BOOK 38

RAYFIELD MOOTY

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This interview with Mr. Mooty took place over a period of three years, 1973 to 1976. Because of its length and the fact that we skipped back and forth in time, he requested that it be reorganized to flow chronologically as one continuous story. Permission to cite or quote is required from Mr. Mooty during the course of his lifetime.
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CHAPTER I

GROWING UP

I was born February 25, 1907, the third child of twelve of Dock and Exa Mooty on a rural route in Franklin, Georgia in Heard County. My father was a farmer, not rich nor poor. He was a self raised man, worked his way to what schooling he had. He married Exa Philpott, the daughter of a well-off family. In the adjoining county, which was Troop, the community was named Philpotts Ferry. It was difficult for a marriage to take place without being double standard, either first, second or third cousins.

The Philpotts was all real bright yellow. My mother's father was real bright, her mother as dark, she came out bright. There was born from my grandfather's second wife my mother, Uncle Richard and Uncle Homer. I am told my father married her when she was about fifteen years old. She was just the resemblance of her mother except she was bright. She had a scar on the left side of her head and she told us many times that Uncle Richard cut her down the side of her head with an ax. She was very humble, she was very loving. She took all the interest that she could in the children that she had and she gave birth to twelve.

We lived on a forty acre farm but it was scattered indifferent plots, not all in one piece. There was wooded areas and pasture that broke the different plots off from one another. We used to rent the land from a white man named Hogan and then slowly bought a patch here
and a patch there. We raised sugar cane for sorghum, corn, cotton, potatoes, peas, a little wheat, and we always had a vegetable garden and some fruit trees.

The first house I remember living in was four rooms, two rooms on each side of a long hall. There was a big veranda all around the house and right out back we had a kitchen and a smokehouse. We had a big barn and a cow pasture, and we always raised hogs and chickens. There was a storage house for the cotton and we always had cats and dogs around the place.

As I remember my father, he was always out front in church affairs, fraternal affairs and discussions, always keeping something to read, keeping up with current events. His motto was: "Idle brains are the devil's workshop." So he never let us have any place for the devil to work. As far back as I can remember our work was cut out as we grew up -- being in the woods, bringing in wood for the fire, making fires, drawing water for the mules, sweeping the yards, holding the calves whilst others milked the cows, driving the cows to the pasture in the spring and minding the cows in the fall, keeping them from straying to other farms. In the fall it was go get the cows, feed the hogs, always some thing to do, child size. When you was five years old you went to Sunday School. You always had to remember. My father said it was more important to remember than it was to read.

Some things I will never forget. I remember us having a pair of iron gray mules, Wiley and George. We bought Wiley in 1903 when he was three years old, a Spanish mule. My father and Wiley used to fight all morning. He would come to the house at dinnertime, tie Wiley up
on three legs without any food. When they started back to the field the fight was on again. Old Wiley learned the art of fighting, yet he was as gentle as a lamb. He would start by waving his tail, reaching for your line. Once he got the line under his tail you couldn't control him. He would go wherever he wanted. Whenever you got into a fight with him you always ended up negotiating on his terms. Papa sold old Wylie once. Mama drove a horse to town and found a man driving old Wylie as part of a six mule team and Mama had a fit! She dealt with Papa and he had to go trade that horse and get old Wylie back.

As we grew large enough to plow, this was the mule we had to drive. If he didn't want to go fast we learned the hard way to go his way. If you whipped him he would look for the nearest tree. He would go at that tree as fast as he could and you would have to negotiate with him to keep the limb from dragging you off. If you tried to drive fast and he didn't feel like it, as soon as he got near to somebody's house he would run up in the yard or into the house. You'd end up negotiating so as not to be embarrassed because everybody would know that you were trying to whip old Wiley.

Wiley died in 1927 but his fighting spirit lingers in my memory. Old Wiley! It was around 1918 when he and papa had the final match. It was mid July, rain and hailstorms drove everybody from the fields to the house. Wiley and Papa were fighting and they never stopped for the rain or hail in spite of Mama's plea. Papa put a trace chain in Wiley's mouth and he was bleeding and hollering all across the wood pile, through the orchard, almost in the house. Finally Wiley
tangled him around a pear tree where he could not get away. Just as Wiley raised his feet to kick the daylights out of him, Papa hollered, "Whoa mule" and dropped that chain. Wiley went to the lot and Papa came to the house and we were all happy the fight was over.

How could I forget my last battle with Wiley? In 1923, it was May or early June, I had been promoted from him to another mule. I left my harness in the field at dinner time and it started to rain. When the rain was over Pa told me to go get my harness. I should have got my mule, instead I got old Wiley. At his age he didn't feel up to running. We started scrapping right from the start. I almost had to pet him over the hill, but I had an idea. As soon as we were over the hill I got a limb. He knew how to make it hard for me to get on his back, but I managed to start whipping him. He started running and kicking and hollering. I was confident I had the advantage until he spotted a hedge of bushes. He ran up to those bushes and stopped real quick. I went right over his head in to those bushes, bridle and all. When I got up bleeding from my face he was far away. I knew I got to catch him before he got to the house. He knew that, too. He ran the opposite direction until he knew I couldn't stop him. Then I have never seen him run so hard to beat me back to the house. When the family saw him coming there was nothing for me to tell.

He lost his only battle in 1927. I was home recuperating from a broken leg and arm. I decided to get a load of wood with him and another mule. When we got to the woods I noticed him getting sick. When I came back he went to the lot and he wallowed and rubbed and stretched over two days and nights. He finally died. He lived to
feed twelve of us. He leaves a wonderful memory of the life he lived -- old Wiley. He was Mama's pet and he never took a whipping. Some of these things has lived with me over the years and has been with me in my fights -- to have that type of determination, that type of spirit.

One person I remember well was Uncle George Montgomery. He was no relation to us, he was a hired hand. This is something that I have always cherished. Oppossums was a rare dish in the fall. Whenever Mama wanted a possum she would say, "Uncle George, I think it's time for possum." Everybody would get together dogs, lanterns, guns. You could hear them in the woods sometime all night, but not Uncle George. At sundown he would take an ax and a sack and disappear. Next morning we had possums. This stayed with me for a long time. How did Uncle George know how to catch possums without dogs or guns or a lot of other people? One evening in 1925 my father came home and he asked if anybody remembered Uncle George Montgomery. He said, "While coming through the woods this afternoon I passed a tree that he caught possums in years ago and I heard some noises in that tree like a possum fighting." A group of us, along with him, got in the car and drove near the spot and walked to the tree.

There we stood looking at the surroundings, the kind of a tree, the condition of the tree. What made this an ideal spot for possums? All these things must have been in uncle George's mind years ago, learning the habits of possums. Finally I climbed the tree clear to the top. No sound of Mr. Possum. The top had broken off and it had a hollow about fourteen inches deep. I broke a limb to stir in the leaves in that hollow. That's when Mr. Possum got up and I got back.
I have never seen one that size before or since. When he was halfway out I hit him on the head with my fist and he fell to the ground where he was caught. On the way back down I found another hole in the tree. I stuck a limb in there and up jumped another small one. I remember that lesson from Uncle George Montgomery. First, learn the habits of whoever you are dealing with.

I remember starting to school in 1912. It was one of those little one room country schools with one teacher for everybody. We had about 30 kids in that school and a man teacher that handled all of them. Each grade level sat grouped together. In those days you didn't get no books until you could master your alphabet. I learned from listening to the older students recite their lessons. I remember how important it was to capitalize letters. I spelled the whole class down by capitalizing both George and Washington.

In 1916 we moved to our new home five miles from school. It was bigger with the kitchen attached to the house. There was still cutting wood, milking cows, feeding hogs and many other chores divided among the children.

Another thing I remember well was what happened to little Joe Wright, who was a little retarded. He stopped by a white man's house that he had previously worked for and asked his wife for some bread. As he sat on the wood pile eating, she called her husband and he formed a mob. They threatened every Negro family with killing their whole family if they found him in their house. And I remember Charlie Wilson, who my Aunt Lulu and her daughters had worked for over the years. He roused her family late in the night, stood over them with a
shot gun while the mob searched for Joe. They found him but they didn't get to lynch him. He was one that got away.

Joe was mentally retarded. He used to stand on the corner on Saturday, night and it used to be amusing to people to hear him blow his harp. But they would have lynched him for sure. Every little boy that could corral a mule was in on this. They even camped in the church. Every Negrow as notified not to be caught on the road after dark. Joe just escaped through the woods ahead of the mob. He was found sleeping outside of a field when Walt Crowder plowed out to the end. His mule began to snort and refused to go to the end of the row. Joe was laying out in the woods sleeping. Jute Shack, a white mail carrier who had a team of fast horses, was over there and he said, "Walt, what's the matter with the mule?" Walt said, "I don't know, he sees something out in the woods." So they went out there and they found Joe. Jute Schack grabbed him up and took him right off to Milledgeville. Milledgeville was the home for the insane. He thus averted a bloody lynching of a boy who had entertained the town folks on Saturday night for years with his harp. I never heard of little Joe Wright since.

I remember Sam Owensby, too. "The last time I saw him he was dressed fine, with a black doe skin suit, a black stetson hat, a silk shirt and a gold watch chain across his chest. He left Mount Olive church in front of a white man, Brooks Lane. I don't remember how it happened but Sam Owensby shot Brooks Lane. After two days and nights a mob of whites dragged Sam from Mr. Gilbert's barn and carried him to the county jail. A few days later he was taken from the jail down the
hill to the Chatahoochee river and hanged by the neck. It was said that they cut the skin at his wrists and skinned them to hang down over his fingers to hide the diamonds he was wearing before they knocked the trap from under him. They riddled his body with everything they had that would shoot. They shot until most all the flesh was off of his bones.

In 1917 I was stricken with the influenza. I was not allowed outdoors till after Thanksgiving. While everybody went to work I only had the clock on the wall for company. I read the Bible from cover to cover more than once. I read Sunday School books, Sears and Roebuck's Chicago catalogue, Charles Williams catalogue from New York. I remember there was a war going on and many things was scarce - flour, sugar, whiskey. Only the sick was allowed extra whiskey. And I remember the boll weevil that destroyed cotton crops, the diptheria that carried its toll of children to their death.

1918 was near tragedy for my own family. Scrap iron was in demand for war purposes. Everybody, including us, was bringing small quantities of iron to town. Old man Billy Joe Hogan told my dad, "Dock, since you are scrapping for iron, I still own that old cotton gin down there on the place you used to live. It will never be used anymore. Why don't you go down and break it up and you can have all the iron." Papa thanked him and we went there that evening. The building had fallen, some of their on wheels were covered with mud, but we managed to get a pretty good load of iron. We carried it up to the highway and left the wagon overnight.

Next morning as we were on our way to town we met a white man
driving two mules to a wagon and leading another behind him. He said, "Hey Dock, look at your wagon wheel, it's about to fall off." We hadn't noticed but the wheel was loose. Papa said, "Come on and help fix it." He said, "I haven't got time. I have to go get some road machine iron down the road." Papa said, "I might catch you broke down someday, come give me a hand. That old road machine might not be over there anyway." That man jumped off his wagon, looked at our load closer and said, "I know damn well it's not there. I know a nigger got some of it on his wagon right now and I'm going to take it off."

Papa said, "Look, I thought you were joking. You see these wheels are not road machine wheels, they're gin machine wheels." That white man started again to unload, our iron, saying "I'm going to teach you niggers how to keep your hands off other people's things," and he pulled out our brake stick. I never saw Papa that mad before. Papa out with his knife and made straight to him, saying, "You take one piece of that iron off of my wagon, you or I one will die and go to hell right here on this river swamp."

My brother and I and the Negro in the white man's wagon was speechless. When the white man saw that knife, he jumped on his loose mule and started back to Corinth as fast as he could go. Papa knew if he got to town and told his story he could stir up a mob so he got to catch him. He knew old Wiley could catch him but Wiley didn't have on any shoes. Tige was our new mule, he had a long horse tail and long ears. This was the first time we had ever drove him on a load. We had never seen him run but this was a gamble. He had on shoes and he was young and ambitious. In no time we stripped his harnesses. As Papa
jumped straddle of old Tige I handed him a switch. Tige spread his tail and broke like a race horse and was gone.

By this time the other mule was over the first hill, but it was a mile and a half before he got to his first house. That was the house of Jim Pruitt, this white man's uncle. Tige was closing in on his mule, so close until he had only time to run in the yard, jump off the mule and run in the house. Knowing he could not go in that house, Papa had no choice but to cut out and beat him to town. He went straight to Mr. Billy Joe Hogan, the richest man in town who gave him the gin mill and who had always dealt with him in all his financial dealings from boyhood days up, and he told what happened. Mr. Hogan said, "Who was the white man?" "B.J. Hammitt." "Well, go put your mule in the barn and you stay in the house. I'll go see Doc Hammitt, his daddy." When the two men got together, Mr. Hogan convinced Doc Hammitt that Papa had no need for road machine iron and that he had known Papa for many years and had never caught him in a lie. "But just to satisfy you about your boy, let's you and I go down to the river and see what did happen."

By this time B.J. had got to Corinth. Doc had a private talk with him and told him to stay there and do nothing until they got back. Doc Hammitt was the county horse doctor. He was also the county highway road commissioner. He could authorize anybody to destroy highway equipment so he had told B.J. he could have the road machine. When Mr. Hogan and Doc Hammitt came down to check the iron, Doc was convinced that B.J. was wrong. They went back to town, told B.J. to go to his wagon and go get the road machine. They told Papa to wait until B.J. had left the river before he went back to his wagon. Then we
hitched old Tige to our wagon and went on to town and sold our iron and had some shoes put on old Wiley.

In 1919 Negro men were migrating North anyway they could get there. That's why mules and boys were in big demand. Any little runaway boy could get a job on a road construction. But it was difficult for him to leave a job because he was always in debt. I remember Richard Sands running away from one of those construction camps. The foreman caught him and beat him until he was bloody and boasted, "Let that be a lesson to anyone who gets ideas." These things happened all the time in the South. I remember one white woman pleading with her husband to let her whip a Negro because he owed her $2.50. We weren't exposed to those beatings because Papa always hired us out and collected our pay.

When men returned to the South after spending some time in the North they didn't always adjust to southern style. I remember when Charles Sims came home visiting, before the older whites could tell the youngsters who he was, one of them slapped him and the fight was on. Sims got shot but he wounded two of them. Then he went over the hill to his dad's house. There was always some Negro classified as crazy by everybody and his dad was one. When his vacation was over he and his dad came over to the house one evening about dark. Both of them had Winchester rifles, he also had a 38 special hand gun. At the supper table it was agreed that Sims should leave by night. It was my pleasure to drive him thirty miles to my Uncle Henry's house. We stopped and made fires on the roadside along the way and he told me of many experiences that he had had.
I remember what happened to Tom Philpott, too. One Sunday night in October someone set fire and burned up his house, his horses, his mules and a bale of cotton. When he notified Ed Tripp, who he rented from and went half shares with, Tripp charged him with burning his property. Tom broke away from the sheriff and escaped. He came down to our house by night, Ed Tripp had threatened to kill him at sight. It was my pleasure to walk with Tom through the woods where he was picked up and carried to Alabama. He never returned to Hogansville again. Tom later went onto become president of an NAACP chapter in St. Louis. I saw him again in 1978.
I could never forget 1922. Papa and mama was going to Atlanta. They went in the buggy to Hogansville and we boys drove a load of charcoal to market in the wagon. Papa had ordered a hundred pound bag of nitrate of soda. When we drove to the white man's house to pick it up Papa noticed that the bag was only half full. He told the man he had changed his mind, told us to go back to the hitching post. Before we could get out of the yard the man called Papa. As he turned to come meet the man, without warning the man started beating papa over the head with a club. Surprised and excited, Papa grabbed the man. When he rassled loose the man ran into the house to get a gun. With blood streaming from his head, Papa ran into Billy Joe Hogan's store. It was old man Billy Joe's son and Alfred Jackson caught the man and disarmed him.

In 1923 it was quiet on the farm. We cut wood, burned charcoal, peddled it in town. We also had a pretty good crop but everybody was going North, making money, doing good. Our relatives was up there. I was sixteen, my brother was twenty. We thought we should be able to get a job and send plenty of money home. Early in June we got our tickets and we had one nickel left. We had our lunch in a shoe box when we started off to Dayton, Ohio.

In Dayton we were two country boys in a new world, flat broke, had to depend on someone else. Our cousin met us. Everybody was
dressed to kill -- hard straw hats, jazz model suits, bell bottom pants, shoe string ties, patent leather shoes. The parks were full, everybody was living well. All I was hoping was I'd get a job.

My Aunty Lulu was so understanding I could never forget her. She would feed us and loan us some money when necessary. In order to look man-size I put on size 44 overalls, a Will Rogers style hat, and I walked to Dayton Steel Foundry. Uncle Billy, a Negro, was foreman. Papa had worked there before. When we told him who we were, he hired my brother for fifty cents an hour. He asked if I had ever worked in a foundry and I said yes. He asked me what I had done and I said, "shake-out." That was a word I had just picked up while standing at the gate. He came back and looked at me again. He said, "You look large enough but your face is too young. Maybe I can use you some place else at forty-five cents a hour." He put me with a man about twenty-five years old, about 5'6", weighed about a hundred and eighty pounds, to unload cement. Every time he dropped a bag I would go almost to the ground. Each bag weighed ninety-eight pounds. Every sack made the stack higher and I got weaker. At quitting time he told me he promised me forty-five cents but he would pay me fifty, but I was too young for that work. This gave us our first money and I came home with my hands raw from catching those cement bags.

Next morning I was out again looking for a job. I found one at a greenhouse, transplanting and watering flowers. The sun shining through that glass made me sick. This job lasted for about two weeks and then again I was looking for a job. I found one washing dishes. After two weeks the cook quit. The man asked if I could cook and I
became a short order cook. He would issue me the amount of supplies to fill the order so I couldn't make a mistake. But when he ordered bacon and eggs over light, ham and eggs up two, poached eggs on toast, one ham omelet, one cheese omelet, a cream of wheat and one oatmeal--that job lasted one meal!

I was again looking for a job. A day here and a day there. I remember getting acquainted with an old man on the street car and he worked at the G.H. and R. Foundry. I got hired there at forty cents an hour. This job was my size. Then we sent money home for Papa to come and he got a job at Dayton Steel.

Uncle Oasie was staying with Aunt Lulu and there was too many relatives packed in too small a house. How can I ever forget August 10! President Warren Harding was shipped to Ohio for burial. Most factories were closed, but mine was working. I was told that there had been an argument between Papa and Uncle Oasie. The argument was quelled only temporarily. I know Uncle Oasie was not as jolly as he had been when we went to church. Papa stayed home. When we got home, four of us piled in one room, the argument started all over again. As they grew hotter and hotter I started to holler. Although Papa was arguing he was still lying down. Later he said he knew his younger brother had better sense than to hit him. But things had reached the point of no return and his brother struck him over the head with a grocery box. Before he could get up he struck him again. By the time everybody got upstairs Papa began to gather consciousness. As he did, he remembered and he started reaching for his razor. Uncle must have felt death. I remember him saying, "That boy's going to kill
me," as he ran down the stairs and through the yard. The clothes line caught him by the neck. Papa caught up with him and cut him and he bled to death before the ambulance could get there. Two brothers' families broken up and a sister caught in the middle!

When the funeral was over I lost my job. Papa was sentenced to one to fourteen years in the Columbus Penitentiary. Uncle Will came to the funeral and he stayed on. He was from Chattanooga, Tennessee. We worked together cutting corn in Xenia, Ohio and he told me about Marcus Garvey and the UNIA. The first I knew of the Ku Klux Klan was when they marched down Main Street in full dress white garb, gowns on horses, full dress parade.

My brother went back home to gather the crop and I got a job at Gibbon's Coffee Shop at Third and Ludlow. Next spring I sent for my brother. Again we tried for big money. No dice! We got disgusted and I talked to my Aunty about us going away to Clevel and to our cousin. She didn't agree with the method of hoboing but she loaned me five dollars. As we were lying in the sun waiting for our first train a railroad detective walked up and asked for our credentials, asked if we were hoboes. We assured him we were residents of Dayton just taking a sun bath and we missed that train. About nine o'clock that night we caught our first freight. We got caught and had to work to pay for our ride, stopping at every town to drop off freight. Then the next evening we caught a cattle train into Cleveland.

We surprised our cousin, who Papa had helped raise years ago. But he was living too high to be bothered with two little broke boys. He took us out for a walk next morning before his wife got up and gave us
along talk. We came back to his house on the way to the station and I remember he loaned us fifteen dollars, Our fare back to Dayton. I was lucky to get my job back at the YWCA; fifteen dollars a week was better than nothing.

I visited Papa regular, he had become a trustee on the prison farm. The foreman would let him to stay in and we could go out and sit and we would talk. After paying my room and board and upkeep and sending Mama a few dollars once in a while, I learned to pick some good clothes from the pawn shop. I had become a handy bus boy. The YWCA used me to serve parties.

I can never forget an Armenian girl, Mary, who used to overload the trays with dirty dishes and expect me to go on the floor and get them. When I refused, they ordered Mary to move that tray and don't load any more trays like that. This upset the white boys, especially Harold Applegate, who was a part time worker, going to school and training for prize fighting. While I was emptying trays he threw a roll and hit me. Before I could think I threw a cup, but I missed.

It was December 21 and I remembered that tomorrow Papa would be free. If I got in trouble what would he think when he came home tomorrow just a few days before Christmas? But the die was already cast, I was in for a beating that night. I was sitting in the dressing room when Harold opened the door. As he stepped across me, he cursed and threw a hard right and I ducked. As he brought up his left, I sprang with my right arm around his neck, tying his left arm up, pressing his body up against the door and pulled his neck until he was
limp.

Next morning when I came in late I had my razor where I could get it and as I closed the dressing room door he came in. I was prepared to be a murderer, but he was all full of apologies. He didn't want to lose his job, he wanted to shake hands. I told him if he was through with it I was too. We got along fine after that. When I left in 1925 I never heard the name Applegate again until 1954.

