aftermath of the 1930 ISWU strike in Grays Harbor, Communists extended their influence from the region's shingle mills into its logging camps and lumber mills. As a series of lumber strikes demonstrated, Communists' successes hinged on their ability to connect shop floor struggles to their community-organizing campaigns.

Epitomizing the crossover between workplace and community were a series of strikes waged jointly by the Aberdeen UC and rank-and-file activists at lumber mills in Aberdeen and Montesano between November 1931 and February 1932. In each strike,

⁹⁶ "Organize and Fight: Against Wage Cuts! For Decent Conditions!" Flyer issued by the National Lumber Workers Union, Local 2 – Grays Harbor; "Fight or Starve," Flyer Issued by the National Lumber Workers' Union, Aberdeen, Washington, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2180.

⁹⁷ *Voice of Action*, 6 July 1934.

⁹⁸ Todes, 183; *Vanguard*, July-August 1930;

⁹⁹ Letter from Sidney Bloomfield to the Secretariat, 11 September 1930, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d.1958.

¹⁰⁰ On the shingle weavers' support for socialism, see Chapter 5.

UC efforts centered on stopping mill owners from taking advantage of the desperation of unemployed workers, who, following the closures and reopening of their plants, flocked back to their jobs only to find their old wages drastically reduced. At the Schafer Brothers mills in Aberdeen and Montesano, wages proved to be among the most miserly: \$1.50 per day for common labor, after a fifty cent cut took effect in November 1931.¹⁰¹ “Two young workers,” members of the NLWU, reported having “our wages cut five times” during the previous eighteen months. M. J. Oremos, another Communist lumber worker, agreed that “wage-cutting has been the only program the bosses of the lumber industry have been able to give us.”¹⁰² Albert Schafer, the old miser himself, declared as much, admitting, “We know the men cannot live on \$1.50 a day.”¹⁰³ With Grays Harbor’s lumber production at only 5 percent of its capacity in 1932, mill workers faced dire straits. But radicals from the Communist lumber union sought to prevent the mill owners from making starvation wages the norm on the Harbor.¹⁰⁴

One of the strongest concentrations of NLWU strength on the Harbor was at the Schafer Brothers mill 4 in south Aberdeen. Schafer employees were active in the NLWU dating back to at least early 1930 when the red unionists contributed to the leadership of a minor lumber strike. Party activists hosted mass meetings at the Odd Fellows and Knights of Pythias halls, and distributed flyers proclaiming “Fight or Starve” and “Organize and Fight: Against Wage Cuts! For Decent Conditions!” and “Mill workers, Loggers” to “Join the National Workers Union.”¹⁰⁵ So strong, in fact, were the links

¹⁰¹ *Grays Harbor Post*, 7 November 1931.

¹⁰² *Grays Harbor Worker*, 13 November 1931.

¹⁰³ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 4 November 1931.

¹⁰⁴ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 4, 8 April 1932.

¹⁰⁵ Three flyers from the 1930 lumber strike in Grays Harbor are included in RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2280. Their headlines read: “Fight the Wage Cut: Spread the Strike!” “Fight or Starve,” and “Organize and

between the Party and the rank and file at the Schafer mill that when, in November 1931, these workmen walked off the job, they immediately assembled within the “Red” Finn hall, property of Aberdeen’s Finnish Communists.¹⁰⁶ It was thus at the Schafer Brothers mill in Aberdeen where Grays Harbor lumber workers put up the “first definite uprising against their employers” of the Depression era.¹⁰⁷

On the evening of 3 November 1931, members of the Aberdeen UC, described by the *Daily World* as a “large following of unemployed men,” joined several employees of Schafer Brothers mill 4 outside of the plant to protest wage cuts and a revised wage scale declared to be “too low for livelihood.”¹⁰⁸ The Harbor towns were blanketed with thousands of Communist handbills advertising the strike, and street demonstrations were visible throughout Aberdeen.¹⁰⁹ One week later CP activists attended a meeting of longshoremen who loaded Schafer lumber and convinced the dockworkers to join the strike. Consequently, these longshoremen refused to cross the strikers’ picket lines even once police and employers encouraged their return to work. The next day, approximately one hundred strikers and Party activists picketed the Schafer docks and according to the *Daily World* were “singing communist songs.”¹¹⁰ Registering his approval with the strike, one CP District 12 organizer informed the Party secretariat that “the Lumber Workers are beginning to revolt.”¹¹¹

Fight: Against Wage Cuts! For Decent Conditions!” The “Organize and Fight” flyer was dated 5 January 1930.

¹⁰⁶ *Grays Harbor Post*, 16 November 1931.

¹⁰⁷ *Grays Harbor Post*, 7 November 1931.

¹⁰⁸ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 4 November 1931.

¹⁰⁹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 4 November 1931.

¹¹⁰ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 4, 5, 13 November 1931.

¹¹¹ D. O., #12 to the Secretariat, 8 December 1931, RTsKhidNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2281.

The mass action worked. The strike spread to Schafer Brothers mill 1 in Montesano, which like the Aberdeen mill, was paying only \$1.50 per day.¹¹² On 15 November the strikers finally met and issued their demands: a withdrawal of the latest wage cut, a minimum daily wage of \$2.50, an eight-hour day, no making up lost time, and no discrimination against union employees.¹¹³ The strikers also gained support from other sectors of the community. On 17 November merchants and civic leaders met to support a “solution fair to all sides,” while the Hoquiam local of the 4L company union vigorously pushed for a \$3 minimum at all Grays Harbor lumber mills.¹¹⁴ In response, both Schafer mills offered a compromise \$2 minimum wage and an increased wage scale.¹¹⁵ By 18 November the *Daily World* reported that strikers were rushing back to work, eager to enjoy their new wages.¹¹⁶

The militant spirit of the strike, however, had become infectious among the mill workers. Within two days of their return to work under the new wage scale, men at the Montesano mill voted to walk out again unless an expanded list of demands, including the end to mandatory shopping at a company store, was met.¹¹⁷ The strike again spread to both Schafer mills, and with renewed confidence the men increased their demands for a minimum wage of \$2.50 per day. The militant stand of these lowly paid mill hands inspired an even greater level of community support. At what the *Daily World* incorrectly labeled “the largest mass meeting of Grays Harbor mill workers in the

¹¹² *Aberdeen Daily World*, 4, 5, 13 November 1931.

¹¹³ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 16 November 1931. The proposed scale, noted one striker, still left the Schafer mill “25 cents less than the next lowest scale of an operating mill on the Harbor.” See *Aberdeen Daily World*, 16 November 1931. It is difficult to test the validity of this statement. Within a week after it was reported, 4L organizer W.D. Smith informed a mass meeting that minimum wages on the Harbor reached as low as \$1.25 at some mills. *Aberdeen Daily World*, 23 November 1931.

¹¹⁴ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 18, 19 November 1931.

¹¹⁵ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 18 November 1931.

¹¹⁶ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 18 November 1931.

¹¹⁷ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 21 November 1931.

Harbor's history," approximately two thousand workers listened to a long talk by 4L organizer W. D. Smith. During his speech, Smith lambasted "wage slashers" and compared conditions at the Schafer mills to "that witnessed several years ago in Cosmopolis," a reference to the infamous Grays Harbor Commercial Company.¹¹⁸ When asked if anyone in the crowd would work for \$2 per day, the crowd "roared out in a negative answer." The workers' unflinching militancy and their support in the community again persuaded the Schafers to bargain. When five hundred picketers assembled at their Aberdeen plant -- a mill employing only 150 workers -- and forcibly stopped cars from crossing the picket line, the Schafers quickly responded to their predicament by cutting a deal.¹¹⁹ The owners offered their employees a \$3 minimum -- more than the men had demanded -- and agreed to keep the scale "as long as the Schafer company could carry on operations at that figure."¹²⁰ Having gained an even greater level of confidence, workers demanded and received Thanksgiving Day turkeys from the Schafers, as the birds were too pricey for workers themselves because of their low wages and the strike during the holiday.¹²¹

The Schafer mills strike provided an effective model of community-based activism for Harbor militants to follow. Activists demonstrated their ability to shut down a manufacturing operation, even one where they did not work, and to coordinate their activities across two spatially distant plants. The conflict also generated plenty of revolutionary enthusiasm. In the years leading up to the strike, several of the Schafer Brothers employees in Aberdeen became radicalized and joined Communist

¹¹⁸ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 23 November 1931.