Papa came home Christmas eve. He never stopped in Dayton. He wrote me to come home March 15, 1925. Eighteen years old, just getting free of a heavy burden, this was a tough decision, but I went home -- there to face another problem. I went back and everybody was working at the sawmill, farming was slow. They needed one more man at the mill and that was me. Tender as I was, I couldn't handle those big slabs. After a day or two with Negroes telling Mr. Jim, through jokes, that I was fresh meat, let's break him in, I was full up to my ears and I started carrying my 38. Mr. Jim began to cut slabs bigger and faster and finally I let one lean on the saw. If the saw strikes it right it will tear up jack. The owner came to the mill and after he talked to Mr. Jim he asked me what was the matter. I told him the slab was too large, they should be cut smaller. I didn't fit in that saw mill and this foreman saw I didn't, so he told me he couldn't use me.

I discussed it with my father and told him I didn't think I was going to fit in there. So we started cutting logs by ourselves to furnish the mill. Out in the woods white and black was cutting logs. You cut those logs and measured them yourself and you got so much a thousand. We could make pretty good money, but it wasn't no use
making a whole lot of money because you'd have trouble if you was going to pile up too much money. Finally we bought ourselves an automobile, the first balloon tired Ford that hit Heard County.

Then Mama passed, she died in childbirth. After my father had served his time in prison, he came back home. And after that, this child was born and she died with it. The child died, too, after almost a month. I guess anybody would say, if he was going to talk about his mother, that she was the only woman in the world. I would be the same way talking about mine. She did give birth to a lot of children and everyone, when they talked later, they said there were times that they thought she was a little abusive, but they appreciated the things that she did, keeping them together and nursing them. We all nursed from the same breasts, she never went to the bottle. She was still young when she died in 1925. They married in 1903 and she was about fifteen then, so she died before she was forty. The only thing I could say, just like everybody else could say about his mother, she was a wonderful woman.

We got along alright. I did a little farming to keep the rest of the small kids busy, because we had a lot of small kids still at home and all the larger fellows working in the woods. That didn't leave too much for the kids, so I took an interest in trying to go back to the house and get a few things straight round there. I helped my younger sister, who took Mama's place and kept the home going, and I put up a pretty good garden.

When Mother passed this made it more complicated because my father and I were too much alike, we couldn't get along together. We
finally had our little run-in and I told him what I wasn't going to do. I went back and apologized to him, but I made up my mind I was going to leave immediately after Christmas in 1927. Papa realized that he was fixing to lose me. Having the experience that I had over the other kids, I was more important to him. There was a lot of things that I knew about housekeeping, about looking after the family, raising food for the garden that was help to the other kids. He was fixing to lose something dear to him, but it was too late because a lot of things was in my mind that told me I had to move out. He did everything he could to delay my trip. Then, when he saw I was determined to leave, he drove me to Atlanta.

To entice me to stay, he was going to give me a little more education. "At eighteen years old you're probably going to go wild, but if I could hold you back now and give you from now to spring, maybe you'll get a finishing touch. You're going to be a man now. If I can just put six more months, a finishing touch on you, this will help you."

Julius Rosenwald had a school in Grantsville, sort of an industrial college. It was something between Morehouse or Spellman and the real country school. I had spent three months there sometime before when I was about twelve years old. In that school they were mostly about eleven or twelve years old and from there up. so I promised to meet him in Grantsville.

I got me a job in Atlanta and went to work on Tuesday. I planned to work through the end of the week before I met him in Grantsville the following week. Saturday morning we were unloading
meat out of a boxcar on the back of the platform. When we got that first flat loaded the foreman says, "Let's pull this in the basement. Some of you pull it on the elevator and the rest of you close the door." So me, being young and ambitious, I rared back, going backwards with that truck. I knew that elevator was there when I left and I didn't look back. When I rared back that truck started rolling; I wheeled around to catch whatever I could and that whole load of meat fell on me and caught one leg. A piece of meat hit this arm and that's the only thing that saved me because when it hit this arm the arm broke and that drove my body through that frame. That's what kept the rest of the meat from falling on me. The meat just came by me and I was left hanging by one leg. That was on Saturday morning so I never got back to school. I had a broken right arm and a broken left leg, so I went to the hospital and stayed. Papa was notified right away and came to the hospital in a couple of days to see what had happened. All the employees at the plant thought I was dead. They remembered me falling in there because I was a new employee.

When I got out of the hospital I went to stay with my old aunty, Aunt Sue Mooty, who lived near there. She was old and she didn't have nobody to talk to so I was good company. This is where I learned all about my family tree. I'm the only child of twelve that knew anything about our family. She told me how she had married my father's uncle. She was also my mother's father's sister. That made her my double aunt. Had I not been broken up, I probably never would have learned that.

I recuperated and I was able to get a temporary job at Star
Motor Company. Then I got a job as a chauffeur but I could never be a servant --never! That's what this man wanted, his chauffeur had gotten sick. I didn't know too much, I had never seen but one Cadillac operated. When he took me out he said, "I don't want you to tell me what you know. I'm going to tell you what I want you to do. I've got two Cadillacs." And when he said two Cadillacs I thought I had something. He wanted me there at six in the morning. He wanted his servant to have his coffee at six o'clock in the morning and he wanted this and that.

Then he left me to drive his wife. "Do whatever my wife wants you to do." She was a young woman, much younger than he was. He was the president of New York Life Insurance Company so he was wealthy. Anyway I had to drive her in this old 1917 model Cadillac and she had her little niece with her. Christmas eve there was a big store down town that was paying to let people ride the street car to that store free. She told me, "Now, you pull right in this corner and wait here untill come out." Right there was where the streetcar turned around at, so I waited there. When the street car came around, the man rang the bell for me to move. I didn't move till the police came and told me to move. Traffic was heavy Christmas eve and I had to drive several blocks before I could turn back around and come back there again. When I got back there, again the man told me to move, so I was going around in circles like that.

Finally one time when I got there, I saw her on the street and she was burned up. I had this little girl in the car and she was really burned up! She had called the police, she had called her husband, she
had called everybody. I tried to explain to her I couldn't stand where she said stand. Anyway we goes on and we gets into it. Her brother was there that night and he asked me to come in and tell him what happened so I told him. They told her she was wrong and I couldn't stand there, so we got over with that.
Chapter 3

DEPRESSION DAYS IN CHICAGO

My Uncle Henry was in Chicago. Out of all the children in the family -- my mother had twelve, his brother had four, his sister had two -- he always clung to me, always admired me. He was in Chicago but I didn't know where so I wrote home to find out. They told me he was at 1521 Hastings Street, so I came over to my uncle in the fall of 1929.

I got a job washing cars on Saturday and Sunday and I scuffled all week on Roosevelt Road and Ashland. After two weeks I went over on Cottage Grove and I got a job there washing on week-ends. There was a guy there from Texas named King. He would hire the boys and work them as long as the cars was coming in. Old man Cohen was the owner of this place, but this cat, King, had the wash rack leased. I worked there two hours a day, one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon.

One day I went to him and I say, "Look man, you ain't going to make no money the way you going. If you want to build you a business you have to have somebody here that knows how to wash cars in a way that people will come back. All you doing is just operating on a catch as catchcan. If you wash people's cars right they will come back. This is the only way to build a business." He said, "By God, it looks like you know what you're talking about. Suppose I just hire you steady and let's see how it comes out. You pick one of the other fellows, whichever one you think will work best with you, and I'll go along with that."
So I took King at his word and King and I got along all right. They used to have those kind of car washes that had a pump that would pump water from a hundred to three hundred pounds of pressure. You had to wash under the fenders in those days. Then you had all those wire wheels, you had to put kerosene or gasoline on them or soak them and then you had to take this high pressure water and you knock all this stuff off. I washed cars all that winter and we began to build up a pretty good trade. I worked hard in there. Them cars exhausted, too, and being in a corner with all this carbon monoxide, one day I went to go out of there and soon as the air hit me I fell to the ground. They had to carry me to the hospital because I was overcome, just about to get killed with carbon monoxide.

King and I and old man Cohen got along all right till one Sunday morning. It was cold and we was washing, trying to catch every body that come along. A guy came by and he said, "How long before I can get a wash-up?" I said, "Right away, you next on the line. Come on around." He was coming on with his car and by that time Hal drove some white cat's car on the rack, told him he had first place. I said, "No, no pull that car over. I just told this one he was next, he was out there waiting." Then King come over and took it up. When he started telling me what he thought about me, I reached up and grabbed his tie with one hand and I pulled that high power pressure spout on him and threatened to stick it down his throat if he opened his mouth again. Hal cut the power off the water. When he cut the power off the water I didn't have hold of nothing but King's tie. Old man Cohen ran up, "Hey Mooty, Mooty, this is me!" By that time my uncle had caught
me. They had me in a bear hug. I got fired and the police put me in jail. Old man Cohen sent Hal down to the jail the next morning to tell the judge that it was King's fault and I was a good worker and all that stuff.

Anyway, now I'm out of a job again. I'd been out several places to put in for jobs, this was 1930. One morning in the spring I was sitting up in the window; it looked like everything was dark and nothing would come my way. Finally the telepone rang. The guy called me from the West Side Simonize Station and I went out and got that job. It lasted awhile but we had trouble with guys coming in there sticking up the garage. A guy come in there one night, he wanted a Cadillac. We told him we had one over there. He said, "Well, you all get in the can. Stay in there until we's gone and won't no body get hurt." We went in the can and stayed in there while he filled the car with gas. Then we called the owner up and told him what happened. He said, "Why you let him take my Cadillac?" I said, "Well, you laying up there in the bed and I'm standing up here in front of a loaded pistol and I'm going to protect your Cadillac? You better come out here and try to find your car somewhere."

They found his car but the guy came back again. Some kids kept coming by, too. I asked about getting a pistol so the owner got me a gun, got permission from the Chicago Avenue Station over there. I had it around my neck and stuck down here. These kids kept riding by so we jumped in this Chrysler and trailed them. On the way down Lake Street we saw a police car, so we stopped the police car to tell the police that those were the kids that was suspicious. But they took us
out of the car and shook us down and carried us on over to the police station. When we went into the station the officer patted us down. When he patted me back here he found this gun.

Anyway I lost that job. I would have begged that man until tears run out of my eyes if I had known we was running into a real depression but I didn't know. I was too stiff to even think about begging him for a job cause I didn't know it was going to be that tough. That's when I struggled! The depression hit me in 1930 and then you couldn't find a job. You couldn't buy a job no kind of way. I had to go back to the old thing I learned in 1925, the pawn shop. You could always get some good clothes in pawn shops so I kept myself above board.

I left my uncle after I saw that I was going to be a conflict between he and his wife. A fellow that I took to the job with me, he had a flat and I took a room with him. Then after I lost this job it was roam, roam, roam. I walked, walked, walked, walked.

I bought a job one time at 37th and State. There was a little employment office there and I went in and paid ten dollars for this job working up on Argyle Avenue at a garage. That job required me to put in twelve hours a day, seven days a week for ten dollars. I paid ten dollars to get it. This was in 1933 and I had got a flat by then.

I had another job washing cars down in the loop. The biggest time we would have cars to wash was when people would come in and they was going to the theatre. Instead of paying a parking fee they would bring it in and have their car washed. We got thirty-three cents a car for washing. The man got a dollar so we got thirty-three cents and he
got sixty-seven cents.

Then I worked for awhile for a little restaurant on State Street where all the coal hustlers came in. They always had money. This guy had a little restaurant and a little cheap hotel. A friend of mine was working there, a fellow from home, and he got me on there. He was a cook. I worked there for a while and did pretty good.

When the Works Program came on, I worked out there cutting these old dead trees out in the Forest Preserves. That was a part time job. Finally, when the Relief came, I got a job working at the Post Office. We cleaned the post Office from the bottom all the way up into the dome. They worked part of us three days. We wouldn't work but three days at a time, fifty cents an hour, eight hours a day. For three days that was twelve dollars a week. We were in the chips you know. You could get along pretty good.

I met my wife along around 1931. She was working at Wilson and Bennett. We talked up a courtship and we went out together. Finally we started bedding up, you got to cut down expenses some kind of way. Any way, we put our nickels and dimes together and we scuffled and we scuffled. Whenever we lived in kitchenettes we were so pestered with rats you couldn't even put no laundry soap on the table or the rats would come in there and eat it up. They'd cut right through the wall, you know.

Finally I got a job working at a smelting plant right off of Roosevelt Road-- melting brass. They throw that metal in there and melt it down and then you tap it out at the bottom. Then we had to pour it out in little small ingots. You had to stand there and skim that
stuff and it was hot.

I was working with an old fellow I'll never forget his name was Pye. He was much older than I was and we was all talking we ought to have a union. He said, "Man, you don't want no union. The union people, the people you try to represent, will do you more damage than the people you trying to fight." I said, "What are you talking about?" You mean to tell me that people working wouldn't want nobody to represent them?" He said, "Uh-uh, you ain't never seen no trouble till you start trying to represent other people. They will hang you." That didn't make no kind of sense to me at that time.

Finally I got a job at T. Johnson's Cooper Shop at 38th and Morgan. We were working out there part time. This cat had a system. He would come out in the morning and look over the crowd and if you had borrowed some money from him yesterday, he got to give you something to do. So all the guys who were money borrowers got to work pretty regular. Me and this particular fellow, Bob Lee, we didn't borrow no money. We did have a principle we stood up for. We ain't going to pay him twenty-five cents on a dollar. That determined whether you worked or not. Those guys had to pay him twenty-five cents on the dollar every Saturday. He'd stand up there at the tavern where they cashed the checks and that's where he got his money. And everybody that he could squeeze he did. One Negro was raising some hogs out here in the country and he went out there and conned him out of one of those hogs.

Finally in the spring they opened up a night shift and we got on steady night shift. That's when I got my first flat, in 1933. We
worked and worked, twelve hours a night at twenty-five cents an hour. Walking to work and back every night, we saved up enough money so we could move out of that rat infested place and we got this place at 46th and St. Lawrence. We lived there from 1933 till 1944 when we bought a home over on LaSalle Street.

During that time I met Bill Young, a fellow that used to work with me on 44th and Cottage Grove. I met him one morning when I was out looking for a job. Bill said, "I'm working on the North side, man, I got a pretty good gig going over there. You might could get a job over there." So I goes over there and I find this guy named Sam Posner. He was a Jew and this other guy, Hansen, was Irish. Hansen was tight but this Jew persuaded him to invest some money. Dodge and Plymouth of that year was really going over big. They had this place and he persuaded Hansen to venture out and rent another place. At that time Jackie Reynolds and Montell Stewart was in the cab business, two Negro cabs, and they was growing big. Sam Posner took them over to Detroit on an airplane and they bought thirty-three Dodges for the cab service. Anyway I got a job working there.

Things was going pretty good and I said, "I think I'm going to get me a car." I admired these Master 6 Buicks; a Master 6 Buick was a beautiful thing. I didn't want no Dodge nor Plymouth. Probably if I had bought a Dodge or Plymouth from them they would have kept me, but I go ahead and get me this Buick. And the fellow that was working with me went with me. He knew everything that I did. By the time I got it picked up and they found out what happened they cut me loose and gave this fellow the job. This was in 1935.
So I told my wife, "I'm going to leave this town. I don't know where I'm going. You may hear from me and you may not, but I'm sick and tired. I've done everything that I know to try to get a job. I'm going to drive that car till I run out of gas and then I'm going to sell that car and I'm going to keep on going till that's gone." I got my clothes out and pretty near got them packed. I washed that car and simonized it and I was ready that next morning to leave.

She came home that night, she was working nights. You never knew what time she was going to get off, so you didn't need to go to the street car line to meet her. Only one thing mattered, don't be late next morning. That was the only thing mattered to them. If you was late you would be docked or you were liable to get fired. So this always made her break her neck to get to work the next morning. She always got up early. She'd get up in the morning, sometimes we didn't even have heat in the house. She'd get up out of the bed, get her clothes on, ain't got time to wait for no breakfast, had to leave.

During those days back there from 1931 to 1933, I was working on those jobs sometimes twelve hours a night, seven days a week for ten dollars a week. I filed a case before Harry Hopkins when I was working like that at that garage up on Argyle Avenue. There was three of us working on this job. I told them what I read about Harry Hopkins and him being the head of that Wages and Hours thing and then I wrote to him. He told me he had an office in the Wrigley Building and he would send a man out, but he needed all three of us together. So this man came out and you know I couldn't get but one of them fellows to come with me. It began to come back to me what that old fellow, Pye, was
talking about. That third man didn't want no part of us, so we two filed this case.

We went down to the Wrigley Building. He brought this company cat down there with his brand new set of books. This was another hard surprise for me to face. I know that cat had been paying me ten dollars a week for twelve hours a night, but when that man summoned him to come down there he brought a brand new book. And this book had every week that I had worked and it ended up ten hours a day for fifteen dollars. When I looked in that brand new book I don't know what went on in me. But when you find people that's hating people in a funny kind of away, something causes them to be that way. And just at that time, when I lost my last job and felt like giving up completely, that Wage and Hour thing went out of operation. We had filed a case, got the case up to where this guy owed us some money. We never did collect, never got it. That's when I said, "This is it!"

I told my wife I was fixing to leave when she came home that night. She said "Well, why don't you go out there where I work one more time. They may be hiring out there, I heard they was hiring." I thought she'd just made this up but it turned out all right. I went out there and the man looked over the crowd. He picked out two of us and I was one. There must have been fifty people that day. The office was just packed. Only thing they would do with this extra help was work them as long as they had work and then cut them out. You might work two or three hours or five hours, it depends on what they had to do. But he picked me out and she was happy, whatever I was doing. I was loading. They was baling scrap and we had to pile it out on the
yard. That was a rough winter 1935 into '36, sure enough rough. I worked outside all that winter. This was at the old Wilson and Bennett Company.
CHAPTER 4
ORGANIZING A UNION

After I spent that cold winter working outside, finally the man in the paint mix department called me. The foreman in the paint mix department needed a man to check in paint and to clean up the floor. He also needed a man to work at night. The company wouldn't hire a white paint mixer for the night shift because the pay was too low for that skill if a guy really knew how to mix colors. Except for emergencies, the paint mixing was done in the day time. When the foreman saw that I knew how to check in paint and weigh it--you have to use a hydrometer to measure the thickness of paint--he wanted to use me steady. He gave me the job and that made only one man in that paint mix at night who knew anything about the specifications, how to take the base and, starting from there, make any other color you want. I learned that in the paint mix.

We had safety problems there. Take mopping the floor with naptha and spirits and things like that, there's a danger there. Any spark will set it off so the front door had a lead weight on it. In case of fire that lead would melt and that would trap the door. It would close completely. The rear door was open for an escape, but just outside the rear door they had barrels stacked up and that's where they loaded. We had trouble over this, had a falling out. Kluzinski used to tell the guy to put barrels over that door. This would have left no way for me to escape. I told the guy not to put no barrels over that door. He said Kluzinski told him to put them there. Then he
brought Kluzinski down there and we had a good cussing out spree. If there was a fire there, I'd been tombed! There was naptha, varnishes, all types of spirits and paint in there. Just one spark would set it off because I mopped the floor with naptha. That's the way you clean a paint floor, you don't mop it up with water. Finally Leon Kluzinski was convinced that I wasn't going to have it and he gave in.

I worked with the foreman and he worked diligently with me to learn me, so he could leave that paint business in my hands at night. I remember one day something happened to some barrels that was going to Detroit. The agitators that goes in these barrels was sprayed with a lacquer and baked. Then they're put in the barrels and sealed up. Now the lacquer that goes on that agitator had to be just right. You have to know what the guy's going to put in the barrel so you'll know what lacquer or what varnish to spray the inside with. I prepared this stuff to spray those agitators and those barrels. When those barrels got to Detroit, Ford Motor Company got them and whatever they put in there, it just coagulated. The stuff came off of the agitators and out of the lining of the barrels. They traced it all the way back to where the varnish and the lacquer was mixed. They finally got me and asked what happened. I told them what I did and they traced it all the way down. Somebody used the wrong varnish or lacquer for the barrel. The foremen at that time just pushed people, you know. I guess when they ran out of varnish the man who was spraying the barrel just used the wrong thing.

When the foreman and I went downstairs he said, "Look, you don't have to tell me whether you can handle this job or not, I know you
can handle it. The important thing is that when I leave here at night, my bread and butter is in your hands. At night you are the one man in here that knows those specifications. All I want you to do is go according to those specifications. When you do that I don't give a damn who comes in here, you throw them out of here on their head. The next morning you will have a job. So we didn't have too much of a problem.

A lot of times I had time to sit down and sleep. When they got another little foreman he was going to catch me sleeping. I learned how to sleep. I would sit to the desk with a paper or something in my hand. Anybody pass the door, they wouldn't know what you would be doing. Plenty of times I would be sleeping but if they touched that door I would hear them.

When we came up to raises I didn't get mine. They hired another chemist, Dr. Pangborn. He came down and we told him our problems. We wasn't making much money, I think about twenty-five cents an hour. Pangborn was supposed to get us our raise. He had given the other guys their raise, he didn't give me mine. I blew my stack! When I got up to his office he said, "They told me they was going to give you your raise." Then he called up somebody and they were discussing it. They argued and argued but I didn't get my raise for a long time. I finally got up to thirty-six cents, but I still had a dime coming they hadn't give me.

Just about the time everybody was getting good and disgusted with things we got a union there. When the union came in, in 1937, everybody was just worked down. It was long hours. As I said, my
wife never knew what time they was going to get off. I couldn't always regulate my hours because if they had some more barrels and pails to run they was running them. You go to work at four o'clock, no use you talking you going to get off at twelve o'clock at night. You might get off at four o'clock in the morning. You might get off at two o'clock in the morning. There was no extra pay for overtime, you got your hourly pay. Everybody just worked and worked and worked and they couldn't pay their bills. Things was getting a little bit higher. Everybody had been to the finance companies and borrowed and everybody was ashamed that the other fellow knew he had to go. But when they got ready to make their payments, all of them would meet down there at the same time. So we had our problems, everybody was just beat down.

It's kind of funny how we got a union. One night just about eight o'clock we had stopped for lunch. At that time, in 1937, people were striking all over, so you heard it on the radio. We wasn't organized enough to strike. One guy went in to ask for a two cent raise. He checked with Art Klein, the night superintendent. This is really what started it all off, but I had an inkling of what was going to happen.

I remember one day as I was working in the paint mix I came in and saw an old guy sweeping the floor. He had on some army denims. I looked at him and I said, "That can't be." He just stayed on my mind all night. Next evening I came back and saw him sweeping the floor again, just sweeping. I walked up to him and I said, "My eyes tell me you are Major Homer Lewis from the Eighth Regiment." He said, "Yeah, that's me." I said, "Now I'm puzzled about how you would be working on
a cheap job like this."

The Eighth Regiment is what now is called the Illinois National Guard. This is the old regiment that fought in World War I, they still had a unit here in Chicago. I was a boy when World War I was going on and I always wanted to be a soldier. So after I got here I got with some fellows that was in the Eighth Regiment. I got in and I did a three year term and half of another one. We had drill one night a week and we'd go out to Camp Logan and shoot on the range, target practice and that kind of stuff. In the summer time we'd have two weeks in actual field work.

I remembered seeing Major Lewis, he used to ride a horse. We used to go to Camp Grant every year. And being Major over the Howzie Department, a horse drawn outfit, naturally when he went to camp he always rode his horse with his strap under his chin. This way he controlled his company. I told him I was a private under Captain Jones. I'd been to camp several times and seen him so many times. And I said, "I just had to be surprised to see you working on a cheap job like this," because most of them guys had good jobs in the post office or somewhere.

Then he told me his story. He said, "The stockholders in this company has been losing money and they wants to know why. They have sent investigators in hereto find out, but they made the mistake of letting the investigators know each other. This time there's three of us in here and one don't know the other. But they're going to find out now why it is they're not making money." And he told me where he worked. He worked at a steel plant some place and he was a steel
He said, "There's only two people in this plant know I'm in here: Heinzie -- he and I went to college together, he is in this plant -- and Ira Flat, the personnel manager. I make my report every morning. I leave here at twelve at night and I get up in the morning and I make my report for the stockholders. Then I go to work there and when I get out there at four o'clock I go to work here. I still have to go to the Eighth Regiment to drill one night each week. Now tonight you'll see me go out that side door and when I go out that side door I will meet with Flat and we'll discuss what's going on."

"I have told them that they're going to have labor troubles here and when they have labor trouble it's going to be worse than any plant they have ever seen. It's going to happen and the best that I can figure, it's going to happen spontaneously. I go all over this place, just take my broom and sweep anywhere I want to go. I sit around and listen to people talk, find out what's on their minds. I've sounded out quite a few things here."

I learned a lot from him but I still couldn't visualize it like it happened and how effective it was going to be. S.A. Bennett, old lady Bennett's son, used to come over there through that plant and people would just break and run. I remember one guy named Mose Boatner. He fired Mose Boatner cause he had a white shirt on. Said he didn't have no business with a white shirt on.

Anyway, the way it finally happened is this. This one guy went in, half-way scared, to talk to Art about his raise. He didn't get it but he came back and told the other guy he got the raise. He
just didn't want the guy to think that he had had a failure. So this other guy went into get his. Now the guys was all sitting at the table watching to see how he was going to do. When he came back they said, "You get yours?" "No, I didn't get mine." And that sort of set him off.

A lot of people knew me because everybody got to come to the paintmix. A lot of them knew me on account of my wife, she had worked out there since 1927. So they wanted to discuss with me about a strike. I said, "I don't know whether they'll stick or not." William Bowman, a paint sprayer said, "Well, they're striking everywhere else." I said, "Let's start striking then." He said, "We're going out there and pull that switch that starts the line." I said, "Well, if you're going to pull that one, let's pull them all."

The line hadn't started. Everybody was waiting to see how this cat come out with the superintendent on his raise. So we started pulling switches and we pulled switches in there that night till it got so dark you couldn't see. We went all upstairs on the second floor, way back in the punch press, everywhere. We don't know how it's going to come out. This was just a spontaneous strike. We just started pulling switches and shut it down.

The news hit the radio that the plant was down and the company was notified. We just went up there and turned the lights back on and everybody started to make him a place to lay down. This was the last of the sit-down strikes because at that time the law was just fixing to outlaw sit-down strikes. The next morning the people came to work and they found out they couldn't get in. They threw their lunches over
the fence to us. Some of us was out on the roof with signs saying we're on strike. We stayed in there for thirty-six hours. Somebody got us a radio and somebody threwed us five pounds of coffee over there. We just had ourselves a ball for about two days and nights.

Eventually somebody came in from the outside. This was the old Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers of America. They got us to sign cards. We had one girl, Ola Belle Francis. She was a kind of young energetic woman and she went out the back gate and got those union cards and brought them into the plant.

We started pushing a guy named Sandford for leadership. The people looked to Sandford because way back in 1932 Sandford was implicated in some type of a union effort in that plant. They had tried before but it was quelled. The membership never did know what happened to it. When we went into this thing Sandford didn't want to come forward but they kept pushing and they pushed him to the front.

Quite a few people became active. We had a meeting and we agreed the company had to sit down and recognize this union. This is the first thing you got to get -- recognition. They got those cards in and we signed them and the company recognized us. The rest of it was at the conference table.

The United Mineworkers sent in a guy named Hank Johnson. He was working for the United Mineworkers and they was helping a lot of these other unions to get organized. Naturally where you have a lot of Blacks concerned they figured this was an advantage -- to put in a Black. So Hank Johnson came in from the Mineworkers to help consummate this agreement. He was a dark fellow and he was kind of
robust. He must have weighed 280 pounds. He had a deep strong voice and he was demanding. He wasn't a man that just repeated Mr. Murray, he knew what he was talking about. He told us he was a Harvard University graduate. The Mineworkers loaned him to Murray because you got Negroes in these mills and factories and they learned you had to do this to draw Negroes. But Hank Johnson did not take no back talk, most Negroes in the Steelworkers Union did. Whenever they run out of something to say, they quoted Mr. Murray saying this and that. Hank Johnson wasn't that kind of a man, he knew what he was doing.

When we finally got an agreement in June the agreement lasted from June until December. We had over 60% Black working in this plant. At that time the old Wilson and Bennett Company was the onliest place that hired Blacks in this area. Continental Can, American can and the rest of those, there was no Blacks working there. Foot Brothers Gear, right in the back there, they didn't hire no Blacks. That's why you had a big percentage of Blacks here.

That union lasted until Christmas at the end of 1937. They negotiated and negotiated and wasn't getting nowhere. All the while they were negotiating with our little group, they had been building this other union, the United Progressive Union of Steel Container Workers, Inc. Charley Wheeler was elected president and Sandford, vice president. Wilhelm Lee was shop steward in the barrel department. They negotiated right up till January. In January when we went back to work after Christmas, everybody had to sign this other union's card. That was the only way you got back in that plant. This was a company union, the company had formed it, so they broke off
negotiations with the old Amalgamated.

Well, I went back and the foreman came to me and said, "Mooty, the company got a new policy. Where there is two people in the same family working on the job, the company has to get rid of one of them. In some cases we're letting the man's wife go and keeping him. In your case we had so much trouble out of you, and your wife got a better work record than you have, so we're going to let you go and keep your wife. They had my check ready and all I had to do was go to the personnel office and get it. So this is how they got rid of me. They knew I wasn't going to sign that other union card. I didn't know that all the other guys in the paint mix on the day shift had signed this card in order to get back. I knew they were working but I didn't know they had signed this card.

Wilhelm Lee and James, Gregory had campaigned for this other union all before Christmas. We didn't know this but all during December they had been campaigning, letting people know they had a new union. All during Christmas vacation when we were off, they was going around seeing people. Now in January they're infiltrating them back. A lot of them wanted their jobs so they signed this card. When they came back Jim Gregory would stand at the door and give the personnel manager the nod. The company had built this organization while negotiating with our union. They had a sound truck, they had an office down the street in a garage, they had literature and they pamphletized the place. This really got under my skin. This made me think about what Pye told me years ago about how people double-crossed you.
Sandford left, he had it hard. Charley Wheeler, the white guy who was our president, left, too. He had been working for this other union. So we had to regroup our forces and find out who was active and who had enough guts to stand up. George Mischeau was one of the white guys that stood up. Ernie Simmons was a colored guy that stood up. We had never run into anything like this, it was so well organized. Now we got to go and get some affidavits signed, saying that these people intimidated them and this is why they signed this United Progressive Union card.

George and myself and Ernie Simmons got together. First of all, we got to go see Sandford because Sandford was in that earlier union and Sandford was vice president of our union and Sandford was gone. Sometime in February we got an appointment with Sandford. We went to his house -- Ernest, myself and George. We thought we got to get to the root of what happened so we know who we can depend on. We went to Sandford's house on 50th Place about eight o'clock at night and we sat down and started talking. We went over the whole situation.

This is one more time that I came out completely speechless. We sat and talked to Sandford about what happened to the union back in 1932. He told us, "I wouldn't advise you to go and try to build a union." He told us how the five of them got paid off. The company spent $2,500.00 to be divided up between them in 1932 and they had an understanding with the company that they would never, never engage in another union in that plant. They also had an agreement with the company that they would notify them of anybody else that attempted to organize a union in that plant. We all sat spell-bound. Later one of
the other guys he named denied that he'd ever been paid anything and he was with us. Sandford may have just been trying to spread the blame around.

When we left, we had got what we wanted. He said the company had made it possible for him to get a job at McCormick's International Harvester. He was satisfied over there where he was. There wasn't no union over there, the people wasn't talking no union. He could not be identified with us anymore because, in order for the company to set up this union here, they had to get rid of him. I knew that we had a hard time persuading him to take leadership. He said this was the reason that he was reluctant to take leadership, the agreement they had when they destroyed this union they was trying to build way back in '32.

He was supposed to notify the company if anything was about to happen, but we had this sit-down strike and he didn't notify them. He didn't know it was going to happen. Sandford worked way back in the shear room where metal was shipped in but this thing started in the barrel department. It was just a spontaneous strike. By the time everybody knew something was happening we was pulling switches so Sandford and this group couldn't stop it.

Now we know what happened, we know we got to build fromhere. George and myself, Ernie Simmons, Ola Belle Francis, Lucius Love, these was the active people. First of all we got to get those affidavits signed, we needed a hundred forty-four affidavits. When you go to the people to talk about the company they were scared to death, they don't want to sign. Finally we got the hundred forty-four
affidavits signed. This was enough to take to the National Labor Relations Board. When we took this to the Board they had a decision rendered and the company had to sign an agreement that they would never intimidate, they would never do this or that.

It took us some time to get a group together that would stick. I didn't ever see the agreement but it was read at the union meeting, what they agreed not to do and what they agreed to do. And they was ordered to put these one hundred forty-four people back to work even if they got to lay off everybody else in the plant.

Now Mooty's a problem. The union said you got to put him back to work. You've got to pay him the salary he was getting and it don't make no difference if he sweeps the floor. So I was put back to work. I didn't get back to the paint mix, but this is how I became familiar with a red circle rate. A red circle rate is where you may not be working under your classification but you have to get your classified pay. If they put you on a lower paying job they can't pay you that rate, they have to pay you the rate that you already had. And I wore a red circle rate from 1938 to 1948. They put me on a receiving dock. You had to go out and get the material and you had to bring it in and take it to its destination throughout the plant. I worked on that until after the war jobs came in.

When the union came in the first thing they told the company is they got to give everybody fifty cents an hour regardless of what they were making. A lot of women was making twenty-two cents, that was about tops for women. They said everybody got to get fifty cents an hour. When you raise them all to fifty cents an hour, those people who
are retaining that red circle rate got to get ten cents above the fifty cents, so that put me still higher. We got everybody a raise and everybody was happy with it.

We did away with the company union and we elected George Mischeau president, Ralph Richardson vice president and Ola Belle Francis recording secretary. I was one of the trustees. Shortly after that our vice president was fired and Lucius Love was elected to finish his term. Then our president had an accident so Lucius moved up to finish his term as president. George got his right hand caught in a conveyor and ripped it open. The union found out he had a little something on the ball so they put him on the staff. Lucius finished that term as president. Finally Lucius was promoted to the International staff of the Steelworkers Union. Well, now that we got our union back what are we going to do with all those people that were agents organizing this company union? We said we was going to organize the plant and get everybody in our union.

The old guy that was managing the plant was a guy named Ira Flat. So Ira Flat started to hauling in people from Kentucky by the truck load. Down in Kentucky they would go out and kill a rabbit in the morning or they could raise a hog and when you talk to them about fifty cents an hour you're talking about big money. But when you get here you're eating out of a paper bag. You don't go out in the woods and kill no rabbit or kill no squirrel for breakfast. And you don't raise no hogs either cause they don't allow no hogs. They found out they was eating out of the same paper bag we was eating out of, so their fifty cents didn't go no further than ours. They wasn't too hard to
handle and we got them in the union.

I ran against Ola Belle for recording secretary about 1940 and defeated her. People had a lot of confidence in me, nobody else could never control me. We were negotiating on the contract and I believe this had to be about 1940. The company was offering us two cents and they couldn't sell it. I remember so well one day Art, who was our local president, called me to go down to his house and talk and have a cup of coffee. Finally he brought this subject up, that the company was offering him two cents and the company just couldn't afford no more money. He said we could go ahead and strike and have all the disadvantages of striking. The company had offered us to see their books, he said, and we can go over their books if we want. They just can't pay no more.

I said, "Look man, you would have to get a federal indictment against those people to make them show you their real books. How can you have that much confidence in them?" We had quite a discussion and afterawhile I said, "Look, we're not going for no peanuts and popcorn now. It's got to be steak, 'taters and tea. What can we do with two cents?"

"Well, they only made $105,000 That's what they told us." "Then give me part of that." "Well the stockholders--" "I don't got nothing to do with no stockholders. If he got enough money to put stock in here, then let him live on it. I can't even live on what I'm getting, so let their stock still stand but give me some money to eat on"

We had our discussion and he didn't know exactly what to do.
At that time President Roosevelt had set up this conciliation service and I had been reading about it. We was right on the verge of striking so everybody was looking to me for leadership. We had a meeting that Sunday. I said, "Look, we ain't got no more time to be arguing about striking. You say you can't find the company, we can find them. They will be here tomorrow morning I guarantee you because I'm going to do something tomorrow and I'm not going to tell nobody what I'm going to do till eleven o'clock. Then I guarantee you they will be in that plant." Then I made a motion that the meeting adjourn and told everybody to bring their lunch.

The next morning some of the guys got scared, you always got some of those. The news went out over the plant, "Mooty's going to strike." At eleven o'clock I met a few people down in the pail painting department and everybody came around. "What you going to do, Mooty? What you going to do?" I said, "I'll tell you what we're going to do. You go to this department and you go to that department and tell them all to come up here when the whistle blows."

Then I went straight to Art. He was up in the machine shop. I said, "The people downstairs are going to want to see you." "What do they want?" "I don't know what they want. Whatever they want, they can tell you. But you going to have a lot of goddam questions to answer, so you come on downstairs at twelve o'clock because they're going to bed own on the second floor." When the whistle blew at twelve o'clock we went down there and we had this meeting. He tried and he tried to explain. I told my wife and some other women to come in and to go downstairs and tell that personnel director down there to come up
here, we want to talk with him.

That evening every department is ready to strike. We had a meeting outside and told the guys to hold it. I said, "Now if we're smart we won't strike. Now they're all upset. In Washington, D.C. the government just set up a conciliation service. If we go out on strike we got to stay out on strike until he comes here. He's the only man that can settle these disputes, this conciliator. If we go out on strike we got to stay out and I don't know what he's doing. So just hold everything just where we got it. If we're smart we'll send and get that man and we will work till he gets here."

Art jumped that high on the table. "Goddam it! What you going to send and bring the government in here for?" I said, "He's the only son-of-a-bitch we got any confidence in, the government." Harry Harper was the staff man servicing us then. Harper always had confidence in me because I had the kind of guts that you had to have. This is what he knew and he respected that. Harper jumped up and he said, "Brother Mooty, I think that's a smart move. I've read of this myself. It is true that we have a conciliation service and I assure you that I'll dispatch a telegram to Washington this afternoon and we will have that man here. It is true that we would have to stay out until he comes and I think this is a smart move."

They don't ever want the government in. No union wants the government in their business, but if you back me against the wall I have to come out. This was the only way we had to come out. We finally got everybody settled down and Harper dispatched the telegram to get this man. I'll never forget his name -- Mr. Cofer. Mr. Cofer
was out on an assignment then. I think it took him about a week to get here but he came and he got with the negotiating committee and finally we had this meeting to report.

I took the floor and told him we were glad to have him here. The reason he was here was because he was the only man we had any confidence in. "And if you wasn't representing the United States government, we wouldn't have no confidence in you. You don't have to be bashful. You don't have to take no back talk when you go in there cause we're not joking. We are going to have more than two cents. This company has been talking about showing us the books. We don't want to see no books, we want to see something green. That's all we're interested in, just that! So you can go in and take all the time you want. You don't have to worry about what we're going to do because we got all the confidence in the world in you because you represent the United States government -- that's the only reason. Whatever you come out with, we'll abide by your decision."

He said, "Well, I appreciate you all taking that kind of time. As far as these books are concerned, I've already told them when I came in I didn"t want to see any books. For twenty-five years that's all I did. I was a certified public accountant so I know books. They haven't showed me the books and I can assure you that they have offered more than they had offered you and I will assure you that they can give more. I can't tell you how much more they're able to give, but according to the amount of money that they're making they can give you more than two cents. I will get everything I can from them before I come back to you. When I come back to you I will tell you what I
believe is fair according to what they make and then it will be up to you to do whatever you see fit." We thanked him and we got more money. I think we got about six or seven cents. At that time that was pretty good money. It's a whole hell of a long way from two cents. And there were some other good things that we got.

People lost confidence in Art Marshall. We decided now we got to change presidents and Lucius Love decided to run in 1940. He came to see me and we had a talk. I said that was all right by me. He had another guy he wanted to discuss it with, Richard Taylor, so we go over to his house. Lucius had a little store over on Federal. We sat down and we talked that evening about Lucius being president. I said, "You have to be the best president we ever had. You have to be a damn good president because there ain't any black presidents. Naturally you're going to have to be better than all we've ever had."

We talked about the confidence that people had in him and George, when George was president, and the confidence that people had lost in Marshall. He had already discussed it with Marshall, that the people didn't have the kind of confidence in him that they had in Lucius and George. So we went for Lucius Love for president and a young fellow named Joe Doelik for vice president.

In order to sell it we went to the people and said, "Look, this union was organized black and white and it's going to have to be black and white. If we get a black president we're going to get a white vice president. And if we get a white president we're going to have a black vice president. We have maintained that up until now and this is the way it's going to have to be. So Lucius was our man and he was
president from 1940 till he went on the staff in '48. We had a hell of a time keeping him in and supporting him but we did. And the union moved forward—not too fast. There's a lot of things that it didn't do that it should have done, a lot of things we looked over. I guess the whole union could have moved faster and further.

First of all we had to make the company respect him as president, keep the company from playing with him, making funny jokes about Negroes. We had to go to the company and demand that he didn't work so that he could transact business. They pulled him out from the barrels and let him float and still draw his pay. Mordechai Taylor worked on Lucius's job. Everyday he got a work slip showing how much money he made and Lucius's pay was based on Mordechai's pay.

Now under Lucius we had this problem of organizing the plant. Everybody said we got to get back with James Gregory and these cats that tried to start that phony union. All this time they been floating. All these years from 1938 all through Marshall's administration, this is all we was talking about. Finally when Lucius got in we said we were going to go ahead and do it, get them in the union or get them out of the plant. We had a method of doing it.

I said, "The first thing is we're going to dismiss this meeting. We don't want no men in here because we don't have enough men with backbone to do this job. We've got to have the women." So the women stayed. I said, "Now tomorrow when you come in, every son-of-a-bitch you see with a bucket of food, a lunch, you just go to him and beg him out of it. Don't let him eat it. If he opens up a package of cigarettes don't let him smoke them. Just go there and beg him out of
them. All of you go out and just beg him out of every one he got. Don't leave him with nair nothing."

That day them women went in there with blood in their eyes and they started eating up those people's lunch. They started smoking up their cigarettes and scared the living daylights out of them. So many guys came down -- we didn't even tell them to come. I don't know how the news got out. But that evening we had guys down there signing up and signing up. We got them down pretty low, got a lot of them in. So we don't keep making that move, we got to start a different technique on the rest of them.

We told every shop steward we didn't want no excuses. "Just tell us the guys that you can't collect from. That's all we want to know. You do everything you can to get everybody. Then everybody you can't get no money from, you can't get them to sign a union card, don't bother with him no more. Just leave him and give us that list." So they gave us the list.

Bill Gilbert, Otis Reeves, and James Forbes and I, this was the committee. We were the flying squad. We got a list of all these cats that owed money and ain't paid. Then we go to each guy and we say, "Look man, what's happening with you? We got a list of people here that didn't join. You're the last man on the list. We done scratched everybody else off. Now how is everybody wrong and you're the only one right?" "Well, they told me they wasn't--" "Never mind what they told you. See here, you're the last man, so what's wrong with you?" Three of us there, one on each side, we went to every one of them, told him that same story. Each one was the last man. So we got
a few more of them in that way.

We had a couple of tough ones who were determined not to join. James Shields was supposed to be tough. Sam Davis was supposed to be tough, he wasn't coming in. So we went to Sam Davis and told him, "Man, you dragging your feet. You may someday have a kid go to work out here. Every one of them women in there are paying their dues and you're here sucking their blood. What you should be doing, you should be making it possible for the future generation to come out here and work. One day this may be a good paying job." We talked to Sam along those lines. We said, "As far as you being bad, we ain't worrying about that, that ain't important. The important thing is, you is sucking these women's blood. Every one that you see out there is worthy of being your wife. Ain't nothing out there but black women and every one of them is paying, but you is riding on their backs, so why don't you get off their backs? What objection you got to the union? The only reason you're getting the money you getting is because of the union." Well, we didn't have no more trouble with Sam.

We get to Jim Shields, he's supposed to be carrying a gun. Ain't nobody going to talk to him. Otis and I said we'd go up and see Shields because we'd got almost everybody else. So we got a hold of Shields and told him the same story and finally we got Shields. James and Gilbert got off at three o'clock that evening and I got off at four. Just to be sure he'd be there I said, "When you all get off you wait down at the tavern when Shields comes out." When Shields come out he kept his promise. He came in to cash his check, got him a beer, went down to that office and paid his back dues.
Well, we got to Rev. Nelson. Rev. Nelson wasn't going to pay no dues. He worked kind of over me. I said, "Well, we don't have no choice now, we got to drive on to the end." So we get to Rev. Nelson that evening when he came off work. We was out on the road when Rev. Nelson came by and I says, "Say Rev., we want to have a talk with you." Everybody was out there looking to see how I was going to come out. Rev. threw me off and I caught him up again. He slung me loose again and I jumped and grabbed him. When I grabbed him the women started coming off with shoe heels and I don't know what all. About that time the company had the police out there and the policeman came up and he was going to break it up. I said, "We just want to try to talk to this fellow and he don't want to talk, that's all." They said we had to break it up, so we said okay and we broke it up. But that next morning Rev. came in with the money and Gilbert was scared to take it. He thought Rev. was trying to trick him. He came in with all that back money, three years back dues.