¹¹⁹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 31 March 1931.

¹²⁰ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 23 November 1931.

¹²¹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 25 November 1931.

organizations on the Harbor. During the strike several Schafer and CP activists were solicited by mill workers from other Harbor plants and asked to picket their own mills in hopes of replicating the success at the two Schafer mills.¹²² The Party itself gained momentum and new members from the strike, and the election campaign and hunger march that accompanied the industrial dispute, as was evidenced by District 12 organizer Alex Moral's boast of the "40 new members gained in the district" partially as a result of the Harbor campaigns.¹²³

Agitation from radicals for a larger, more concentrated labor action on the Harbor began in mid-1932. At that point, according to internal CP documents, NLWU successes peaked with strike victories at the Schafer and Aberdeen Plywood mills, a similar strike at the low-wage Wilson mill two months later, and the increased "response from outlying communities," including Oakville, Elma, Independence, Willapa Harbor, Copalis Beach, and Rochester, many of which had strong socialist and syndicalist traditions.¹²⁴ In April 1932, an enthusiastic Communist organizer reported "some of the achievements we have made in the district," including the addition of a second Party unit in Aberdeen and the formation of five CP sections, where "formerly [there were] no sections in the district."¹²⁵

In June 1933, Grays Harbor's Communist efforts were bolstered when District 12 organizers held a district convention in Aberdeen. At that meeting, the NLWU officially adopted a broad set of demands that they intended to impose throughout the lumber industry. These demands included a six-hour day and fifty cents per hour minimum

¹²² *Grays Harbor Worker*, 13 November 1931.

¹²³ Alex Moral, D. O. District #12 to Secretariat, CPUSA, 12 November 1931, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2281.

¹²⁴ Aberdeen Report, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2909. II. 1-3. The *Aberdeen Daily World* wrote extensively of the 1932 Wilson Brothers mill strike. See *Aberdeen Daily World*, 30 January; 1, 2, 3 February 1932. See also A. N. [Alex Noral] to the Secretariat, C.P.U.S.A., 9 February 1932, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2908.

¹²⁵ D. O. Dist. 12 to Organization Dept. CP.U.S.A, 23 April 1932, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 2908.

wage, which they publicized throughout Grays Harbor mills and camps. Word of radicals' extensive list of demands spread rapidly throughout the region, and by the second week of July the Harbor's lumber workers once again appeared poised and ready to strike.¹²⁶

Falling close on the heels of the CP's District 12 convention in Aberdeen was the largest lumber strike in the Pacific Northwest during the early Depression period. The strike coincided with negotiations for the National Recovery Administration (NRA) Lumber Code. The lumber code was one of the many codes written for all major US industries. These codes were ostensibly to be drawn up by representatives of business, labor, and the state, although in practice, industry representatives from the largest corporations possessed practically unchecked influence in the drafting of these regulations. This problem was especially acute in the lumber industry, where the sole workers' organizations were the IWW's LWIU and CP's NLWU, which were not recognized as legitimate labor unions by the code's writers, and the 4Ls, a company union. Worse yet from workers' perspective, the lumber industry operated in some of the most isolated rural parts of the nation, including the back woods of Grays Harbor. Code inspectors lacked the resources to monitor and enforce the regulations, which were largely ignored by employers throughout the Pacific Northwest.¹²⁷ Indeed, more than one striker in the summer of 1933 expressed the dubious value of what they labeled the

¹²⁶ Minutes of the District Buro Meeting Held on July 25th, 1933, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 3289, II. 8.