We had another little guy that came in. He was working and I was tanking around with him, couldn't get him in. He'd tell me this week he was going to pay me next week. Kept on, so finally I caught him. I said, "Look man, you just keep putting us off. What happens?" He said, "Well, I told you I was going to join last week, but I'm not going to join next week or the next week either." I said, "Well, you won't be working here that long." I got my squad together, got Gilbert and James to get ready. I said, "You all meet me down, at the tavern this evening 'cause I'm going to bring you something down there. It's going to be hot and heavy."
This little cat gots cared. He went and told the foreman that I threatened him. He was going to get out of there fast that evening. But I was working loose, I didn't have to work on no assembly line till the whistle blew. He was going to beat me out, but I already had him trapped because I had James and Gilbert sitting down there at the tavern looking this way. He had his self stashed right back there so when the whistle blew he could come and punch the clock and go out fast, but I was standing down yonder, going to meet him at the clock. Sure enough, the whistle blew, he came from this way and punched the clock. I came from that way and punched the clock and took right down the street behind him. When I gave Gilbert and them the sign they came out and we met. He goes up to his car and Gilbert steps upon one side and James stepped upon the other. I stepped in the middle and said, "Wait a minute." So he started to plead and plead. I tried to get some kind of way to hit the cat. I would have hit him but I didn't have to hit him because he'd plead and he'd beg. I said, "Well don't you come darken that door in the morning unless you bring us all your back money, every dime of it." The next morning he didn't come in till about ten o'clock. When he came in, he went in the office and talked to the personnel manager. The manager asked him, "Were they on company property?" "No, they wasn't on company property." The manager said, "Well, there ain't nothing we can do about that." So we never saw him no more.

These cats here all came into the union under Lucius. King Mark left, we didn't have no trouble out of him. We got Wilhelm Lee in. Joe Holman was another tough cat. He was working on the same
job after the union came in as Major Lewis was before, so he was there to help setup this company union. He was a flea in George's bosom and this was more so the reason that made me cling to George [the white local union president]. George and I sat down and he used to tell me, "Somebody has to break me out of this fix 'cause when they start talking about racial issues he can interrupt the chair and tie it up so bad. Somebody has to be able to break me out of that." This is how I learned about teamwork. I was able to break him out a lot of times, making motions. He knew how to make motions. The average person working in the mill, they don't know nothing about motions. They never studied parliamentary procedure, but you learn by doing when you get your back against the wall.
CHAPTER 5

WAR YEARS IN THE PLANT

All those people who had double crossed us and got mixed up with the company union left except Lee and Jim Gregory. They wouldn't leave so they had to be disposed of some kind of way. People didn't want them in because they're scabs. Lucius Love was elected president and he promised them he would give them a fair shake. This is one thing I blame him for, after I done everything I could to get him in. The first year he was in we took up money for a Christmas present, made the company recognize him, made the company take his head out of those barrels so he could float (move around the plant). Then he kept telling these cats he's going to give them a fair shake. Lee came to the meeting and I cut Lee up like green onions. Lee walked out of the meeting and he didn't come back no more.

Jim Gregory couldn't do that, he still had confidence he was going to be in it. He'd been going over to Love's house talking to him. His wife had been over there and they didn't want him to lose his job. So at this meeting Jim Gregory came up. They had a vote on him, whether he was going to be in or he was going to be out. When the motion came up whether we was going to accept him, I had to take the floor against Jim.

There was quite a bit of discussion. "The man has lost three fingers and he can't get another job." I said, "That son-of-a-bitch may have lost both hands but he got a brain. One day fate just might
make it possible for him to be a foreman. If that time ever come he will drive you people insane. I hope he'll work you to death if you stand here and let that scaley-belly get back in this place. He should go!" They said, "Well, you can't just kick him out. He ain't did nothing since then. You just don't allow no man no second chance." I said, "If he didn't know what he was doing, it would be something different but he stood in that door. Everyone of you women that came in that door to come back in this plant, you remember him standing there pointing as to whether you could or you couldn't come back to work. He had that opportunity. He was the big stalk in the cane patch. He stood there and he pointed on every one of you all and you had to come back by him to sign one of those cards before you could come back in that plant. He did that to you and you mean to tell me that you going to allow him a second chance?"

Finally the vote was in sympathy with him and they left him in. He promised that he would never do them no harm and he thanked them. I told them, "Well, you can let him in if you want but once a rat always a rat. I've never seen nothing lose its tail but a tadpole, nothing. Once he born with a tail he going to keep it. That's what you going to find out one of these days."

And they found him out. He got off on a job by hisself operating a press and he stayed to hisself. But what he was doing, he was establishing rates on those presses. I seen him operate a press. A piece of metal would be long enough you could cut twelve pieces out of it as it came through the press. He could put his foot on that press and cut six pieces, turn it over and cut six more, twelve pieces before
he even took his foot off. Now these women see they can't get a good press operator over there to make that kind of money and they say, "Jim's alright. We want Jim over here so we can make some bonus."

I say "Bonus ain't something that you want." Bonus ain't going to hurt me cause when they found out they didn't have no place for me to work they had me on the receiving dock. I worked on that receiving dock till all those good war jobs was beginning to come into the plant. I had to get up before day and get out there and make a lot of overtime in order to take home any money. I couldn't take no money home because I wasn't making any incentive out there on the receiving dock. I kept hearing guys talking about taking home a hundred dollars. Wasn't no way I could make a hundred dollars working by the hour. I got to get out there at four in the morning, start unloading them cars working on the dock. You get cold out there and you got on your clothes; then when you come inside the plant to take your material through the mill you're sweating.

Finally a Mr. David came into manage the plant. The war got bad and everybody had to wear their name and their picture on themselves. Everybody was cautious about spies coming in the plant. So Mr. David came into the side one day. It was cold on this dock and I was just getting in out of the wind. He came in the side door to see if we was going to challenge him. The little foreman and I, we challenged him. "That's good, boys, that's good. I'm glad to 'see you all do that. That shows that you are real alert." Then he says to me "I get good reports on you. You seem to be a good worker. This foreman here is crazy about you." I said, "I got to work out here.
You see how cold it is out here? You wouldn't even park your car out here but I've got to work out here on this cold dock. When I came out here I was a well man. When I leave here I intend to be a well man."

We got into quite a discussion. Everybody was standing back waiting to see how me and Mr. David was going to come out. We stood there all during the lunch hour and we went over some things. I said, "You see, you came in here. Somebody told you about me so you been had a bad heart for me ever since you been here. You want to keep me out here on this dock. I been through the bitters and been through the sweets. I think I'm entitled to some of the sweets. Now you're bringing in all these jobs into the plant and this is the only one I get to work on."

He said, "I hadn't thought about it like that. What department you want to get into?" I said, "I don't know where these good jobs is. You know because you assign them in here. All these war jobs and people in here making over a hundred dollars a week and I have to break day with a brick bat in order to take half a hundred dollars home. And you sit up here talking about this foreman done fell in love with me. Man, I don't play those kind of games." We had it good and heavy. When we got through talking he said, "Well, I tell you what, if you don't trust me for nothing else you trust me for this. Within the next week you'll hear from me."

All week I kept hearing this one didn't want me in his department, that one didn't want me in his department because I was going to cause trouble. Finally I got transferred to a job where I got twelve to fourteen dollars a day. Then I sure enough blew my stack.
I said, "Here I am fighting for you guys. You all know there's money back here and all you all making this easy money and nobody ever told me this money was down here. I'm out there working my can off. I've been out there fighting for everybody that was in here, trying to uphold the union and I don't know what's going on."

This is how I was able to be just across this fence where Jim Gregory was working. People were saying, "We need him over here so we can make some bonus. The rest of them, they can't run that press and we can't make no bonus." I said, "The bonus that you're talking about is one of the worst things that you ever tried to make. Whenever you make that so long, they going to raise the rates up. You're going to have to make more and more to keep the same bonus."

Well, they wanted Jim to get on that press and he got on that press. I think there was thirteen of them on that press assembly line. They made bonus after 900 pieces. I believe they was making 1100 pieces an hour, so they raised the rate to 1100. Now they had to go over 1100 pieces to make that bonus. They sent half of those women to the hospital for operations. Just bending their bodies and bending their bodies, they got sick. If that didn't happen they got this knot on their arms from working so fast.

Just before the war was over, when the fight came about promoting Blacks, Jim was promoted to foreman and he was as rough on them inside that plant as he was at that gate in 1938, just like I'd told them he would be. I said, "You didn't have no business keeping him in there in the first place." So that was Jim Gregory's story. Those women forgot too easy. There's a time to wipe a thing out and
that's when the season is ripe to wipe it out. But they left Jim Gregory there. Their sympathy for him was like some parents for children that break them and send them to the poor house. All the time you just can't be sympathetic.

There was a fellow named George McCrae used to attend our union meetings. He was with the old Douglass Washington Institute studying something about labor. He wanted to be a labor consultant. When George saw me in this meeting, fighting with Jim Gregory, he said, "Mooty you put up a good fight but you don't handle your words right. Words have a power. You have to learn how to deliver what you have to say." I said, "Well, I don't know but one way to make it George. Just let it come up and come out. I don't try to adulterate it." He said, "I'm going to give you something to help you. In 1925 here in Chicago the Scholarship Committee was set up and they give scholarships and I'm going to get you one. When you get this you'll learn how to do what you're trying to do. This will help you. You did a good job but this will help you do what you want to do." So he gave me a scholarship.

When he gave me the scholarship I went to Lucius and I said, "Look, I got this scholarship but I want you to be the best damn president there is in this district. Being a Black, you've got to be better as president so I'm going to give you the scholarship. If I ever get another one I'll take it. We discussed the scholarship and I got him down there and when they found out who he was, how important he was, they agreed. So I gave him that scholarship in 1942. He took two weeks vacation and he stayed six weeks up there at the University of Wisconsin. It really sharpened him up.
The next year George got me another one and I took that one myself. This is where I met Hy Fisch and Myrna Seigendorff. These people was sharp. They was up on labor history, on contracts and all that kind of stuff. This is where you learn how to work together. When I come out of there I'm a little bit sharper than I was before.

I worked on this new job making a decent salary till just about the end of the war and then I had learned about identifying jobs. The company lost a lot of money because they thought they were smart, but the people down in the mill had different ideas. They put meters on all those machines. Those cats were able to manipulate those meters where they could run the meter and the mill not be running. So the company had a little fellow come in. He was real slick and he sat down and told us what he wasn't going to stand for. He called a meeting with all the union representatives and the foremen in the plant. We went up and sat down and ate all his food and pies and coffee and didn't nobody say a word but him. He had all the say. Then we went back down in the mill. When they took inventory on him one time that was it! He started then to try to fight to correct the mistake that he had made. They got rid of him just the same.

Another guy came in smart, knowing all the answers, but then it came down to cut this crew size. There were about eight men on this line and they pulled off two of us. Byrne knowing something about the title of jobs and the duties of the job, the description of the job and what you were supposed to do, it made a big difference. The superintendent came in that night and told us he was cutting off two men. So who was going to carry the rings to the scale? We sat down
and we talked about the job. "Your job is to operate that machine, the other fellow's job is to catch those rings and put them in that rack. That's his job, that's what the job description says he is supposed to do. So you go up there and discuss it with him."

We made them go up there about three times that night discussing this matter. They discussed and discussed. I said, "Don't understand nothing he says. Keep on asking him until get it figured out." So they did. Finally I told them, "Now I got it down straight. Your job, Rev., is to put them in that machine and pull that lever. Eddie, your job is to pull them out and throw them in that rack, that's your job. You each do your own job." So they did. I said, "They moved us from back here who are supposed to take them forward, so don't nobody take them further than here. Here's where they'll stop -- right here."

They started running the machine and they ran and they ran and they started piling up. I said, "Just let them keep on piling up." They piled up and they piled up. Just inside this other door there's a paint rack where they paint colors -- all different colors, blue, green, black, red. All this paint is just behind this door. They ran and they ran and pretty soon the pile got higher and higher so naturally the door started cracking. They started to stop but I said, "Keep on running." so they kept on running and pretty soon the door cracked. It opened on the inside and turned over all that paint. There was red, gray, blue, all kind of paint, running on the floor. He was feeling pretty good up front. He thought they were operating everything all right and he'd go back and see what's going on. When he
came back and saw what was going on, he hollered bloody murder, "Stop the job!"

It makes a difference who stops it, whether you refuse to do the job or he stops it. We learned that when we had to go on strike one time to determine who stopped the job. Anyway they didn't run no more of those rings. They said they only had a short order for the government and it wasn't worthwhile to run them no way. We had quite a knock-down, drag-out but nobody got fired. Nothing happened to nobody. We just knew that he wasn't going to cut those two men off that job. These are some of the things that you could do in those days that you can't do now.

Then we got into this business with the Army and the Navy. The company wasn't paying the kind of money they were supposed to. This was around 1944. We was having trouble with the contract and the company was stalling on negotiations. They go in with the Army and they called Lucius up in the plant. "There's a war going on. We need those barrels and pails coming out of that plant and we better have some barrels and pails out of that plant before we have to take action."

This is what would always confuse them. The company would always think they would be dealing only with Lucius, but when Lucius would get in a bind somebody would break him out. We used to talk sometimes till twelve o'clock at night, sometimes till four o'clock in the morning. We'd map out methods of what we was going to do. In this case he told me, "The Army and the Navy wants us to get them barrels out and I don't have no choice." I said, "You do have a choice. What do
you mean the Army and the Navy?" He told me what they said, they got to have them barrels and pails. I said, "Look, you're in the best shape you've ever been in, in your life. You sit down and you write a letter to the Army and the Navy. Write a letter to the War Manpower Commissioner and the War Labor Board and then get the representative here for the union. If we do that, then we ain't going to have no problem." So he did.

I'll never forget that Sunday we were going to have this big meeting. Just about the time we were getting ready to go to the meeting my uncle called up and told me his wife was laying at the point of death. I had to go over there. My wife and I jumped in the car and we went over. I stayed there as long as I could. She was real low sick. Finally I told my wife, "You'll just have to stay here, you can't go to this meeting, but I got to go, I got to be there." So I broke out and went on.

I got to the meeting and everybody was there, packed house. There was the Army man and the Navy man with his brass on and the man from the War Labor Board and the War Manpower Commission. Everybody was there and the stage was set. Lucius got up and he did some talking. I asked for the floor and I said, "Gentlemen, I'm glad to see you all here. I don't know what nobody has told you before this, but regardless of all the things you've ever heard, today you're going to hear the truth. We're out here scuffling, trying to make a living and we're not making a living. We're not making enough to eat. If we work in this plant we're going to have enough to eat. We're not going to be hungry and tired, too. It's going to be just that simple. Now I
don't care whether this man makes barrels or pails or whether he makes shoe strings. The United States government says that if you make anything for the government you are entitled to 6% profit and if you don't make 6% profit they will subsidize you. I don't know if this company has asked for any subsidies or not. You say you've got to have these barrels and pails out of that door. I tell you to look on all of our work records. Everybody here has got from ten years up in seniority, no bad workers. There's only one thing about it, if you get those barrels and pails out of that door this man is going to pay us x amount of dollars cause here is what it takes for us to live on."

I took the blackboard and I said, "I pay $46.00 a month for four rooms." I put that down. "And I pay x amount of dollars for lights. There was a time that I used to go to the woods and cut wood and make lights. And there was a time we used to have kerosene lamps. I lived through that, but you can't do that here cause the city says you got to have electric lights. Before we get off this, I intend to cut this into three parts. This part here is what we want. We ain't going to talk about what we want. This part here is what we need. And we're not going to talk about what we need. And I need two cars to get back and forth to work. I need two homes to live in, one in the summer and one in the winter. I don't have time to talk about that, cause this here is what we're going to talk about now. This is what we GOT TO HAVE. And if this man makes any barrels and pails out of this plant, this is what we're going to have."

I wrote out rent, gas, lights, clothing, carfare, soap, toothpaste, work clothes, dress clothes, chewing tobacco, chewing
gum, some whiskey, food. I added it all up and I said, "If there's anything on that board that you fellows say we don't have to have, here's the eraser. I'm not talking to one or two, I'm talking to the wholecrew. If there's anything up there that you say we don't have to have, now you go up there and erase it. If you can't erase it, that means we're going to have to have it."

"If you're talking about putting us in jail, just make the jail big enough for all of us cause there's thirteen hundred of us here and we'll all be in it. If, that man don't pay us that kind of money you will not have no barrels and pails coming out of that plant. We will shut this plant down so tight spider webs won't grow in it. There will be nothing in that plant that breathes. Call it a strike, call it anything you want. If this man needs subsidies the War Labor Board has the authority to grant him subsidies. Now he hasn't asked you for that has he? If he hasn't asked you for subsidies that means that he's making over 6% profit and if he's making over 6% profit we dont have to work in this plant."

Neither one of the people we had invited there said anything, so that settled it. They had a meeting behind closeddoors after that and we got that kind of money. As I say, you have to provide your own methods.

We had to do our plant manager, Mr. Ellis, that way, too. One time when Lucius was negotiating a contract they were talking about how they couldn't find Mr. Ellis. People was worried, where is the contract? The contract time had run out and they just kept on getting an extension. We'd come to the meeting on Sunday and they'd
say I "We can't even find him."

Finally one time I said, "Well, this time tomorrow we'll find him, don't worry. Everybody just leave here today and tomorrow at 11 o'clock I'll tell you what to do. I ain't going to tell nobody till then." Sure enough the news got back that we was going to strike. Every one of them was in their office waiting for us to strike, but we didn't strike. We just called a meeting in the middle of the day and we picked a committee to go down and get the man out of the personnel director's office. He came up and he talked until he foamed at the mouth. Nobody said nothing but him.

When he got through talking I said, I Wait a minute; we ain't concerned about nothing you said, we're only concerned about, three things. We're concerned about a contract; we're concerned about how much money we're going to get: and we're concerned about when we're going to get it. That's all we're concerned about. The rest of the stuff you talked about is just null and void. Now can you answer those three questions?" He said he couldn't. We said, "Just join this committee, go on in the office and get that other cat." So he went and got the other guy and they came up and talked and I told him the same thing.

All this time wasn't nothing happening in that plant. Everybody was sitting at that meeting in the middle of the plant in the middle of the day waiting for something to happen. Finally we got a hold of Mr. Ellis who was the young manager of the plant. It took three trips to get them all there. Nobody could find the mall before then. When he got through telling us about gross income, net profit
and the whole picture of the economical situation I said, "I got something to say. Number one, if we say 'forward march,' everybody steps off on the left foot and that means they're in step from there on. The first thing you did was get off on your right foot, so we've been out of step ever since you been talking. What you're talking about we're not concerned about. We don't know nothing about no gross income. We don't know nothing about no net profits. We don't know nothing about the general over-all picture. We don't know nothing about no war. We don't even have time to listen to those things because we're confined to these machines and when we leave that machine we don't have time to do nothing but go home and eat and come back. But we know one thing. When we get our pay checks we can't pay our bills. Now that is the only thing that we're concerned about and that you haven't even touched on. Our committee tells us that when they get ready to negotiate this contract they can't find you and we are determined to have a contract. They cannot negotiate no contract with you, you're not in the office. We selected the most intelligent people there was in this plant to come down and negotiate our contract. If you can't negotiate with them, everyone of us will be down there in your office and we will sit down there until this contract is negotiated. You decide whether you want us to negotiate with you or you want them." So he had to make a decision. They got off on the side and had a little conference. Then he told us to get our committee together and he would meet with them. That's the way we got that done.

You have to devise your own methods of dealing with these cats. This is the way you deal with them. This is the only language
they understand. They don't understand the union. I've always maintained the best way to negotiate a contract is to take that cat down in the mill, shut down all the machines down there and then he can hear what you're saying. When you're sitting behind a desk with fluorescent lights all over your head and you have stayed around the city for three or four days and been out to two or three nightclubs and all that kind of stuff, you forget what you really came down there for. These are some of the methods that we used during our heyday.

In 1946 we had the biggest strike we'd ever had. We had been battling and tussling with each other all through the war. I warned the people when the war was over we were going to have a show-down. Sure enough we did. When the company found out they couldn't reduce the amount of people they had on that assembly line without having trouble they said they just wouldn't run them. We said, "Don't run them, we don't care." So they didn't run them.

As soon as the war was over we had one cut-back. They had set-up men coming in at seven o'clock in the morning to set up the machines. When they came in and set up the machines they would get time and a half for that hour. As soon as the war was over they told the guys, "We want you to come in tomorrow morning at seven o'clock. This is your regular starting time." No more overtime. People wouldn't take it. They started out that morning and before they got through they had fired 72 people for refusing to come in like that. They had to call the president in; the president had to call the international union. The union had to prepare a statement for these people to make in refusing to come in at seven o'clock. Now they can't get no set-up
men. They went right down the line, 72 people fired. They called it suspended. Then we had to strike. It wasn't really a strike, it was a shut-down. We came in right along, supported those people. We came in and worked every day, scrubbed, mopped the floor, washed the walls, but there was no production until they were forced to shut it down.

Now it's got to be decided whether it's a shut-down or a walk-out or a lock-out. We had that case before the Arbitration Board and the Arbitration Board ruled that the company had to admit that it was a lock-out. This was the first time in the State of Illinois that anybody had drawn unemployment compensation for a walk-out, whether you term it a walk-out or a lock-out. But all of us had signed it. We didn't have no pickets around there. Hell, everybody went on home. If they wanted to, they came out and signed up for unemployment compensation. Some people was afraid to sign up. But they got it, all those that signed, although they were a longtime getting it. We didn't have no problems like other people in the plants had, because once you get your union organized from within, not from without, then the people believe in you.

The union was a lot different in the early days than it is now. It got really involved in things going on in the community. There was one woman in particular who came in from the outside to help the labor movement in this area. Her name was Myrna Seigendorf, later Myrna Kassel. The whole idea of community service, the possibilities of what it could do, all came out of this one woman's head.

I met her at the University of Wisconsin in 1943 where the
union sent some of us to school. She was an instructor there and I was in her class. We had people there from all over the country, including two fellows from Alabama. These fellows was in a strange part of the country, so they sat in the back of the building, wouldn't be seated right. Myrna and the other teachers saw this. At the end of the class Myrna says, "Tomorrow morning I'm going to do something different. I hope you all will come prepared for it. I'm going to seat you alphabetically. The seats will be arranged alphabetically and you will take your seats accordingly."

So the next morning she started seating them according to alphabet all the way down to me. She said for me to take seat 19 and Miller to take 20. I hadn't looked up to see who Miller was but Miller was one of the white guys from Alabama. He didn't sit down so she called the next guy and he didn't come over neither. Then she said, "Miller you take 20." He said, "Are you insisting I sit there?" She said, "Yes, I insist that you sit there because there's no other place for you." He said, "Well, I won't sit there." Eventually she called on the rest of the people and they sat down so Miller left the classroom. When he got back to the dormitory and told his story they told him there was no other place for him to sit so he left. He missed the whole class and he would have learned more in that class than he would ever have known all his life.

I got missed of Myrna after that till 1945. In 1944 she came to Chicago to establish the Community Services Committee. We had talked about this, about what all it could do, but when she got here she had a problem trying to sell it to the labor movement. She went to the
Cook County Industrial Union Council. Finally they allowed her to try it.

I've already pointed out my relationship with Lucius Love. Lucius was already a trustee of the Council and he was appointed to help put this program together in its infancy. Myrna knew Lucius because he was there at the school the year before I was. So Lucius said, "Mooty, they want me to serve on some kind of committee downtown and I haven't got time to go down there. Would you like to go down?" I went and this is where she started telling me more about this thing.

There was a woman out of the Clothing Workers named Clara Leon, another gal named Marie Peital and there was a Miss Diamond and another lady, I never did know what her name was. With Myrna that made six of us on this committee. We were to try this on a three month basis. At the end of the three months we had to elect a chairman and this was where the problem came. Marie Pietal was bashful, Clara Leon couldn't talk, Miss Diamond had a brass mouth, she was going to change the whole set-up. They was most surprised when I spoke up that Myrna couldn't do much harm, we were only going to elect her for three months and I thought it was important, so long as she had started the program, that we shouldn't tear it up right now. I made a motion that we retain her in office for the next three months. So that's how she stayed in.

The first class held out in the community was held in Claren. I had the privilege of picking the first professor, Professor Burleigh Gardner. Myrna began to tell us about the various community agencies and what the agencies was set up to do. She went in to all these phases and Burleigh Gardner was there in the evenings. Then she was able to
go and bring these agencies to us because at that time these agencies got a part of their operating expenses from community funds and the unions used to go out in the plants and solicit funds for community services. They didn't want us to have anything to do with the distribution. It was alright for us to participate in the collection but nothing to do with how it was spent.

Through our committee we began to get rank and file members on the executive boards of these agencies who were getting portions of their operating expenses from the Community Fund. Labor didn't know anything about this until Myrna brought this program in, in '45. At that time she was able to call in all of these big wheels that deal with this Community Fund's money. This is what you call the Red Feather Report. A guy came to the first conference to talk to the board members and the people who were going to be coming on these boards, to let them know what they were expected to do and what would be a better way of operating. His name was Lester Sorenson and he gave a long lecture. I got one of the first Union Counsellor's certificates at that conference. There was about a half dozen of us that graduated at that time, rank and file.

I went to the first week-end institute that was held by the Community Services Committee. I started not to go but I was glad I did. This was in 1947. This was an institute that was held in Waukegan to bring all the people together. After holding all these conferences down at the Standard Club and other places, Myrna said we should get out in the country and have a weekend together in the country where we can get people to bring all their grievances out
there. This is when Leo Perlis came in. We went to Bowen's Country Club in Waukegan. That's the only time I was ever there.

We had begun to put CIO people on these boards. There must have been over a hundred agencies collecting money from the Community Fund. Nobody ever knew where that money went. It goes on up to a treasurer somewhere with some big people sitting on the board. Now these agencies come up to ask for funds. Somebody may have some old aunty who's been beat out, run down, or what have you, but they know where she can get a good job. They put her on this particular agency. They would set the agency up out in the community. If people needed these services they don't even know the agency is in that community. The lady in charge would have nothing to do but sit there all day. The money was coming free anyway, it came through the Community Fund. Nobody would question what they did until our program came into being. When this program came into being we started putting people on these agencies, on these budget review committees.

These conferences was called to familiarize us. People used to stay on those boards for years and they didn't do anything. You need to rotate people, bring other people out. Then you need to interchange them. Some of the boards didn't have nothing on them but women; some of the boards didn't have nothing on them but men. And some of them didn't have nothing but these old people on them. They never did have to do anything. They'd just go down to the Community Fund and make a request for their money and they would get it.

After we learned about these things through the Community Service Committee, Myrna was able to maintain her position in there
and get the program across. Doug Anderson was the first chairman of the Community Services Committee and Myrna became the secretary. Mike Mann became one of the top people in it. [Mann was Secretary-Treasurer of the Cook County Industrial Union at the time. He later became New York State Director of the AFL-CIO.] And Maida Steinberg Came in from Michigan as a social worker to help Myrna. We had a lot of projects. When this program got into operation people began to see that it was valuable so they began to move in. [The large unions wanted their own representatives in these jobs. Elroy Smith from Auto replaced Mike Mann. Frank Annunzio replaced Doug Anderson and used the position as a springboard to become Director of Labor in the State of Illinois. Larry Keller from Steel replaced Myrna and Paul Iaccino replaced Maida.] Myrna had created these jobs, then went to the Council of Social Agencies to get them to pay their salaries and this is where their salaries was paid from. These two women had no strong union to support them in the work they had been doing. When the old War Relief Committee went out of operation, this is where Leo Perlis came in. This was a growing committee, beginning to get nationally known, so right now Leo Perlis is Director of the AFL-CIO Community Services Program but that's where it came from, right out of these two women's heads.

While Myrna was in charge we were clamping down on these agencies. Her idea was that we're going to have Labor representatives on those budget reviewing boards. Marie Pietal was the first Labor representative that went on a board where the agencies came in to get their portion of the money. She held up a budget. I
don't know just exactly what was the issue but it had something to do with children and they didn't have enough sanitation there. They had come in last year for x amount of dollars and they came back this year for x amount of dollars so she questioned them -- what did you do with it? This kind of thing Myrna was deeply concerned about.

I remember we started off being involved in the weights and measures. We began to look into some of those agencies and the pounds of potatoes that came out was always five to ten pounds short. A hundred pounds of black-eyed peas would have about ten pounds of sand in it, little stones. We would do what this consumer group is doing now. We were like a watchdog and this was digging deep down.

Well, I don't think they had time for this kind of stuff. If you read the manual they put out, you will find what the Community Services was doing in 1947. The 1955 manual is much thinner because they weren't doing as much work. Myrna just had too much guts and too much drive and dug into things that the Labor people just didn't go for. The men that took these jobs over from Myrna and Maida, they didn't go into those things like those women did. They just didn't want to do this type of thing that she was doing, digging so deep and driving so hard.

I saw her later and we talked it over just casually. She had married and went into the furniture business. She just thought Labor should do this and Labor should do that. But these people don't believe in digging too deep into nothing. If she didn't think it was right, she'd tear right into it, boots and spurs. Maida went along out with her. The last time I heard of Maida I think she had infantile
paralysis or something. She was in a rest home on the North Side. After I left that plant there was a book entitled *Pattern for Industrial Peace*, written about that local union by a Dr. Whyte from Cornell University. Dr. Whyte was a professor. He came out looking for a story and he thought he would have to interview quite a few people to get one. But when he came to Inland Steel Container he said he found everything that he wanted to put in that book. He didn't have to see a lot of different unions because he found out at our plant how labor relations had went from extremely bad to moderately good. He came out and discussed it with people. He would get with Lucius, who was president, and he would have certain people to talk with him and then go back and write overnight.

That book is in the library but it wouldn't say nothing about Rayfield Mooty. My name wasn't mentioned through the whole book. I read it onetime. When this book came out it wasn't premiered until I had went to work for Reynolds along about 1956. As long as it was going to be premiered and it was about my old local union I thought I should have been invited but I wasn't. I went anyway. I didn't go where I could be seen, I got in the back door and I went up in the balcony.

Some of the things I'm telling you should have been in this book, the things that we had to do in organizing. Lucius wasn't always involved in all the things we did in the early days, like using the women to pester those cats. Even what we called the raiding squad wasn't known. Lucius wasn't involved in none of that. A lot of things happened that the professor never knew about. He only thought
he understood the whole story.*

*The first 66 pages of the book deal with the period Mooty describes. Although several incidents involving him are reported, his name is never mentioned. Lucius Love appears to be the sole union informant and most of the information appears to have come from company sources. Whyte gives the impression that not only the strike which brought the CIO into the plant was spontaneous but that many of the other actions, which Mooty describes as well planned in advance, were also spontaneous. Whyte gives a much more thorough appraisal of changes in company attitudes toward the union. Ironically, the time which he sees as the year when dramatic improvements in labor relations are made is the time period when Mooty leaves the plant to go into business for himself, with cooperation from the company in making him eligible for unemployment benefits while he tries to start his own business.
When I couldn't make ago of my own business I decided to go to work again. I said I ain't too old to get a job. I couldn't find a job so I go over to the union office and sit down and talk to Lucius. He said, "Yeah, we got a place out to Reynolds Metals. That's just the job for you. We need a good union out there."

I said, "I ain't going for no job to fool with no union. I'm going out there to make some money. If I be a union member, well and good. I'm not going out there to take no more abuse trying to be a union officer. He called Joe LaMorte from the union and they started talking. Oh, they wanted me at Reynolds Metals.

The union's all messed up out there and these guys done spent all the money. They had to fire some of them. Now Joe is the administrator over the local. I went out there just before Christmas and got a job. No sooner I get in the plant, I start to find out all this trouble that's going on. There wasn't but a few people in there that knew anything about union activities in the first place. They brought them here from Mississippi and Arkansas. Everybody that had a cousin or uncle or anybody down there, they brought them here. Reynolds had just took that plant after Alcoa had turned it loose. They started off to operating it and it failed. After some manipulations they got it going again. When they got it to going back, they had to hire everybody they could find.
They used to run trucks from 47th Street all the way to 63rd Street bringing people to work. They were so far out they couldn't depend on them coming to work furnishing their own transportation. Didn't no busses or nothing go out there. Everybody could read or write, they made them a machine operator. A lot of the guys got to be machine operators just because they could read and write, not because they knew anything about the job.

You only had two or three guys out there that knew anything: Doc Williams, Bob Davis, Sonny Adams, a guy named Sargent, and a gal named Anne Portel. These were the people who ran the union. They just spent the money like they wanted. Doc helped organize it. I saw Doc at the convention in 1948 spending money like it was going out of style. He had control of the treasury. I think the union was paying him $100.00 a month and he had unlimited expense account. He was living big, Doc was just a big man!

When he spent all his money out, then he got into it with the district union officers and they took the union away from him. Oakley Mills, at that time, was the sub-district director. Oakley couldn't come out to the West Side so Joe LaMorte, who was a staff man, was running it. Joe told me what happened and they showed me a letter that these cats signed. He says, "Now they spent all the money and rather than prosecute them, we drew up this letter for them to sign." The letter was asking Phil Murray to assign an administrator over the local and it was signed by Doc, Sargent, Sonny Adams and Davis.

When Murray assigned an administrator over there, the other people in the plant don't know nothing. Doc was their god! So Doc
goes back to his constituents and says, "They ain't got us accused of nothing." The agreement was that if they signed the letter they wouldn't prosecute them. Then Doc tells his people, "All you got to do is make a motion that they restore us back to our jobs because they ain't got us accused of nothing." I had a chance to go to the meeting and that was the first motion that was on the floor. Joe was trying to explain. They'd get right up and make the same motion again.

I went to about two meetings. Finally, on the third meeting I got up and said, "I don't know what this argument is all about. Maybe you people haven't been informed but these fellows here signed that agreement." Then the word was out that some guy's coming out here and he, knows more about the union than anybody. Joe is bringing him out here to take over the union. You couldn't do nothing like that. The by-laws said you had to be in the plant a year before you could run for office and I didn't go out there for that.

Finally a couple of things came up in the plant. The place I worked at, the company furnished your gloves. When you got to the end of your shift you took your gloves off and everybody put them in the barrel. The next shift come on, the foreman would come on out there and pick the gloves up and hand them to you. When they started handing, me gloves I said, "What you giving me gloves for?" He said, "We furnish gloves." "I Well, if you're going to furnish gloves you ain't going to give me them. You mean to give me the gloves somebody else just pulled off?" He said I'd have to see the foreman in the morning. The foreman came in the next morning and said, "I understand that you don't want the gloves." I said, "It's not a matter of I don't
want the gloves, I don't want the gloves somebody else has had on." He ain't had nobody put no resistance against him like that. He said, "Well, you'll have to see the superintendent. I'll make arrangements for you to see him."

So we went into see the superintendent. He introduced me to Paul McGee. McGee was the toughest little cat that ever crossed that sill at Reynolds, but he was as easy and tender and understanding as any man I ever talked to. I told him, "I'm glad to know you but we're having a problem about these gloves. I don't want to get in a fight with you about this cause I know I'm going to beat you. You are not going to take the gloves off of one man's hand. His hands get sweaty and all the germs out of his hands is in that glove. You're not going to take those gloves and give them to me to work in. I had this fight at the plant I left. This is one of the fights we had in 1945 when we first learned something about union counsel. This was one of the first jobs we took up and I know I'm going to be at you because the Board of Health ain't going to allow you to do it. So let's consider that before we go."

He said, "Well, how would you do it?" I said, "At the plant where I used to work this is what we did. We bought everybody gloves. The only way he could get another glove, he would have to turn that one, in once it got a hole in it, and get another one. But everybody had his own individual gloves." I said; "You wouldn't give me your shoes to wear, you wouldn't give me your hat to wear and you wouldn't wear a hat behind me. There ain't near as much germs coming out of your head as there is out of your hand."
He said, "You know if we would give them people their gloves they would steal them all." I said, "You talk just like those are convicts or slaves. Those are laborers and if you're going to give them gloves, you're going to have to give them the right kind of gloves. I seen it work and I'll guarantee you it'll work. All you got to do is give that man his glove, let him have the responsibility of that glove. Put that responsibility on him."

So we talked frank. Finally he told the foreman, Jack Podesta, "Jack, he seems to be confident of what he's doing. It looks like what he says makes sense. You take his shift, just his shift, and try out this method. Give them the gloves and let's see how it works."

That's the first upset that he and I ever had. We had it then for twenty-one years. I beat him there, he had to give up the gloves. Then we had a ring-a-ting about how you're going to distribute the gloves, how you're going to take care of them. I said, "Ain't nobody going to take them. The United States Army has everything in the world and don't nobody take nothing from the Army cause everything Uncle Sam's got, got a number on it. Every man you got in here has got a clock number. Now you put that number on that glove when you issue it." We lost one man tinkering with those numbers, only one man. Everybody got his gloves and put his number on them when he got them. From then on nobody messed with them.

We had other problems. We had to have some place to keep the gloves. This foreman told us to keep them in our pockets. I said, "How you going to keep your gloves in your pocket, man. You'll be throwing all that grease on your clothes. And what do you think your
pants pocket is made for? You got to have identification cards, so you got to have a wallet to put them in. You got to have a clean handkerchief, you got to have keys. You can't live in no house without keys. And every time you go out in the street you got to have some money in some pocket. Now what pocket you going to put your gloves in?"

Finally we came up with these little lockers to put the gloves in. I said, "You got wire all over this plant. It don't cost nothing to make them. The millwrights down there, the people that can make those little cabinets, don't have nothing to do but get that wire and make them cabinet; and stick them gloves in." So we finally wound up doing that.

Now everybody understands that I'm a union man. One fellow from another department came over one night and said, "I hear you's a union man." I said I was and he said, "Well, we got a foreman over yonder doing something he ain't got no business doing." One thing led to another and I finally told Joe, "You guys better give me some kind of title. I can't do nothing without a title." So Joe appointed me a shopsteward. Then I had something to go on. This started the people to knowing who I was.

"Then we went to, a meeting on this administration thing. The people were determined to take the union back away from the International because they didn't have no charges on the Local officers. They wasn't going to accept Joe taking the union over without filing charges. When he was ready to give the Local back to the members, Joe said, "Who am I going to appoint? I can't find nobody
who's honest." Finally he found a preacher, Sam Cook's dad. Sam Cook worked in my department and Sam Cook's dad worked in the cast house. Joe thought if he's a preacher, maybe he's straight. So he appointed a group of officers. Sam Cook's daddy was president, they had a white guy for vice president, Brownell was recording secretary. They ended up with two white guys and three colored guys.

He tried to explain to these guys that all they had to do was try to build the union, try to fight the company, try to service the people, and don't worry about no salaries. He wouldn't pay nobody anything. Joe talked about how nobody was going to get no salaries. But Cook said, "Hell, they're going to pay me me $100.00 a month. As quick as ever he turns that treasury loose to me, I'm going to get my money out of there." And he did, too. Joe gave him a six month trial and then he turned the Local over to him. When he turned it over to them, every one of them went back there and got six month's salary.

In the meantime I began to get acquainted with some other people in there. Fred Corneliuson was the personnel director for the office and salaried employees. When I talked to Paul McGee, I kept talking about a safety program. Corneliuson was a safety man and I began to talk to him about it. Finally they sent this little Walter Bouchard down for he and I to talk about a safety program. We built up one of the finest safety programs that there was in this country anywhere. We got the white guys out of the millwrights and out of the electrical department. We got a representative from every group and we started developing it and having meetings.

The program was setup by a guy named Cunningham. He came in
to give Walter Bouchard a boost. We worked pretty close together. When McGee told him to set ups safety program he gave him time. "We're going to spend money on a safety program. We don't want you to throw it away, we want you to use it to its best advantage. Use it wisely, but use it." So this was why Cunningham didn't have to spare no time.

The foremen realized that they was going to have to give up their dolly operator to come to a class. "What am I going to do for a dolly operator?" "Put somebody else on the dolly." "We ain't got nobody trained." This is what you call direct action. Cunningham sent out a memo: "Due to the fact that many new dolly operators have been added to the rolls in the past two years, it has been decided to conduct one hour training forums. Safety and cost reduction will be emphasized. All meetings will be held in conference room 860. Department heads will schedule all dolly operators to these meetings effective Monday according to this schedule." [quoted from Cunningham's Memo to Foremen] This hit them in the face like a wet dishcloth, but the dolly operators began to realize what he was trying to do. Those dollies cost nine thousand dollars and he explained what every load of metal cost that you was picking up, how important it was that you don't spill any because this was where waste come in, scrap, turned-over metal. Every dolly operator began to be aware of how important he was in this mill.

We went on from there to build it. Later I became one of the resource persons at one of these institutes to tell how we did it. We showed a twenty minute film called "Safety Pays" at our safety meeting
in the mill. Then the union officers talked to the men. Wally got slides and film and he made the foreman sit down, too. This was the greatest education the foreman had ever had because he would take this machine and sit down and he would have to narrate everything that happened to that metal in his department. You could sit down in one meeting and you could hear and see that metal from the time it came into that plant until it went out the back door. Our safety meetings got so interesting that we was able to have different people from different departments all over the plant participate in the program.

Walter decided to write up some rules and regulations by which the Safety Department should operate. He wrote out his rules for the Safety Committee to operate under. We discussed them and finally we put them in print, what the rules were and what penalties should be imposed. Each department had a representative from black and white on the Plant Safety Committee. They had a meeting once a month and everybody would be in the meeting. We started off with four hours pay so we had to trump up four hours of discussion. We set rules how we should operate. Some of the guys had a pretty foul mouth so we started charging them 5c a cuss word and made them payoff right then and there. I believe we gave away the treasury that we built up that way to some guy that got sick.

Everybody would have an opportunity to bring up the problems in his department and Wally would have to record all these things. All these complaints was filed. Then at the next meeting he would
have to let us know what was done about it. This way you could keep up with what was going on, you could make a lot of corrections that had never been dreamed of. For example, we took up things like the gas house floor had holes in it in spots. This was bad because truckers and dolly operators took risks of jarring off. Or the skimburgers that didn't have ladles under them to catch aluminum, so hot metal would run all over the floor. This was all good but we began to run out of items so it got to be a problem to keep the thing going for four hours. People wanted to cut it down.

We finally told the guys that the Safety Committee deserved a little credit. We got the company to give us a steak dinner. We didn't take no pay and we thought we should have something. This was the first time any type of a cordial communication was extended between the foreman and the safety committeeman in his department, because up to then he had been mad at the safety comitteeman criticizing what was going on in his department. When we had this dinner they all got a chance to come together. This was the first time Blacks had been accepted in this big fine dining room and we was accorded cigars, coffee, cake, steak dinner and what have you. We thought we had this established pretty good. It went over for a couple or three years. Even after I was defeated as president I still was a member of the Safety Committee and I was always able to keep these things going.

We had a Court of Inquiry to handle problems. The Court of Inquiry procedure said: "The Plant Safety Committee will act as a representative for any employee who feels he has been unjustly dealt
within receiving safety disciplinary slips." We had this rule that we got to give you a safety discipline if you violate a safety rule and if you get so many of these slips it will eventually end in dismissal. But we got to have a procedure to go through before we can dismiss. This went on all right till you got down to discharge. When you got down to discharge, nobody wants to be responsible for saying that he was involved in getting somebody discharged.

There was another rule that required safety shoes. Now a lot of people wanted the safety program but didn't want to wear safety shoes. They would render all kinds of excuses on safety shoes. In that factory a lot of people didn't have enough leather on their foot to make a sling shot, coming there with dress shoes on. Some of them wore cloth shoes and they'd get mashed toes. We went along with the safety rules but we had lots of people had bad feet and they said they couldn't wear them. Well, the rules say everybody's going to wear them. It don't say how quick, but we weren't going to stop till everybody in there put on safety shoes. And when they got out of anything else to argue about, this would be our argument. We would prolong the meeting talking about safety shoes, the pros and cons, how you're going to let them off the hook who can't wear them and so on.