¹²⁷ Lembeke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 30-31; William G. Robbins, *Lumberjacks and Legislators: Political Economy of the US Lumber Industry*, (College Station: Texas A & M Press, 1982), 174-181. According to Vernon H. Jensen, the reason why unions did not participate in the creation of this lumber code was that "there were no labor unions to demand participation," thus forgetting the existence of the NLWU and ISWU. See Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 145.

“Fascist” Blue Eagle, a reference to the eagle symbol chosen to represent the NRA.¹²⁸

With no hope of storming the code-planning meetings held in Washington, D.C., lumber workers made their voices heard as two thousand men struck at nine Grays Harbor operations in July 1933. Their demands called for a radical restructuring of the way business was conducted in the lumber industry.

Pulled in late July 1933, the timing of the strike was no accident. In fact, one of the strikers’ main goals was to persuade the code’s authors to pen a set of regulations more favorable to labor. Lumber workers in the Grays Harbor area joined strikers in Spokane and Klamath Falls who sought to push negotiations in their favor by proposing their own code. The NLWU issued its own “Workers’ Code” drawn “from the camps and mills” and submitted at the same time that the “lumber barons and manufacturers” issued their code. The latter code was considered to be an “insult to every lumber worker” and a “slave code” by some radicals.¹²⁹ The National Lumber Workers’ demands included a \$3.30 minimum daily wage with a guaranteed cost of living increase and a guarantee of full-time employment for no less than thirty-eight weeks per year. They also called for the thirty-hour week, elimination of speed-ups, introduction of sanitary equipment and bedding provided by the logging corporations, abolition of company unions and blacklists systems, and an established grievance procedure between workers and employers.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ For anti-“Blue Eagle” opinions, see *Voice of Action*, 2, 30 October 1933. The “Blue Eagle” was portrayed as explicitly “Fascist” in the *Voice of Action*, 6 November 1933. An illustrative example of the type of opposition that emerged among lumber workers can be seen on the front page of the *Voice of Action*, 7 August 1933, in which a cartoon eagle, labeled the “National Robbery Administration,” appeared. A second issue of the *Voice of Action*, referred to the Lumber Code derisively as the “Slave Code” and a “‘Slavery Code’ being forced on the lumber workers.” *Voice of Action*, 28 August 1933

¹²⁹ *Voice of Action*, 7, 28 August 1933.

¹³⁰ *Voice of Action*, 7 August 1933.

Loggers struck alongside mill workers in the 1933 conflict. Virtually absent from Pacific Northwest strikes between 1924 and 1931, the woodsmen became involved in the Pacific Northwest's Communist movement in small numbers during the 1920s, which led CP organizer Aaron Fislerman to state plans to form "the organization of these lumber workers numbering upwards of 30,000 throughout the Northwest."¹³¹ However, the Party failed to live up to Fislerman's expectations until 1930 and 1931 when large numbers of Grays Harbor loggers joined the NLWU and waged strikes in the region's woods. On 7 December 1931, pulp wood cutters at three of the largest camps and several smaller operations in Grays Harbor held a strike vote that favored a work stoppage by the margin of 94 to 56.¹³² However, the strike failed because boss loggers were able to recruit enough scab labor to keep their camps running throughout the conflict.¹³³ Two years later these radicals of the woods joined their fellow workers in the mills for a more concerted offensive against their bosses.

The lumber strike of 1933 began on 22 July when two hundred loggers at a camp owned by the Saginaw Lumber Company walked off the job. Strikers elected a four-man committee that presented their bosses with a demand for \$3.65 per day minimum wage for bushel workers. They later declared their intention to abolish the bushel system altogether and be paid by the hour.¹³⁴ Loggers at four more camps followed course during the next week.¹³⁵ On 24 July walkouts across Grays Harbor mills paralyzed the local lumber industry. All told, the strike halted production at five mills and four large

¹³¹ Aaron Fislerman to C.E. Ruthenberg, 25 February 1927, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d.1042.

¹³² *Grays Harbor Post*, 12 December 1931.

¹³³ *Grays Harbor Post*, 12 December 1931; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 10, 11 December 1931.

¹³⁴ *Industrial Worker*, 25 July 1933.