The outstanding case was a young lady that was a secretary. The safety rules said that, "Safety shoes or external foot protection must be worn by all employees whose duties require them to be on the mill floor." This young lady worked in the office but her job called for her to go from one office to another, to be on that floor. So she was a problem. Everybody said that she was a foreman's lady friend.
She wasn't going to wear no safety shoes, so we took this up. Walter didn't want to get into it but we prodded and prodded him. She would come through the mill, and if she hadn't been so attractive and putting on such a performance when she come through the plant I guess she wouldn't have stuck out so. But she had a different pocketbook for every pair of shoes she had, and when she come through she would be switching so it looked like you could just see her dress tail popping. She'd have her head up so high till she didn't see nobody. She was just going! Well, this really got into her craw. We had a pair of safety shoes made for her, had several pairs of shoes made for her. She couldn't wear any of them, claimed they couldn't make shoes to fit her. I said, "No? They can make shoes to fit horses, they can make shoes to fit dogs. Anything they want shod, they shod. Now what you going to do about her?" We got shoes on everybody down to her. Finally she had to put them on if she wanted to keep the job and it was a pretty good job. So she didn't walk so fast then. She finally put them on and then it wasn't long before she quit.

The Court of Inquiry was something unique. If we had a problem we couldn't solve the Court of Inquiry said that a representative from the union and a representative from the company would discuss the case and if they couldn't agree after so long a time, it would be submitted to the grievance procedure. You couldn't just present a safety problem to the grievance procedure right off the bat.

Then we came to the problem of the parking lot. How you going to deal with the parking lot? Guards was too abusive, we couldn't have guards out there. The guys on the Safety Committee don't want
to be out there. They're going to run into some of their buddies who are violating some of the safety rules. Some guys go out of there running a mile a minute. You hear their tires screeching going out of the parking lot. They're coming up there stopping all of a sudden, people trying to cross the aisle and they're running them over. But who wants to deal with it?

Eventually they say, "Wally, you go out there." So Wally goes out to tell the guys to move on, deal with them with courtesy. But I guess he was pretty angry this one morning. This guy came up and Wally was going to tell him, "Don't stop here to let your passengers out, move on down before you let them out." This guy pulled up and before he could get to the right spot to let his passengers out they jumped out. When they jumped out Wally runs around to this guy to have a talk with him and the guy snatched his car loose from him and went on to the parking lot to park it. Wally gets mad and takes down the car license number. He's going to solve it himself, he wasn't going through the Court of Inquiry. He called up the state and found out whose car that license belonged to. Then he called up down to the cast house and had the guy come up and he fired him right on the spot.

That evening I came to work at four o'clock, he called me in and wanted to discuss it with me. He said he wanted to set an example. I said, "What do you mean, set an example? What did you do?" He said, "I fired a guy." "What you mean, you fired a guy? You ain't no foreman!" Well, he was young and ambitious and he said, "I think we got to make an example. If we make an example out of one guy, I think we'll have everybody else in line." I said, "No, no, I won't go for
that. Did he have a hearing?" "No, he didn't have no hearing but we got to set an example on somebody." I said, "Well, the rules say you got to have a hearing. How're you going to discharge him without having a hearing?"

We discussed it and we went at it round and round. We must have stayed down there about an hour and a half going over this case. Next day we had a meeting with McGee, the superintendent. McGee wants to try to protect Wally. He wants to be fair but he got to try to protect Wally. So we had it round and round again. I said, "You can't discharge a man without him having a hearing. He got to have his day in court." Finally McGee says, "Well, if we leave this stage of the disagreement, then it's got to become a grievance. If it becomes a grievance, I have got to hear the grievance. I'm not going to hear the grievance." So they had to put this fellow back to work.

Well, the program became a plant wide thing. We found enough material around there to build a safety trailer. We used to move the safety trailer around at night from department to department. Next morning, if these guys were going to have their safety meeting, everybody would break for the trailer. The trailer was nice and air conditioned. They had movies, slides and everything. Each department would have a meeting once a month. When people can have a safety meeting and sit down, they feel like they have been somewhere. Every one had the chance to get the wind out of his jaw. He had a chance to express hisself and there was a record of it, too.

But some hothead foreman decided we ain't going to have it like that. He was just going to take a few people over in the corner
and take down what they said and record it. One day we was all sitting down at the process furnace at lunchtime and the little foreman came down and says, "We're going to get together right here and have a safety meeting. Any of you all got any suggestions or any ideas about safety?"

I said, "Yeah, we don't have no goddam ideas, we don't have no goddam suggestions, we don't have no comments, we don't have no criticisms and we have no intention of participating in no meeting like this. Now you put that in the minutes and you turn it in." He can't put this in the minutes. Next month another little foreman came by and said, We got you all down here, we're going to have a safety meeting." I told him the same thing.

They were doing this throughout the plant. Finally I met McGee out in front of the cafeteria. He said, "Mooty, I can't get no reports from down in the plant. I been trying to have a safety meeting and I'm going to try to find out what's happening." I said, "You ain't going to get no report from out of that plant. We ain't going to have no meeting like they trying to have down there. They say they don't have time to have no meetings, and we say if you're going to have a meeting, we're going to sit down like human beings. We're going to have safety meetings like we been having. If we're not going to have that kind, we're not going to have none at all."

He called a meeting and we all went in together, the Safety Director, the Superintendent. Now we got a good conference room where they have their meetings. The general Plant Safety Committee can go in there and have their meetings decent. So he laid down the
law. He said, "We're going to have safety meetings because safety don't cost, safety pays. We've had safety meetings here, we had the finest safety program, we cut down accidents." And he went into the whole works of it. From then on we had safety meetings, every department. He said, "Every department better call safety meetings and I better get a report on it every month."

These meetings helped people a lot. A worker felt like he didn't just come in there and get kicked in the rump eight hours and kicked out the door. He had sometime to sit down and if he had been having a problem with his machine, if he had oil on the floor and every time he would come along there he would slip, or if he had a catwalk somewhere that was broken in two, or if he had a grate on the floor that was busted or there were holes in the floor, he had a chance to tell that himself. Another thing was equipment. You see in some of the process furnaces, where the guy would pull those bars out, he'd tell the foreman about it and the foreman wouldn't do nothing about it. But if you told it in the safety meeting then the Safety Director would come by and say he got a report about such and such a thing, what's the condition?

We used to have oil under the floor. They had a concrete floor and it had wooden bricks on it. Underneath those, machines oil would just gushup from under the floor. When we talked to Jack about it, there wasn't no way you could stop it. We brought it up and brought it up. Finally a superintendent came in and he said, "It's your job to get that oil up from under those machines. Those people can't keep slipping and sliding in that oil." When we finally got it
out I told Jack, "Well, you said we couldn't get it out. That damn thing is dry as a bone, ain't it?"

We had trouble with a little foreman on the dolly one night. A guy came and he said, "Frank Russ is over there on that dolly and he ain't supposed to be over there. Paul McGee told us there wasn't no foreman supposed to get on there." So I went over there and I said, "What is this about you driving a dolly? These fellows say you ain't supposed to drive a dolly. Are you supposed to drive a dolly as foreman or ain't you?" He said, "I can assign somebody to drive it if I so desire. If I don't think I got nobody here that's able to drive it then I can drive it." He said he could do this and he could do that. I said, "That sounds like a lot of stuff to me. I don't know what you all been doing. I'll see the superintendent and find out."

So next morning Jack and I went in McGee's office. I told him, "Last night they came and got me and told me this fellow was driving the dolly, a foreman of yours, Frank Russ. The people say he ain't supposed to drive it, he says he is. I want to know before we get into any kind of fight, is he supposed to drive this dolly or not?" McGee said, "Drive a dolly! A goddam foreman on a dolly? I don't pay no foreman to ride a dolly. I pay a foreman to get that good metal out of that plant. That's what I get paid for, that's what I'm paying him for. I ain't got no time for no foreman to be flunkying on a dolly."

Jack sat there and turned red as a beet. Then we got into it. We finally went out there and got Frank Russ off that dolly and we didn't have no more trouble with foremen driving dollies because the word spread. Then all of the men wanted to take me on. I established
myself as shop steward; I became grievance committeeman and rose on from there to be president.

Podesta got carried away one day. The guys would sit down a lot. In the operation they had, once they'd hang this metal on a car they can't do nothing else till this other load comes out of the furnace. When this load comes out of the furnace they got to be right there. This type of heat treating metal is the finest there is. They get it up to a certain point, just to the melting point. When it gets right to that melting point you got to pull the trigger out from under it and it goes right in a batch of water that chills it. When you do that, then this other load is ready to go. They got to have this load ready to go in, so they got to be right there. They would work like hell to get this load hung so they could sit down.

Anyway, Jack got tired of it. So he didn't ask nobody about it. I came in one evening-- I was working on the four o'clock shift-- and the guys said, "Jack moved all the benches out. He don't want nobody sitting down no more." I said, "Jack, why did you move the benches?" "I ain't going to have no more sitting down around here. They're going to stand up. I'm getting tired of people sitting down."

That was a big battle we won. We went to McGee's office and he said, "This company pays me a good salary and I'm satisfied with the, salary I'm making and I'm satisfied with the kind of work I do. This is the kind of work I love. But his company don't pay me to mess around with some benches. They pay me to get metal out of that back door. Now you and Jack go in that office and I don't care how you all do, whatever
you all come out with, come out here and tell me what you did and I'll buy it."

I said to Jack, "The quicker you make up your goddam mind that you're going to put them benches back where they come from, the quicker we're going to get out of here. And we ain't coming out of here till you make up your mind that them benches are coming right back where you got them. Them benches were right here when they first hired you. They put them benches there for them people to sit down on. You're going to put them right back where you got them from." He scratched his ear and he wrung and he twisted. Then he put them back.

We had many battles, we had many grievances. I became the Wage Study man and I became president. They had to respect me then. I went to work there in 1951 and it was 1954 that I was elected president.

I went on the Negotiating Committee in 1952 and one of the things we took up was the eating arrangements. They go back there to get food in the morning. A man may have his lunch on his arm but he'd want to have a cup of coffee, so everybody'd go around the steam table and get his sandwich or his cup of coffee. Then the workers would come on back to a little bench where they could set their coffee down and put some sugar in it and stir it. Now everybody's got his coffee in his hand, pouring it in everybody else's pocket and his shoes and everything. There'd be four or five hundred people milling around in this little small area waiting till the time to go in. You couldn't go in till twenty minutes ahead of time but they wanted their coffee.

Now when the foreman go this, he'd go right by the cashier and
go around over there and there's a great big dining room with silverware, glassware, chinaware. That's where the foreman went. Back over here in this other area there's a great big area of tables and chairs piled upon top of the tables with dust eating them up. So what was wrong with us having that? During our safety meeting I brought this up, but it didn't fit in a safety meeting so we got it in on a grievance meeting. By that time I was grievance man and shop steward.

We brought this up to the personnel director. He said, "We don't furnish a place to sit down. We just put out a snack bar." I said, "That don't make no difference what you call it. What's wrong with them having some place to sit down?" He said "No, we couldn't afford that. They would all get so happy about sitting down till they wouldn't even go in. Everybody would be late going to work."

I didn't get nowhere with him. We argued and argued and finally I decided I'd wait till the Labor Relations man come up here from Richmond. He has to come in on the fourth step of the grievance. So he came up and I got him off on the side and a had a talk with him. I said, "What's wrong we can't get no tables set up back there? We'd like a place to sit down, too. We ain't particular about going in the big dining room but these tables over here -- the dust is just eating them up." He said, "I don't see any reason why they shouldn't be doing that. That sounds reasonable, I'll talk to Bob about it tonight." So I thought I had something going. Next morning I asked him, "What did he say?" "Well," he said, "you know Bob's got a point there." And then he showed me ten thousand ways it couldn't be done and why it shouldn't be done.
In 1952 I went on the Negotiating Committee and we went down to Louisville, Kentucky. It hadn't been long since Joe appointed Rev. Cook president. Joe wanted me to go, too, because I knew something about contracts. And I had a new car so we could all drive down to Louisville. There wasn't no Blacks there from no parts of the country but here, only three Blacks there altogether. We was all for Rev. Cook. The rest of the guys were from Arkansas, Texas, Oregon, Arizona. The whites ran all those locals. Only our local, Local 3911, has always been predominately black.

Anyway, we were sitting down in Louisville and I got a chance to meet all the guys from the various parts of the country. Charlie Smith from District 38 was chairing the negotiations with Reynolds and Alcoa and Kaiser, all aluminum. When they got through scrapping and arguing Charles said, "Well, they ain't going to do nothing until after steel's settled." I made it my business to sit right aside of him. So I said, "You all about through? Do you mind if I say something?"

Lewis Reynolds was sitting at the end of the table with this old big bellied Labor Relations man, Jarrett, there and all the rest of his subordinates sitting around on that end of the table. Charlie says, "Lewis, this is Rayfield Mooty from Chicago and he got something he wants to bring up," I said, "I would like to know what is the reason that we can't get that cafeteria opened up in Chicago. They got those tables and chairs back there with the dust just eating them up and we don't have no place to sit down and eat. We have to stand up and eat like a horse or a cow. They don't even feed convicts like that any
more. We're not asking for nothing special. We just think that those tables and chairs should be in use and we could use them. We could at least sit down and eat half decent. I haven't bypassed nobody either. I asked everybody up to you and I'm glad I had an opportunity to meet you because I want to know from you what is the reason that we can't get that cafeteria opened up where we can sit down and eat like human beings?"

He says, "You mean to tell me that cafeteria wasn't opened up? When I bought that plant they had the most modern equipment out there that money could buy, tables and benches and chairs of all kinds, the best that the government had. I thought that cafeteria was opened up, but I'll make it my personal business to see that it is opened up. You don't have to worry about that, you take my word for it."

Joe LaMorte hadn't said nothing about it either. This is the reason I said the people down in the plant has to know. If you don't know, the union don't give a damn about whether you get what you're rightfully entitled to or not. Those people were entitled to those benches to sit down on.

Jordan came back and he put benches around on the edge of this thing. I wrote Reynolds and told him what had been done and asked him was that his idea. I never got no answer from him but it wasn't long before we was in a-grievance meeting and old Jordan said, "Well, I think I'm going to give you part of that cafeteria back. I ain't going to give it all to you though. I'll probably give you about 25, maybe 28 tables." So that's how we got a cafeteria.
Another thing, we had a long pay line. We used to have to stand in line to get our pay, then if you were late getting to work that morning you got docked for that. The companies don't always know how to do things. It was just their way of thinking. They thought this method of paying was the right way. When you have a line in the morning it looked like a soup line. People was trying to get their pay in the morning so they could have it during the day rather than have to pick it up that night. Then at night when you go in the gas house, it's like going in the mines. If you just go down there and turn around and come straight back you got to have a bath. The guys would come out and take a bath at night and stand out there in the winter time in that line trying to get paid off late at night. So I wrote Reynolds about that.

They had no scheme of giving those checks to the foremen and letting the foreman pay the people off. They no more dreamed of that, that just sounded like something foreign to them. We got the point over and they changed the pay system and every foreman got a chance to pay his own men. We got a chance to get out of that long line and we got a chance to stop being docked in the morning for being late.

The first elections in the union, we used to elect the president every year. As I said, Rev. Cook and that group was only concerned about one thing -- getting control of this money. The next year, 1953, they elected Richmond, a white guy. Joe LaMorte, although he had turned the local back, still tried to control it so the local had about $10,000.00 in the treasury. When Cook and them got a hold of this they cut it down considerable. Joe jumped on me to buy a building. Local 3911 owns its own building. It's an old theatre
building out there in Claren. It was all run down, but he said, "Once I stick them with it they'll have to pay for it. And I'm not about to turn this money over to them because they'll be fighting like cats and dogs. They wouldn't do nothing but throw it away." So he stuck them with that building, bought the building on contract.

Even though Blacks had worked out there for years they never had no establishment in Claren. They never liked that building, they never wanted no parts of that building. When I came in I had to take it off a contract and put it on a mortgage. Joe had promised the owner if he would let him have that building that this Local would be able to pay him $1,000.00 a month. It wouldn't be long paying it out. They had to pay $35,000.00 for the building. The former owner still owed $16,000.00 on the building. I think Joe gave him $10,000.00 down and he drew out the rest of his money, $6,000.00, to pay it off. Now he owned it, he holds everything. But Ed Richmond never did pay him $1,000.00 a month and this was disturbing him. Because he couldn't get his money back, he was threatening to foreclose on it.

Vandels broke out the windows so I had these glass bricks put in. The executive board wanted to get rid of it so they just wanted to brick it up with plain bricks. I had one hell of a time trying to hold on to that building and put those glass blocks in. The only way we could refinance it, take it off of a contract and put it on a mortgage was it had to come up to the standard of the community. Now I got to fight with the executive board in order to make an appearance so we can get it refinanced. I was able to go to Savings and Loan in Cicero and they refinanced it, took it off contract. We paid off De Lucca, the
owner, cause he was threatening every month to foreclose.

In 1952 the union first started laying the ground work for a master contract. Ed Richmond and I went on that negotiation. All them southerners were in this negotiation. At that time they started to equalizing wages, wiping out the wage differential in the South and the North. The union took a pretty fair position. They said it didn't make no sense to have a good contract and a good wage structure up North and not down South. If they had less money down there, the company would put all the work down there. In 1953 the union took the position they were going to equalize the wage structure. The International Union has the authority to sign these contracts. Local unions don't have to sign no contract. The International Union signed the contract and they put all the money down South to get the wages there up within the range of the northern wages. When they got back here and they reported it, the people jumped on Ed with both feet.

Ed got his committee and said he'd go back. I said, "Ed, don't let these people make a fool out of you. You know the International Union's got the authority to sign the contract. How you going back?" "Well, we're going back and we're going to negotiate on our local issues. We ain't got our local issues." I said, "Man, you go back in there and start talking, that company's not even going to listen to what you say." Anyway they forced him back in there.

Jordan sat there and waited till all of them got in. Then he said, "Now what you want to talk about?" "We want to talk about our local issues in the contract." He said, "Look, Mr. Reynolds signed this contract and your International Union officers signed this
contract. I only work for Reynolds Aluminum Company and I ain't about
to tamper with this contract. There it is. If you got anything else
to say we'll talk about that, but not this." The people in the mill
were still thinking, because their minds had been built up, that they
can do something else about it. Well, they couldn't do it. Once
that contract is signed, that's it. Any local issues that ain't
settled before that ain't going to get settled.

In 1954 I ran against Ed Richmond for president of the union
and I told Ed the president had the authority to check into this wage
study. This is the first time wage study came up. We got to check
over all these job descriptions. The union don't go around and
describe jobs. The company describes jobs and they bring the local
committee in to approve them. Now if the local committee approves
them and signs them, that's that. Nobody got anything else to say
about it. They send it on to the central committee. The central
committee looks it over and they don't have no questions to ask. They
ain't looking for no work to do no way. If it becomes a dispute, then
the central committee has got to check with the local committee and
find out what the dispute is about.

Ed didn't know nothing about no job description so he started
to sign any job descriptions that come along. When it got to the job
in the Heat Treat Department I told him, "I have to see that job
description." "Ain't nobody supposed to see it. The people in the
plant ain't supposed to." I said, "Look, Ed, I'm going to see that job
description. Don't sign that job description till I see it. I got to
check it over and see if everything is included in here. This is the
hardest job in the plant, hanging those sheets." Finally he slipped it to me. I saw some things about it but I let it go ahead and we got some things straightened out. But the job evaluation began to come up more and more.

Next election we defeated Ed. The Blacks wanted to get control of the Local again so they decided to throw their support to me. The plant was at least 60% black and they got to get control of it. I got elected in June, 1954. A Black guy named Hayes ran in the election, telling Ed Richmond he was going to split the Black vote so Ed could win. Bob Pryor didn't think he had enough experience to run for president but he was still in their corner. He ran for treasurer and got elected and a guy named Kennedy got elected financial secretary.

In July we was supposed to leave on negotiations in Richmond, Virginia. We drew out enough money to last us a week. About the middle of the week they started telling me, "You better see if you're going to have some more money. Let's check with Kennedy to see if we can get some more money." I said, "You don't have to worry about Kennedy. When we need some money we'll send and get some money. You guys better stop spending what money you got. You've got $25.00 a day to spend but you don't need to spend that much."

About Wednesday I began to check with Kennedy and he started some wringing and twisting about sending no money. "Some of them tell me not to send no money." We got into a big argument and we couldn't get no money from him sent down there. Bob Pryor was working with Kennedy and Hayes all the time on this deal, telling all the people
back there not to send no money. They didn't send any so I called the
wife and told her where to look. I had about $400.00 in a drawer back
home. She sent that to me. From then on I said, "Okay, here's five
dollars a day for you all. Blow it like you want. I don't, know how
long we're going to bed own here but this money is going to have to last
us." We stayed down there another week and then we had to pull a
strike. We had to shut the plant down, so they agreed they had to go
back to Chicago Sunday morning.

I stayed on in Washington right over across the river. Ail
them union hill billies was over in Richmond, Virginia just across the
river. We didn't have no association at all until we went to the
conference table. Then Sunday morning we went to Washington and you
wouldn't have knowed the difference between black and white. All of
them wanted to drink with me then, we got along all right.

When I came back here to Chicago they wanted to get a petition
against Kennedy. We got a petition and we got all setup to file
charges against him. When the morning came that they was going to
have his trial, Kennedy came to me, and said, "Can I have somebody to
represent me at my trial?" I said, "Yeah, I don't have no objection to
that." I got to the trial and it was Bob Pryor representing him.
Pryor and I had a fight the whole term I was in office, just a fight!
They framed up the trial. I thought they was going to convict
Kennedy. When the trial come up, the very fellow that's president of
the union now, Tom Hight, was chairman of the committee. They didn't
find him guilty or nothing, they exonerated him.

I was in office for two years, from 1954 to '56, then Pryor
defeated me. When we started looking into this wage study business, this is when first saw an Applegate again. It was the brother of the Applegate I knew years before and fought with when I was bussing tables at the YWCA. This Applegate was the man that evaluated and described all of the jobs there. We started talking about where were the lines of progression. The contract says that the lines of progression should be on the bulletin board in the department so the people would understand how to bid on them. I said, "Now, you put them on that bulletin board." "Well, they wouldn't understand them." I said, "No, don't tell me they wouldn't understand them. You just get them down there." So they put them down there and sure enough this is what started to happen. People could get some answers to some of their problems that they had never had no answers to.