¹³⁵ *Voice of Action*, 19, 26 July 1933. In logging, the bushel system was a form of piece work, better known as "gyppo" logging.

camps, including the Schafer mill 4, the Wilson mill, one of the Donovan mills, and several Saginaw logging camps, all of which were centers of Communist agitation.¹³⁶

In spite of the close relationship between CP officials and the rank-and-file organizers on the ground, this was a local conflict, one rooted in the historic antagonisms between labor and capital on the Harbor. Activists, many of them Party members, had embedded themselves in mills and camps, and provided leadership during earlier strikes. But the significance of local conditions in bringing about the strike was apparent from its timing. It began in mid-July, while all NLWU delegates were meeting in Seattle, and according to internal correspondence, quite unprepared to provide much in the way of leftist leadership for the strikers or to help the strikers build upon their gains. Distracted by their official duties in Seattle, CP officers admitted to being caught off-guard by the loggers' militancy, conceding that they "must re-act fast" and send "more responsible comrades" to build upon the "good sentiment" on the Harbor.¹³⁷

Harbor employers and the state mounted a coordinated response to the strike. Local bosses organized through the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce turned to the state for assistance. In response to a request from the chamber, members of the Washington State Patrol descended onto the Harbor on 25 July, the third time state troops were deployed to Grays Harbor between 1917 and 1933. Forty-two state patrol officers came to Aberdeen from "all sections of the state" to "back up the local authorities in preserving order."¹³⁸ Rather than "preserving order," however, the state police simply helped local authorities to "intimidate the striking workers to return to work" and round up the "picket

¹³⁶ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 24, 25 July 1933.

¹³⁷ Minutes of the District Buro Meeting held on July 25th, 1933, Seattle, Washington, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 3289, ll. 10.

¹³⁸ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 25 July 1933.

line leaders.”¹³⁹ Eight picketers were arrested by members of the state patrol and taken to the county lockup on 26 July. Well-aware of the more pernicious forms of anti-unionism practiced on the Harbor, strikers also pleaded to not “be put on the blacklist,” claiming that they “are not communists, IWW, or representatives of any organization whatever.”¹⁴⁰

In fact, many of the most active strikers were Communists, including Joseph Shenkir, a Jewish-American radical who was arrested by the state patrol on 26 July. Shenkir went by the pseudonym L. A. “Red” Johnson, a Swedish-Finn surname, perhaps chosen to blend more easily with the large local Finnish and Scandinavian populations.¹⁴¹ Johnson first arrived on the Harbor before 1930, and appears to have divided his time between urban unemployed agitation and organizing loggers. And he paid dearly for his successes. Forced out of the woods by police harassment and the blacklist, “Red” found regular employment as a clerk at the Aberdeen Piggly Wiggly grocery store.¹⁴² Still, Johnson’s organizational abilities made him a prized target for AFL organizers, who understood full well that Communists were among the most dedicated, fearless union organizers. In October 1933, following his release from jail during the lumber strike, Johnson was bribed by Art Wilson, organizer for the AFL, with the potential removal of his name from the blacklist -- and thus the chance at a job in the woods -- if he quit the NLWU for the newly minted AFL timberworkers’ union. “I told him I’d stick with the

¹³⁹ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 26 July 1933.

¹⁴⁰ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 25 July 1933; Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 21. The argument that the strike was not the tool of the CP, IWW, or any other radical group was repeated in a letter from the strikers to Governor Martin. See, *Aberdeen Daily World*, 26 July 1933. Ending the blacklist was one element of the demands made by NLWU strikers. See *Voice of Action*, 23 October 1933.

¹⁴¹ Auvo Kostiaainen, “The Finns and the Crisis Over ‘Bolshevization’ in the Workers’ Party, 1924-1925,” in *The Finnish Experience in the Western Great Lakes Region: New Perspectives*, ed. Michael G. Karni, Matti E. Kaups and Douglas J. Ollila (Turku, FI: Institute for Migration Studies, 1975), 171-185. Shenkir may have consciously replaced his uncommon surname with “Johnson,” among the most common last names in Grays Harbor County.

¹⁴² *Polk’s Grays Harbor Cities Directory*, 1935; *Voice of Action*, 23 October 1933.

National Lumber Workers' Union . . . But I can't help wondering as to just what control the AF of L has over the blacklist," responded Johnson.¹⁴³ Writing for the *Voice of Action*, agitating for poor relief, and dodging arrests, "Red" remained at the fore of Harbor left-wing activism throughout much of the 1930s. In later years he was instrumental in establishing the North West Joint Strike Committee during the 1935 lumber strike, and served as one of eight woodworkers who met with national director of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) John Brophy in D.C. to discuss chartering by the CIO in December 1936. Ever the devoted Communist, Johnson departed for Spain where he, along with more than a dozen Grays Harbor comrades, joined battalions of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade fighting against the spread of Fascism. Johnson was killed in action during the war.¹⁴⁴

The leading role of Communists such as Johnson no doubt provided the impetus for the strike, but the conflict soon mushroomed into a mass popular uprising, outstripping each of the Harbor strikes waged since 1923. CP correspondents reported the scope of the strike. "Industry 'paralyzed' in Grays Harbor," stated one report, as strikers picketed and leafleted at Grays Harbor employment offices, a tactic successful at discouraging unemployed woodsmen from scabbing.¹⁴⁵ Demonstrating the necessity of local control, even while operating with heavy CP support, Harbor lumber workers

¹⁴³ *Voice of Action*, 23 October 1933.

¹⁴⁴ Gordon "Brick" Moir interview with Gary Murrell, Audio Recording, in author's possession; Pacific Northwest Labor History Association Questionnaire, PNLHA Honor Roll, Otilie Markholt Papers, Box 5, Accession No. 4191-002, UW.

¹⁴⁵ *Voice of Action*, 26 July 1933; Minutes of the District Buro Meeting Held on July 25th, 1933, Seattle, Washington, RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 3289; Minutes of the District Buro Meeting of the C.P., August 10, 1933, Seattle, Wash., RTsKhIDNI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 3288.

dictated the financial relief drive themselves, soliciting demands from local Party headquarters at 512 East Market Street in Aberdeen through the *Voice of Action*.¹⁴⁶

While the strikers failed to gain all of their ambitious demands, their “stubborn resistance” paid dividends.¹⁴⁷ According to the Communist organ *Voice of Action*, each of the struck mills and camps gradually reached compromise settlements with their employees. On 8 August, Schafer’s mill 4 resumed cutting on a forty hour per week schedule and paying 42 ½ cents per hour, while most of the struck logging camps also went back to work under compromise agreements over the next week.¹⁴⁸

The 1933 strike, waged in the midst of the NRA Lumber Code negotiations, was not the final struggle of 1930s Pacific Northwest labor history. In fact, judging by the silence afforded the conflict, as well as the other strikes surveyed in these final three chapters, historians have not considered the 1923-1933 decade of working-class militancy to be of much significance. Certainly, these sporadic strikes paled in comparison to the 1934 waterfront or 1935 lumber strikes, but it is not only the mass strikes or violent riots that demonstrate working-class consciousness, or workers’ proclivity to resist the dictates of capital. These phenomena too appear in the localized strikes, unemployed activism, and radical cultural celebrations. The strikes of the early Depression Decade, a period of intense working-class suffering, likewise revealed the continuities between this and earlier eras as lumber workers continued to resist the dictates of capital through strikes, demonstrations, political campaigns, and cultural

¹⁴⁶ *Voice of Action*, 7 August 1933; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 29 July 1933.

¹⁴⁷ *Voice of Action*, 7 August 1933.

¹⁴⁸ *Aberdeen Daily World*, 8, 9 August 1933; *Voice of Action*, 21 August 1933. On the blacklist in Grays Harbor at this time see *Voice of Action*, 13 November 1933. This victory proved to be short-lived. After their release, these eleven activists, as well as other picket line militants, were promptly placed on the Grays Harbor lumbermen’s blacklist, sharing this hallowed spot with an earlier generation of Harbor radicals. See *Voice of Action*, 23 October 1933; *Aberdeen Daily World*, 25 July 1933.

contributions. These conflicts likewise revealed the relevance that radical unionists affiliated with the IWW and CP had in the local community, a community that turned out in force to support workers in their struggles with the boss.