One fellow, little Hezekiah Bobbitt, was a grievance committee man in the shear room. You have to bid on jobs off the common line. They had the lines all set. If you want to go up to be this, you got to go to that line. You got to come off the common line. One particular line was an embossing machine. This line came down that far from the common line and stopped. That line was giving lots of trouble. Why couldn't no Blacks get in this line? Bobbitt tried to tell me why and tried to show me. Finally I found out what's happening. When you see what's happening, it's easy to straighten it out. We had to make Applegate bring that line down to the common line. Before that, the only way you could get in there is if they would put you in there. You couldn't bid on it because it didn't come to the common line. It was just a line set up there by itself. When we got
that straightened out that was one of the outstanding cases.

Another outstanding case we had was the Cold Mill. The company put who they wanted on the Cold Mill. I said, "You can't put who you want on the Cold Mill. Why ain't no Blacks on the Cold Mill?"

"Well, they're scared of it. They don't want to take that responsibility. He'll have to be responsible for that metal and he's scared to take that responsibility."

This we tried to take up through the safety program, through the Grievance Committee. We had to go into Paul McGee's office then and take that foreman to task so we did. I said, "That man's got seniority in this plant and that seniority says that a man can bid on that job according to his seniority. Now that man's going to have to bid on that job. You ain't going to put just all whites on that job. You ain't going to put just who you want on that job. The man who is entitled to that job is going to get it." We got our first Black on the Cold Mill, a guy named Harry Fly. Then we got another man on the Cold Mill, Carlos Nelson.

Then we had trouble because of a guy named Vernon McLennon who was crippled. Vernon got seniority but he can't operate the machine. He wanted to exercise his seniority and he started raising a lot of sand. They wouldn't put him on, so we filed a grievance on it. Jordan took the position that Mac would never make a mill operator. Well, I thought about it. I called Doc up and talked to him. Doc said, "Mooty, don't mess with Mac. Mac will never make a mill operator. Mac tried that mill when I was there, but he will never make a mill operator so don't bother with him. All he is going to do is give
you a lot of headaches."

I fooled with Mac and fooled with Mac and finally Jordan said one day, "Mooty, you're so Sure Mac will make a mill operator I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give Mac sixty days on that mill and I'll guarantee you he won't pass the test." I called the Grievance Committee out and we discussed it. They said, "Well, hell that's about enough time for him to make it. If he can't make it in that time that ought to be fair enough. Then Jordan said, "Hold it just a minute, there's one stipulation. If he don't make it he goes back down to the bottom of the line of progression." This means if Mac wins that job he'll get a twenty-five cent increase an hour, but if he loses he's going to lose fifty cents an hour.

I went back and told Mac all about it. He said, "Mooty, I don't need no sixty days, I can operate that mill." I told Mac, "You know the foreman don't like you. You know Paul McGee don't like you, and you know good and well there's only one way a Cold Mill operator can operate. He's got to have the good will of the whole department head, because they can find a thousand and one ways to get rid of you."

When we put him on, the foremen started keeping a record of everything Mac did, every coil he ran, every alloy, every time he was late, every time he punched in on time. If he punched in right on the dot he couldn't be out working because it takes him at least eight minutes to walk to where he had to work at. He'd be late if he punched in on time. They kept a record of everything, every time the assistant operator had to help him out, every ton of metal that was scrapped. They had that on Mac. And I took notes of this. out of
493,000 pounds of finished metal, there was 8,870 pounds was scrap.

In the meantime I got involved in this Emmett Till case and I was out of the mill while Mac was on his trial. When you're rolling metal those rolls is running so fast till you've got to have oil on them. The oil just sprays on it all the time to keep them cool. So Mac turned the mill on and didn't turn his oil spray on and Paul McGee saw it. He walked in and put the clamps on Mac, "Pull him off."

I came back and Mac was raising a boatload of sand. I went in and complained about it. We had his days cut from sixty trial days. I think he had about fifteen days left. I said, "But Mac, you told me you didn't need thirty days, that's what you told me. Now you're arguing about these other ten or fifteen days." We had the darnedest fight. Anyway I grieved it. I had to sign this yellow dog contract that was my fault for Mac to get it and Mac had to sign it, too. When Mac failed and he don't want to come off, this thing hurt me in the next election.

The other thing that hurt me in the election was in 1954 when we were all down in Richmond negotiating this contract. As I said, 1953 was they ear the International Union equalized wages. In '54 the union went in and equalized the vacation period pay. They said we're going to have a uniform vacation plan for all people in the plant. People back home just couldn't understand that we had to give some to help those in the South. So this hurt me in the election just like Mac's case hurt me.

They opened Mac's case up again after Bob Pryor defeated me. Mac never did make a mill operator. Mac ain't made a mill operator
today. He made assistant operator, that's as far as he could go. He finally got an expediter's job.

We had our problems through the years but we built some things that was good. I learned a lot from Phil Garman when we went down to the University of Illinois in 1951. He kept talking about time and motion studies and I asked him why he talked about things in general. I told him we came down here to learn about specifics. I said, "You keep telling us about time and motion studies. When we get these jobs the company already got an edge on us. Somebody teaches, these people how to do time and motion studies. I don't know who it is, but somebody teaches them. What I want to find out is who it is."

He admitted that he taught them. I said, "There is only one way we can combat what they put down. We have to go to the same source where they're getting it. If we both got the same knowledge, then one ain't got the advantage over the other. Now that's what we want to know. How do you determine how fast a job should be done? That has never been settled -- how fast a man should work in order to be considered a normal day's work. One more question that needs to be answered, and it hasn't been answered yet, is how much work a man should get done. Somebody tells that company how fast a man should work. Somebody determines that. And companies tell us we ain't working fast enough. How the hell do we know whether we're working fast enough or not? I didn't come down here to talk about theory. I want to find out definitely the answer we got to have."

He told us to meet him in such and such a room at 1:30 so we went there. Then he started showing us how they determined how fast a man
should work, how important it is to have his work right close to him, how much time he loses if he has to move around a lot to pick up different pieces to operate on. Phil remembers me because we took him through the mill. Some of this stuff you just imagine. So when I got to the place where we had to imagine some things, the guy from the company couldn't tell me that he knew definitely what he was talking about because I knew he didn't. People ask me how I do so good at evaluating jobs. You don't have to be that good. All you got to know is the companyman ain't near as good as you been giving him credit for being.

When we defeated Pryor, then Clay asked me to take the Wage Study Committee job back over and I did. We got a lot of money for people in back pay. One man alone got over $1,200.00 in back pay on the job. We fought like hell to keep that job up in the classification it was in and move it up into another classification.

I got a chance to evaluate all the various jobs, go over the whole evaluation program. We found out that there was some jobs just put into a group named "Labor General." I had to go around and find out from each one of the guys, as I saw him, what he did. One guy says, "I paint these cans that you see sitting all over the plant. We got machines down here. I have to mix the paint and I have to spray them. Sometimes I have to spray some of these trucks." Well then, he's not just "Labor General", he's some kind of painter. I was able to pull that job out and put up an argument for it. This man had a particular thing that he did but he was classified as Labor General and these jobs was only in pay grade 2.
We take these jobs and first of all we got to put a title on them. One thing I learned from Hy Fish that I will never forget. He said it makes a difference what you call a job. Every job should have a title, then the job should be described. In order for you to know what you are supposed to do you've got to know what your job description calls for so they can't expand it. I didn't graduate from no college or nothing but I understood common sense. I had such a time with the wage Study man, who was the best the company could buy. This fellow said he wrote all the job descriptions for every plant that the government had during World War II. I said, "I don't know where you come from but this job is going to have a title on it. Then we're going to evaluate it."

In this group they called "Labor General" I picked out thirteen jobs. He didn't want to go along with it. The only way you can get to the Steelworkers Central Committee is to put a request through the sub-district director's office. When we got into a dispute on these jobs, I wrote a brief on them and sent the brief to the national office in Pittsburgh. This way we got the central committee out. They agreed with some of them, most of them. They had to say he was a paints prayer. It took me a long time to get it done, but I got a lot of jobs pulled out and put a title on them.

We put a title on one job -- flat sheet man. When they evaluated that job with all the responsibilities that this man had -- he got to keep records, he got to know metal, he got to know what sizes, what gauges, what alloys, what temperatures that metal gets -- that job went from pay grade 2 to pay grade 6. There's a five cent
increment between each job classification so that's twenty cents an hour more he got. Another guy that was spraying those things, we named him a container sprayer. He went to pay grade 5 and he was only pay grade 1, so that gave him four increments. Those jobs that I had pulled out, they finally put them in the proper place and when it came time for a job to be put on the board they had to put it on the board.

At that time another problem was that jobs kept expanding. The company got smart and I don't blame them. They're in the business to make money, they're not in it to give nobody jobs. They put these overhead cranes in. They put a tail on them to operate from the floor. Now they called that a tool. I wasn't in a position to demand it, but told the guy that that is an overhead crane. I told him, "If you get laid off and you have to go to the unemployment compensation bureau to apply for unemployment compensation, they will ask you what did you do, where did you work? When you tell them what you actually did, they're going to look in that dictionary and find what that job was. There's a job definition in the dictionary to tell you every job that can be made. Based on the salary that job should be paid, the dictionary tells me that that is an overhead crane. An overhead crane may be operated from a crane in a cab or it may be operated from the floor. It does not change the definition of the overhead crane." But they never got anything done on that job.

Another job that was messed up -- there was a big furnace in the Cast House. The way they got it setup, they had 30 furnaces down there, 28 of them run regular. Those furnaces were made to hold may be two ingots of metal. Once you get that furnace full you run it into
the holding hearth and there's where you dope it up with whatever it's got to have in it. In the meantime you're refilling this furnace here again. All that comes before you can pour the ingot. That's what they call a drop. They might get two drops out of there a day. Then it may be a day or two before this other furnace is ready, coming to the holding hearth. Generally these furnaces hold about two ingots, maybe a 10,000 pound ingot. When they get ready to pour the furnace, here are them cats over yonder to door 20, sitting over here with the fireman. He's doing one thing, the pourer, he's doing another and the skimmer, he's doing something else. And all that meant was that the man wasn't getting out no metal. The skimmer wasn't there or the fireman wasn't there. I told those guys, "One of these days you're going to all forget there ever was a door 20 over there, because all you do is shoot the breeze over at door 20, talking about everything but that metal. The company's going to get wise to that." Sure enough they did. They went out and tore down about two of those furnaces and built a great big huge furnace. All these guys have job descriptions, the best they could get is pay grade twelve; fourteen would be the limit.

You only had ten factors in the wage manual and each factor would only furnish you so many points. Now the points that you would get the most on had been eliminated in the new plan. Hazard is one. If you're working in mud or where it's greasy, nasty and dirty, that's a big factor. You get a lot of points on that, but all that was eliminated. When they built this great big furnace they eliminated the fireman and pourer and skimmer and put all those job descriptions
in furnace operator, assistant operator and helper, just three people. Now they wrote the job description. The same thing the operator was supposed to do, the assistant operator was supposed to do. There wasn't any way he could say, "I wasn't there." The helper, his job description was everything that they didn't do. This furnace was large enough they could pour five ingots at a time. It will hold 250,000 pounds of molten metal. There wasn't no way one guy could say he couldn't do his job till somebody else did his. Now what they going to do with the job? They say you're a furnace operator. It ain't no different than what you was doing. But it did make a difference because you used to throw one drop, now you've got five drops at the same time.

I got into it with the wage Study man. He said, "We can't pay no more because you ain't got no more points. So we put the job in dispute and now you got to have the central committee in on it. All this went with this automation. I had to get hold of Joe Goins from the International staff to go in there because I set the job at pay grade 15. He said, "How can you get it in 15, it ain't got no points to make 15." I said, "That's just the point right there. The manual is not big enough for the job. The job won't fit in the manual so you got to make the manual fit the job. And we locked upon that job until they brought this DeMay in here.

DeMay ran for office when McDonald and Abel was running. McDonald pushed a lot of men to run, because if a district director didn't have no competition he could concentrate on helping Abel. If somebody was running against him, a district director, then instead of
helping Abel he'd have to worry about his own election. So Abel got DeMay to run against William Nicholson, one of McDonald's candidates for district director. DeMay lost but that made Abel responsible to DeMay so he gave him this job.

When DeMay came we agreed that he would come down into that plant and look at that job. But he didn't get it changed. That job stayed in limbo until after the negotiations was opened. Then he went to clay and said, "I told Mooty I was going to get something done about this job." So he had to go before the executive board to get the manual overhauled. That job finally ended up pay grade 19, but he had to go to the executive board to get them to understand the problem.

Scratching it up down here at the ground level is important, but then you've got to have an avenue to get to the top, too. I couldn't have carried it up to Abel, he wouldn't have listened to me, but he owed DeMay some consideration. DeMay was glad that he could make an impression, doing something that nobody else had-ever done. So he got the wage Manual opened up and while it was opened up we put in one more factor, horsepower. Every job in there that had horsepower increase, that factor went up. This furnace had a motor in there to cool it and that motor created more horsepower. In the 72 inch mill, there's six mills up there with the double stands on them. You reduce your metal twice where you used to reduce it once. That was increased. Lots of jobs went up to pay grade 23.

This is important. When a job changes the company will always try to cut the worker's pay and wherever the union isn't on the job, they get away with it. Sometimes the top is so busy playing and
socializing they don't pay attention. That's why I think every local union needs to educate its own people to protect themselves. They still need the top union leaders to help them, but in this world every worker better know enough to protect his own rights cause he's the one that has to live with the consequences.
At that time they didn't educate shop stewards. The only reason a guy got to be shop steward was because he got paid five dollars. He would be a shop steward and not try to learn a damn thing. If you did learn what the contract called for, then when you got into executing the contract the company went into tailspins about it. Next time they go to the conference table they change it.

There used to be a rule if there's no work in your own department you don't have to accept work somewhere else. A lot of guys didn't want to work on Saturday. If a guy came to work and there's no work in his department and there's another department over yonder that wants some men, he'd likely forfeit his pay and go home. This we fought to a showdown.

One Saturday about four or five guys didn't want to go. They asked me about it and the foreman took us on. They called the Personnel Director at home. We called the International Representative at home on Saturday. Then we had a hell of a time. This was the first time that we found out that provision had been taken out of the contract, that we couldn't refuse to work. I'm glad I didn't just allow them to go home but waited until we got it settled. From then on they couldn't go home, they had to work.

If you thought a job was unsafe you could protest it or you could call in your Safety Department man and they would have quite a
bit of discussion on it, but it's not like that now. A lot of these things you can't refuse to work, whether you feel it's safe or unsafe. Three small words can make a good or bad job description: "unless", "except", "etc." Other words make a big difference, like "may" or "shall" or "emergency." Change one of those words or take one out and the whole meaning of the contract is changed.

Some people in the mill take advantage of it anyway. We had a fellow in the mill, he had to go down in the pits. They had been cleaning out them pits all the time by the Cold Mill. They'd cut scrap and the scrap would get down in there. When they had a little leisure time they'd send a guy down thereto clean the pits. This guy said it was slippery down there, it was this, that and the other. I was called over. When I went over to look at it, I asked the foreman did he have ladders. They had ladders, they had lights down there, a 200 watt bulb and everything else. He'd been doing it all the time but now he don't want to do it. Well, I couldn't see nothing wrong for the guy. When I looked down in there you could see how much scrap he had. He would tie it to a rope and a guy would pull it up. Sometimes guys just want to take the advantage. There are times when people do get in those cases where there's gas or there's an open switch somewhere. We had one fellow get burned up, electrocuted in the pits. I don't know how it happened but some time these things happen.

Overtis Chapman came back from service and the contract said that his seniority would be going on just as though he was there. When he came back, his seniority entitled him to be operating a dolly, to have been moved up that far. He got into a big argument with his
foreman about it and then he came to me. I told him, "Yeah, now your seniority would entitle you to be driving the dolly." The foreman had been used to nobody telling him what to do. We had a fight and we won Overtis Chapman's job. They had to give him the dolly.

One morning a guy named Bingham came to me. He and Vogen, the foreman, was having a hell of a row. The Finishing Department had a dolly and it didn't have no driver. Bingham was a crane operator but he was also a dolly operator when the crane was not running. His crane is broke down and Bingham feels like he could sit down, he ain't got nothing to do. Vogen goes over to Merf Hulett, the foreman in the Finishing Department, and says, "I want to borrow your dolly." Merf Hulett says, "Well, you might let your dolly operator haul some coils for me and I'll let you have my dolly." They made the deal.

Vogen comes back to Bingham and Bingham don't want to work no way. Bingham says, "I don't have to work out of the Shear Room, I'm working for the Cold Mill. I'm hauling coils over from the Cold Mill to the Finishing Department." Vogen said, "Well, while you're taking them over there you can haul those other coils back over here and we can roll them again." "My job calls for me to haul them over there. It don't call for me to haul them back."

They get in an argument and they come tome. I say, "No, he's working for the Cold Mill, he ain't working for the Shear Room. He ain't supposed to bring them back. The Shear Room is supposed to bring those coils back, not you." So Bingham got to make up his mind. Vogen told him, "If you don't do what I tell you I'm going to fire you. I'm telling you to get on that dolly, take those coils over there and
bring some coils back." "I will get on that dolly, I will take those coils over there and I won't bring none back."

While I go out to the office and call Joe LaMorte (union staff representative) to tell him about this thing, Mac gets into it. Mac is the shop steward so he's going to show his authority. He tells the men they done fired Bingham and we're going to quit work. All the men get keyed up. They stop, everybody in the Cold Mill, about 25 people. Mac has done called the fellows to strike, telling them they ain't going to work. And just the sight of Mac would make McGee all upset. McGee tells them to go back to work. They say they're not going back to work, they want their representative to explain the contract to them.

All the people in the Cold Mill walked out. The company put them back to work after calling the staff man, Joe LaMorte, because they couldn't afford to lose 25 men at once. Mac and Bingham spent 99 days in the streets before they were put back to work. They were put back to work without any back pay after the arbitration. Phil Garman arbitrated that case. Mac always contended that I got his money and didn't give it to him. I never got one dime. Mac was a bitter enemy of mine from then on until may be the last year that I was in the plant.

Bingham went back into the mill. The Whites in the Cold Mill, the crane operators, had a scheme that they worked. The Cold Mill always tried to pick their people to go on certain jobs. I had to break that down. Bingham had a problem getting up in the center bay crane. The center bay crane didn't do anything but just change rolls in the mill. Sometimes he would change one roll a day, sometimes he
would have to change maybe two or three. But the whites locked that job up and they didn't want no blacks up there. I had to go in and fight like hell to get Bingham on that job.

I continued to bring this into McGee and the superintendent and let them know that those men on the crane had seniority and the men had a right to rotate on that crane. "Well, he can't operate that crane." I said, "He can operate the south bay and the north bay, but he can't operate the middle bay? Either he's a crane operator or he ain't."

Finally they got Bingham up in that crane. Chadda was a foreman and his father was a millwright. Old man Chadda was changing a roll with Bingham in the crane. He had a two by four sitting up. This two by four slipped some kind of way and old man Chadda got hurt. This created another stir, Bingham can't operate the crane! I said, "Mr. Chadda, did that man do that intentionally or was it an accident?" Old man Chadda levelled with me. He said, "No, it wasn't that man's fault. I didn't have that two by four sitting exactly right and that could have happened to anybody."

Okay, since we've got a safety problem the Court of Inquiry came into play. At the Court of Inquiry I said, "I'm going to take Bingham out of that crane and I'm going to put him down on the hot line. Either he can operate a crane or he can't. If he can operate the crane there, he's going back in that crane, I don't care what nobody says."

Then I had a fight with Bingham. "How come I got to give up my crane?" I said, "You ain't got no crane, you don't own no crane. You can operate a crane or you can't. If you can drive an automobile in
Chicago you can drive one in New York. If you can drive it in New York, you can drive it in California. If you can follow signals you're supposed to operate that crane. If you can't follow signals you're coming down out of that crane. Now that's simple!

Don't nobody know about this but Wally Bouchard, Bingham, Vogen and I. Only three people are supposed to know it. Bingham went down on the hot line to operate the crane. This is a trick put up by the crane operators and the millwrights. Chadda gets ahold of it some kind of way and he goes down and tells these guys on the hotline that Bingham is coming down there and why.

Once we got Bingham swung into that and broke up this syndicate, Bingham didn't want nobody to go in the crane then but him and these white boys. They was making so much overtime that Bingham just stayed out there, Bingham joined the syndicate. He stayed in the crane and he worked so much overtime. At last came the time of dividing the overtime. Somebody else wanted to get in this middle bay crane because sometime you sat there all day and you didn't do anything. Sundays you wouldn't have to do nothing but they had to have a crane operator in there. So Bingham stayed in the crane and they kept this thing going.

They kept a guy named Reed out of it. Reed was just a happy go lucky guy. It didn't make him no difference, he'd just laugh at anything the foreman said. Reed and I sat down and talked about it one day. He said, "Of course I'm not particular about it but it's just the principle. You fought like hell to get Bingham in that crane and now he don't want nobody else in there but them and divide it like they want
I got a chance to sit down and talk to Bingham one day and I told him, "You're just rotten from the inside out. As hard as we fought to get you in the crane." "Well, I have to have the overtime. I have to raise my kids." I said, "Your kids are going to live some kind of way. You've never seen kids starve to death. You don't have to do all that."

But he did, he sat up in that crane till he just got too fat. He was lazy, too, he got almost too fat to walk. I had a good talk with him and I'm glad I did before anything happened. The company had an open house where everybody came to the plant. Bingham stayed up all night and worked and then went home and got his family, came back and spent the day in the shop with his family, came back that night at midnight and went to work. He went up in that crane and went to sleep and they couldn't hardly wake him up. When they finally woke him up he just climbed up out of that crane. You have to pull it to a certain ladder to come down on this ladder. But when he woke up he was so dead tired and sleepy, he just climbed right over on the side of the crane and came down on the side. When they saw him he was hanging on that crane by his hands. As heavy as he was, his hands couldn't hold him till they could get there. Dead asleep! They didn't know what had happened, This was the tragedy that finally happened, he had no choice but to turn loose and fall off. He eventually died from the injuries. These are some of the things that happened down in the mill. Sometimes you fight like hell to help a worker get a fair deal and he just gets so greedy or lazy or selfish or ambitious he doesn't
want to give the other workers a fair chance and he ends up destroying himself, too.