CHAPTER XVI

CONCLUSION

The lumber strikes of 1933 were mere tremors on the front edge of a decade of class struggle, a period marked by mass lumber and maritime strikes and the return of actual class warfare on the streets of the Harbor towns. But the 1933 strikes are an appropriate point to conclude this thesis because those conflicts served as a bridge between the working-class mobilization of earlier eras and those more famous conflicts of the middle and late 1930s. Indeed, in 1933 striking loggers joined their urban working-class counterparts to battle with their collective class enemies much as they had done on numerous occasions between 1912 and 1923, and much as they would continue to do throughout the 1930s. And it was the collective struggle waged by the rural loggers and the urban mill hands, longshoremen, and their allies in the community that forced employers in the lumber and shipping industries to recognize the legitimacy and authority of leftist labor unions in their industries. Of course, the 1933 strike was not the last labor conflict to occur in the months immediately preceding the mass lumber strike of 1935. Small-scale insurrections continued to erupt throughout 1933-1935 at logging camps and lumber mills, waged, in part, by “Red” unionists, but also joined by the masses of lumber workers who wanted something more than the pro-business dictates offered by the “Blue Eagle.”¹ But when the great labor conflicts of the mid-1930s finally brought the lumber and shipping barons to their knees, the thousands of men and women who had been politicized on the picket line, shop floor, and radical halls of the 1910s, 1920s, and early 1930s were present to provide guidance to their fellow workers.

¹ *Voice of Action*, 21 August 1933; 20 February; 24 April 1934.

Like Grays Harbor workers, local employers remained unified during the 1930s in their efforts to put their class interests into action, especially by fighting radical unionism in all its forms. On 1 December 1939, the Aberdeen “Red” Finn Hall, which had served as the main meeting place of Harbor socialists and later Communists since 1906, was attacked, looted, and destroyed by a band of vigilantes. One month later, Laura Law, wife of local Communist leader Dick Law and daughter of IWW supporters Sally and Nestor Luoma, was murdered in her Aberdeen home while Dick attended a union meeting.² Although the Laura Law case remains officially “unsolved,” the Laws had received threats from employers and their allies prior to the murder, indicating a strong likelihood that she was yet another casualty of Grays Harbor’s several-decades-long class war. That Aberdeen police failed to intervene to stop the attack on the “Red” hall, and that Dick Law, rather than the anti-union employers or their allies who had threatened the Law family, was the only person charged with Laura’s murder, were two vivid reminders of capital’s continued influence over state decisions on the Harbor. Despite these examples of anti-union repression, the cities and towns of Grays Harbor remained fertile union territory throughout much of the twentieth century as workers affiliated with the International Woodworkers of America, Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers, and ILWU, and several other unions won relatively high wages and humane benefit packages from their employers.³ In fact, before the permanent recession hit the lumber country during the 1980s, workers in a wide array of industries -- lumber and education, maritime and food service, construction and local government, transportation and grocery

² Hughes and Saltvig, 100-104; Saltvig, “The Tragic Legend,” 91-99; *Industrialisti*, 14 December 1921. Laura Luoma was listed alongside her parents in the 1921 *Industrialisti* “Greetings” list.

³ On the International Woodworkers of America, see Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*. The best history of the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers can be found in John McClelland III, “Union Rebels,” *Cowlitz Historical Quarterly* 44:3 (September 2002), 3-39.

-- belonged to unions in a region that could turn thousands of people out for a Labor Day parade or solidarity rally for striking workers. It was little wonder that Harry Bridges, a Communist, founder of the ILWU, and a one-time Wobbly, liked to say, “Aberdeen feels like home to me.”⁴

The destruction of the “Red” Finn Hall and Laura Law’s murder, like the numerous conflicts explored in “Red Harbor,” demonstrated that class struggle was a potent force in the lives of Harbor residents during the first four decades of the twentieth century. Harbor workers, especially white men, formed a large, powerful, and vibrant trade union movement at the turn of the century, one that succeeded at exacting “bread and butter” gains for its members, and crafting a rich working-class culture consisting of festive celebrations, a dynamic literary culture, and defiant public demonstrations. Emerging primarily from outside the trade union movement were more radical organizations, chiefly the SPA and IWW, both of which were joined and led by large numbers of “new” immigrants such as Finns, and both of which were every bit the equals of their trade union counterparts at establishing a politicized and cultural working-class presence through halls, newspapers and handbills, parades, street meetings, unions, and strikes.

Class was thus a primary animating force in the lives Grays Harbor residents, a fact that was evinced by the multitude and variety of class struggles covered in this study. Moreover, this study has demonstrated that class formation is a process, one resulting from the interaction between classes over time. Grays Harbor workers and employers engaged in a great number and variety of struggles during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Both classes learned from these struggles and reshaped their actions

⁴ Cited in Hughes and Beckwith, ed., *On the Harbor*, 85.

accordingly. Thus Grays Harbor bosses and their allies utilized deportations, blacklists, and hall closures to contest community-based radical movements; injunctions and mass arrests to deal with aggressive picketers; and formed employers' organizations to coordinate their efforts once local unions proved too powerful for individual employers to defeat on their own. Employers' actions likewise helped to shape those of the working class. Terrible wages and conditions, which are part of the basic exploitation of workers in a capitalist system, pushed workers to form organizations. Harbor workers responded to scabs and gunmen with militant, sometimes violent, forms of direct action; formed class-wide workers' organizations once trade unions failed to effectively represent the local working class as a whole or consistently deliver "bread and butter" gains for their members; and carried out frequent, mass cultural celebrations to carry working people's struggles from the shop floor to the street corner, hall, and parade route.

By writing a local study focusing on Grays Harbor, this thesis enabled me to peer closely into the world of the worker, to observe workers' experiences on the job, on the picket line, and as part of the wider working-class community. This methodology was especially fruitful in yielding insights about the IWW. In Grays Harbor, the Wobblies crafted a community-based form of unionism, one responsive to the needs of the local population and that was led, joined, and supported by long-term Grays Harbor residents. This conception of the Wobblies contradicts most scholarship on the union in the West, which has portrayed the IWWs as young, single, migratory men who travelled between towns looking to stir up discontent. In Grays Harbor, a different IWW existed, one that was supported by thousands of people -- men, women, children, and families -- for more than two decades, gained support from a diverse cross-section of the community, and

used that support to remain a significant part of the local labor movement well into the 1930s. These findings are in agreement with historian Elizabeth Jameson's study of the Western Federation of Miners in Cripple Creek, Colorado, in which she argued that settled workers had a greater stake in bringing about social change at the local level than did itinerant radicals, the group most commonly associated with radicalism in the American West. However, "Red Harbor" extends Jameson's argument to cover the IWW, a syndicalist union that has, at least in western contexts, been portrayed as unusual and unpopular, a revolutionary movement favored solely by social outcasts who lacked connections to kin and community, and fools who failed to grasp the benefits of industrial capitalism. In fact, the Grays Harbor IWW was largely a family-based movement, and the Wobblies' families, like their communities, provided support for the movement.

Grays Harbor workers and employers both mobilized around their understandings of class and their class interests. In this study I have been able to uncover and document a great variety of these mobilizations on the shop floor, picket line, halls, and on the streets of their communities. But in order to make sense of the actions of employers and workers we must recognize what the men, women, and children of Grays Harbor knew so well: they lived in a society divided by class and their mobilizations were based upon those understandings of class. "Unfortunately," as historian Alan Dawley remarked, "each generation of American scholars has to waste considerable energy working its way back to the points of valid insight originally propounded by Marx," points that reveal the value of class analysis to the study of history.⁵ "Red Harbor" has sought to return class and class struggle to the center of Grays Harbor history, the same position it had when local workers and employers lived it.

⁵ Dawley, *Class and Community*, 4.

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