I remember a woman called Hattie Shaw who didn't want to belong to the union in the first place. She wanted to be contrary. She used to come in every day at 7:30 and nobody could stop her from coming in early. She's an ambitious worker. The contract said 8 o'clock would be starting time, but she would always start early. The bad thing about it was that when she come in, she would have the work all lined up. Normally if everybody came in at 8 o'clock they wouldn't have to go to work right away. They would have ten or fifteen minutes while Hattie was getting their work over to them. But she would get in there at 7:30 so when they'd get in there at 8 o'clock they'd have to start to work right away. Lots of people like to cause confusion like that. They couldn't stop her from coming in.

Little Bobbit was the shop steward over there and he wanted to stop Hattie Shaw from coming in early. They had a big discussion about Hattie. We had a hell of a time trying to stop her from coming in early, but we finally agreed to enforce it. We had a meeting and took it up and the decision was that Hattie was to report to work at 8 o'clock like everybody else.

I went to the hospital once when I was sick and when I came back my job had spread as far as from here to State Street. They didn't change the description, they just ignored it. They had other guys who worked on that job while I was gone, sweeping that floor all the way from here to State Street. When I came back the little foreman kept coming down there telling me, "You wasn't sweeping up your
department." I got clear up in the neighborhood where I was supposed to work at and he came back again. "I told you to sweep your department." I said, "Wait a minute. Let's me and you understand one another. Looks like there's some difference between us. What do you call my department? Where do you intend for me to sweep?" "You sweep all the way down to the hot line." I said, "Man, I wouldn't sweep that much for my mother. I don't know what you're talking about. This is where our problem is, there's too much difference in the way you're thinking and the way I'm thinking. How much do you want me to sweep down this other way?" "I want you to sweep all the way down to the cold mill." "Oh no, no, no, you've got to be wrong. You got to be out of your mind. My job don't call for that much sweeping. I sweep up in my vicinity but not all the say down yonder." They had been having these guys do all that while I was off.

The next morning we go in the office. I called Pryor, who was the president, right away to come down in the Heat Treat Department and have a meeting with me and Jack. I said, "Last night me and Bill had an argument about sweeping that floor over yonder in that area. He told me where I had to sweep and I told him where I wasn't going to sweep. I know what that job calls for because I described the job. I signed the job description, I know what it is. I told him I wasn't going to sweep that floor and I ain't." This is one of the things that happened down in the mill.

This is why it is important, if you're working on a job, to know that job. Plenty of times these jobs gets expanded beyond their bounds because the people working on them just don't know. The man
comes telling them to do something and he don't question it. Working on the Wage Study Committee I was able to tie things down where they are. That man would have moved the job a little bit wider and took two or three men off the job. When he takes two or three people off the job for awhile and tries it without them, he's doing that for a purpose. They're getting out more work with less people. They're finding out how much they can get away with.

That's another thing that happened down in the mill -- this ten weeks vacation. [He is referring to the Extended Vacation Plan negotiated by the Steelworkers Union in the early 1960s. It provided a 13 week paid vacation every 5 years for all employees with 15 years service -- 10 weeks more than their normal vacation. This was supposed to reduce technological unemployment in the industry.] Yeah, people enjoy ten weeks vacation, but all the company does when they give you that ten weeks vacation is they learn how to operate with less people. The company said they were going to let 20% go off at once and hire 20% more people but that don't happen. These are the little things that the union don't have to come in and check into unless the people brings it up to them.

That's not the only time they tried to do that kind of stuff. One time a new job that came in was a pay grade 5. My job was pay grade 6, so this was another complete job. They kept working, different guys down there on it. Finally they decided to put me on it. One Monday morning, as soon as the whistle blew, my telepone rang, "Mooty, come on down to the office. We want you to operate this Down Ender." I didn't see nothing but blue all the way down there and he said, "Now
Frank Russ is going to show you how to operate the Down Ender." "Okay Frank, show me. How far do I have to go on this job in order to complete the job? How far does my territory extend?" "Well, you may have to unload some coils."

When he got through explaining all that he knew, I said, "Who told you to tell me to do this job?" He finally said George Wilson. I said, "Now you tell George Wilson I want to have a meeting with him right away." "Okay, you go ahead and do the job in the meantime." George got to me about noon and I said, "I want to know who told you to tell me to operate that Down Ender? You know what my job is and I've been doing that job down there for about ten years. Then you come telling me that I'm going to do something else. Somebody told you and that's who I want to know." "Well, it came from Personnel."

Okay, now I got a meeting with the Personnel Director at 1:30. He gave me a release to go over there. Applegate, who headed the Local Wage Committee in the plant, brought his assistant in there. Sam Clay, the president, was there and Lloyd Thompson, who was the vice president, and myself. I said, "Look, somebody told somebody down in that department that I should take this Down Ender. My job is loading flat sheets. It spells out flat sheets. It don't say a damn thing about a coil. I'm not loading no coil. That job is pay grade 5 and my job is in pay grade 6 and I have no intention of tying these two jobs together."

McGee looked at Applegate and said, "Well, you set up the jobs. How do they go?" Applegate said, "Well, we figured that he has enough time." I said, "You ain't got no business figuring that.
That's where you're wrong," McGee said, "How do you define the difference between coils and sheets?" I said, "One rolls up and the other lays flat, it's that simple." "Well, they both load alike." "They don't load alike. You got to use a different method to load a coil than a flat sheet. It's a different job altogether. When you described the job, you and I described it. You wrote the job description, we evaluated the job. Now what are you talking about -- me doing two jobs? I'm not going to do no two jobs."

We had it up hill and down dale. Finally I said, "McGee, you sit here and let that man tell you that there ain't enough work on that job that I'm doing to pay for pay grade 6. Now that's what he's saying. Then somebody's been jiving you for ten years. That's him, sitting right there. Somebody's been jiving you for ten years because he described the job, he evaluated the job, he said it was pay grade 6. Now ten years later he's telling you there's not enough work on that job to pay me that kind of money?"

McGee said, "Will you all excuse yourselves for about ten minutes?" So we all went out of the room. When we came back Applegate told us, "Well, we don't know what we're going to do with it yet for awhile. We'll hold off on it for the time being and let it ride. We'll decide later what we're going to do with it. So this is just some of the little things that goes on down in the mill. When a job is set up, if the worker don't know what the job consists of, what he is supposed to do and what he is not, supposed to do, he'll find that his job will be getting broader till pretty soon they'll knock off another man."
We had a situation in the Shear Room. They had an operator, an assistant operator, a laborer and an inspector. There was lots of people to operate this particular job. So the man from the Personnel Office came in one night and the guys weren't doing the job that they were supposed to do. The assistant operator, he was operating the machine. The operator was gone off someplace else. The inspector was standing over yonder chewing the fat and smoking a cigar. So he stood there and watched all this. When he got through they came down and cut about half in two the number of people they had on that job. They raised a boatload of sand but the man had found out how long they was operating without all those people. And they never could get those people replaced, never could.

Then they went through the mill cutting out people's jobs. I used to tell people, "Stay on your job, stay around your job. Don't go wandering off because the company isn't in business to furnish nobody a job. They're in business to make money. They're in business to cut as much help as they possibly can. It's up to you to try to keep as many people working as you can."

When I got defeated for local union president in 1956, I made them call another election. I lost the election just the same and then for the next nine years we almost lost the union. We had to take a different look at it. We had to come back and build up a man who could defeat Pryor. The opposition got so good they could shift one from vice president to president, they would just change jobs. The president would run for vice president and the vice president for president. When they did that I had to study out a strategy how to
defeat them. So in '64 we tied all the contenders in opposition to Pryor together and formed a committee. I ran for president in 1954 and won, then lost in '56. I ran again in '58, '60 and '62.

As fate would have it there were three possible contenders against Pryor in 1964: myself, Ephraim Henry and Woodrow Campbell. We set up a committee and that committee was to decide which of us was to run. We agreed that whoever would be nominated out of that committee, that's who would run and we would all support him. When we went to pick the president I took a definite position. I had told Sam Clay when he first came to me and wanted to support me, "I have no intention of asking nobody else to vote for me for president. If the people have wanted me they've had plenty of time to select me, so I'm not running no more." But only he and I knew that I wasn't going to run. When it came time to decide, we decided that we could put our cards on the table. Everybody said they couldn't support me because they'd campaigned against me so much. I said, "That's just fine, just tell it like it is. I can't support you or you because I've told people all the time that you wasn't presidential material and I can't change now. So it will have to be a new man."

We had only one new man in the gang and that was Clay, but when we talked about selecting Clay the other guys got kind of leery. They were hem-hawing. I said, "We promised that we would pick one man. We could not pick either one of you. We have to pick a new man for a new place in the game and support him and I see no reason why he shouldn't win. So we picked Sam Clay. Henry accepted financial secretary. Campbell, he didn't want anything so we didn't bother too much about
him. We all went out and supported Sam Clay. I had to do all of his literature. He had never ran for anything and he didn't think he could make it.

When they got down to recording secretary, they asked me if I would accept recording secretary. I told them I would. The recording secretary is the most important job there is on the executive board. I ran against the best they had on the other slate, Howard Holubetz. This cat had a position on the Credit Union and he had the recording secretary's job. I lost but in the meantime I ran so close to him, when he found out that all his slate except him lost, he just turned in his resignation.

The Saturday he turned in his resignation Clay was in bad shape because they had campaigned for delegates to go to the convention. Clay hadn't campaigned. He called me up and told me that Holubetz had turned in his resignation and he had turned in the secretary's books. I said that was the best thing he ever could have done. I said I'd be right out there and I went over the books. Clay said, "What are we going to do? They've been campaigning all week and we haven't campaigned. We have to elect delegates to the convention."

I, said, "That's fine, hand me the books. Do you remember in 1958 and 1960 and 1962 when we sent delegates to the convention? Do you know how we sent them? You was one of the delegates. You was the one delegate that they elected from the floor. They appointed the rest of the people they wanted to go to the convention." I took the book and turned right to it. In '58 they named five delegates to the
convention and in 1960 they named them and in '62 they named them. They sent all black delegates to Miami, Florida because they didn't want to be involved in that racial issue that was going on down there. Then sent Howard Holubetz to New York to the Negro American Labor Congress Convention as a pay-off so he didn't interfere with that going to Miami, Florida. I was in New York, I saw Howard. He knew nobody there, he just went there as a pay-off. So that's the way we're going to do that.

When the time came to nominate delegates to the convention I said, "We're going to do just like they did. You pick out the people you want to go and name them. First accept his resignation. Next ask permission to appoint me as temporary secretary." So he did. When they opened the floor for nominations, the other side jumped up because they had all their people there. Then he called for the report from the last convention. When I read the report they named the people they wanted to send. They had 36 people there ready to send them to the convention, but we had 56 people there who needed leadership. So I got up and read this and then they took the vote and that's the only way that he got to the convention. We had 56 people voting to support his recommendation. That was just one of the things that I did for Sam Clay.

I got $25.00 a month for being recording secretary and $10.00 a month for being Chairman of the Wage Study Committee. I lost the next election for recording secretary and that meant that I lost the $25.00 monthly stipend. I thought that being Chairman of the Wage Study Committee was more important than any other committee that we
had. The way I happened to be in Atlantic City at the Steelworkers Convention when the Ad Hoc Committee (a grass roots anti-discrimination group within the union) was founded, I wasn't elected a delegate, I went there as a Wage Study man.

When they started this Ad Hoc Committee, Clay thought it was a fine thing but the next year he applied for a job on the staff. Ad Hoc was going pretty strong and he had applied for a staff job. He kept telling me, "They keep telling me if I'd cut you down I'd be all right." I said, "Wait a minute, man, when you get ready to go just let me know. I don't know what you're talking about. Who is this "they"? I only know one thing. I have helped you. I went in this Wage Study business. I wrote all your campaign literature. I helped get you elected but you don't owe me nothing. When you're ready to go you just let me know." So he just kept dribbling away.

The next election when I didn't win I told myself I'm not going to evaluate no jobs for $10.00 a month. I told Clay, "If you want to talk $50.00 or above we'll talk. I've done this job for a long time. In 1954 I dug out thirteen jobs that involved 250 men. That added 13 jobs to the old wage-structure. Not only that, I had over 20 men receiving from $500.00 to $1,000.00 back pay as a result of what I did. I have proven to you that I can evaluate these jobs. Now if you don't want me you don't have to have me." That was the break between me and Sam Clay. I wrote him a letter to ask if we could talk about the situation but he wasn't interested in that. He thought he could get ahead better by cutting me at that point.
CHAPTER 8

RACISM AS USUAL

In 1955 I became involved in the Emmett Till case. My mother's brother was married to Emmett Till's grandmother. They became widow and widower about the same time. They began to get lonesome about the same time so they got married in 1949. We had a pretty good relationship. I knew Emmett as Bobo. I knew his mother just as Mamie, I didn't even know her last name.

Just as I started working on the union paper, Mamie called for me to come over right away. I said I couldn't come till later cause I had to finish my paper. When I finally got over there everybody is hollering and crying and the house is full of people. I said, "What goes on here?" The phone was ringing and, Mamie came running up to me and she said, "Mr. Mooty, we want you to take the case over." I hadn't heard a radio all day and I didn't even know what happened. The phone would ring and some other aunty or cousin would call up and interrupt her and she couldn't get finished telling me.

Finally I got the story. Emmett Till was dragged from his great uncle's house at two o'clock this morning and he hadn't been seen since. His great uncle was Moses Wright in Money, Mississippi. His daddy was killed in the war in 1945. I said; "Okay, where is his mother? And where does he fit in with you?" "That's my baby, Mr. Mooty, that's Bobo!" I said, "Well, why the hell didn't you say Bobo in the first place." I didn't know who she was talking about.
She said, "We just want you to take it over. Daddy got a lot of confidence in you and he says you can do it." By that time it was four o'clock in the evening. This happened early in the morning. They'd been over there stumbling around over this all day. They're all excited and I ain't knowed nothing about none of it. Anyway, I jumped in the case. The first thing I did was put everybody off the phone, this cousin and that cousin. I just said, "You can't speak to Mamie. I don't care who you are, get off the phone. The phone's got to be open." I got in a big mess with the family cause they all wanted to talk.

Anyway, I stayed with the case all night. I didn't have no chance to go to sleep. The next morning I got to call up and get a leave of absence from the job for a few weeks. Monday morning we got up and went to the NAACP and let them know. We went to see the attorney and got a few things straightened out. Finally Tuesday we went to Senator Douglas's office. That's where I ran into Doug Anderson. Doug Anderson was the Chairman of the Community Services Committee when it was first established. He went to Washington with Senator Douglas and he also operated Senator Douglas's office in Chicago. They told me to see a Mr. Doug Anderson so we got a straight direct contact right into Senator Douglas's office to see that the Attorney General or somebody got this case up before them. Then I really got involved. Wednesday, all day we was on the phone, I didn't get no sleep. I took the phone over to keep them off the phone.

Finally the news came through that the boy's body had been located. When they found him they shipped his body here. By that
time I was dead on my feet. I hadn't had a chance to go home so I went to lay down across the bed. Mamie's father was here from Detroit. Her father and mother had separated when she was six years old, but he had come in here to see her when he heard his grandson was murdered in Mississippi. I thought now I can lay down and get me a nap. I went to go across the bed and he said, "Don't you want to go down to the station? They're bringing the body in down to the Illinois Central Station." "No, man," I said, "I really didn't get no sleep all week so this is a good chance for me to get a nap with everybody out of the house." He said, "Well, I'm going down there. If you want to go you can go along with me cause I ain't got nobody going in the car. I'll do the driving, you won't have to worry about driving." I said, "Well, maybe I better go along."

We drove on down to the station and when we get down there it looked like all hell had broke loose. It looked like a country association. Everybody was from everywhere. I didn't know the people were that much disturbed. But over those three days' reports everybody was shook up and everybody was down there to see the body when it come in. I forced my way on through the crowd. The uncle that was down in Mississippi and followed the case down there was able to bring the body up here. He got off the train. I had seen him once here. When he saw me he said, "Mooty, don't let nobody see what's in that box, don't even let them open the box. Be sure don't let Mamie see what's in there." By that time the press had him going for a press conference. That's all he had a chance to say.

Her father and I were standing together so I said, "You hear
what Crosby said?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "What the heck is in there?" I've got to wake up now, bad as I needed sleep. They had taken it to the undertaker parlor. I said, "I've got to go out there now. I've got to see what's in there even if I have to get a gas mask."

When we get out there, there's more people than there was down to the station. Everybody was crowding all over the place, so I breezed on in.

When I walked in the chapel the undertaker and two more fellows had the box open and was looking in. They said, "Who're you? You can't come in here." I told them who I was and I said, "I have to see it." They said, "We got orders not to open it." I said, "But you got it open." They said, "Yes, but we can't let nobody else see it." I said, "Well, I have, to see it. Not only that but the mother has to see it,"

They went out there and started talking to her to try to persuade her not to see it. They said, "We got orders that we're not to open the box." I said, "Lookman, that's the boy's mother. What do you mean, she can't see it? That's her son and she got the last say over it." She said, "I just paid $750.00 to have that box brought here and I want to see what's in it."

So he don't have no choice, then, we just went on in there. They had it already open so we went there and looked at it. That wiped all the tears off her eyes. There was no more tears, no more tears! What she saw in that box -- that boy's head was cut open like they hit him with an ax. His head was wide open and his mouth was twisted all around and eyes was bulging out of his head. They didn't even have no
clothes on him. They just put him in that box and sprinkled some lime over it and zipped that box up just like that. The body had never been washed.

I can't go to sleep now. Even though I hadn't been to sleep I got to wake up all over again. Everybody stood there speechless. I said, "This is what's been happening all the time; they've been covering up this kind of crap. We just ain't going to cover this up." She said, "I think everybody ought to see it." I said, "Yes, everybody ought to see this. That might not stop it but this'll put a whole big slow-down to it. This is what's been happening all the time." She said, "I don't care who sees it, anybody can see it. I said, "We'll make arrangements so that everybody WILL see it." I asked the undertaker if he could enbalm the body, take the odor out of it, and he said yes. I said, "Don't bother the face. Leave that face just like it is, don't touch it. We're not going to bury this, we're going to let everybody see it!"

Then she went on back home and the newspapers started to call. The news got out that we wasn't going to bury him Saturday. They tried to interview me but I got too rough. The language I was using wasn't fit for them to listen to. They couldn't put it on the air, you know. I told them, "If you want to find out what's in there, go on out and look. It's going to be open for everybody to see. If you're not afraid of your camera, you go out there and take that picture and put it on the front page of your paper." So we finally got them off.

Then I went over to Lucius's office and he and I talked it over. I said, "We're going to put that body on display somewhere, I
don't know where, but they belong to this church on 41st and State Street. I'll go see their minister first." I went up and got Rev. Isaiah Roberts out of bed and I didn't let him say a word till I got through telling him what the score was. I told him, "All we want to do is have a place to lay that body where it can be seen, that's all. This may not stop it, but this will be starting an end to all that lynching that has been going on down in Mississippi. They've been throwing everything in that river until it be full. Now you've got a chance to be a great man if you let us use that church. All we want to do is put it out there where the people can see it. We got three days, we're not going to bury it tomorrow, which is Saturday. It's going to be open Saturday and you can't bury it on Sunday. Monday is a holiday, it's Labor Day. You got three days to lay it out on display. There will be a million people in Chicago who, just for curiosity's sake, will be coming to see what's happening. You just ought to go down to that funeral parlor and see how many people are there. This would be the greatest contribution you could make."

He said, "Well, you sure seem convinced that you know what you're doing. I don't see anything wrong with that. If they have Sunday School we can roll it down in the basement and the people can view it if that's all you want." When we got his permission, then we was set. From then on people filed on by that body for the next three days. People came from everywhere to see it.

From that point on the NAACP sort of took charge. Demands came in from everywhere for Mamie to speak. I travelled around with her for a while but then I had to get back to my job, so her sisters and
her father started travelling with her. But I really believe that we made the right decision -- not to bury the truth, just let everybody look at it like it really was.
The middle fifties were mighty busy years for me. One thing I got involved in, in 1955, was an organization called Labor's Civic Affairs. Bill Abner, from the Autoworkers Union, was getting to be real popular in Chicago and he was drawing attention to the Blacks in all the international unions. Packinghouse was pretty strong. Their center has been a labor center. Paul Robeson, before he had problems with the government, planned to build a labor center there at the old Baker's Casino. He had the blueprints drawn up and everything. That area finally turned out to be what we consider a great labor center in the heart of the Black Belt.

Al Towers [head of the Industrial Union Council], Joe LaMorte and Sam Parrish [staff men of the United Steelworkers of America] was having so much trouble with Bill they didn't want us to have nothing to do with him. Bill Abner was an energetic young man coming up in the labor movement and real aggressive. The Steelworkers didn't want no Blacks that was aggressive. Bill had a lot of trouble with Al Towers and the Cook County Industrial Union Council. The Cook County Union Council was controlled mostly, after it was taken over from Myrna, Maida and Mike Mann. Auto took part of it, steel took part of it, the most important offices. Bill, being as aggressive as he was, was just a little too much for Steel so they had many fights.

Bill set himself up a little office on 47th Street and all the
Blacks in the neighborhood would go there. He had a little information center. He got pretty strong and he put up a big fight against the school they built at 63rd and South Park. He thought it shouldn't have been built right under that El. A lot of things he objected to and he was real aggressive.

Since he had the only place in the Black community for Blacks to go to, many steelworkers went there. Or they could go to Packinghouse, Packing was kind of on the outside, too. When the District Director of Steel started arguing about the steelworkers going to Bill Abner's outfit and helping Bill out, they jumped on Lucius Love about it. Lucius was a member of the Cook County Industrial Union Council. So was I, as a member of the Community Services Committee. We said, "What's wrong with Bill? We don't believe in letting white folks put you to fight no Blacks. We are utterly opposed to that. Don't start telling us that. That will make us cling to him more."

Lucius told them, "The only place we can go for information, to participate in community activities, to participate in political education is there. You have help here but Blacks won't come. They want to get help from other Blacks and they're going to keep going there unless you furnish them with something else. Give us some ground to start something of our own. We go to Bill and we go to Packing cause we got nothing of our own. If you want us to have a place to bring steelworkers, you give us something to work with. And that's how this thing called Labor's Civic Affairs got started.

They said whatever you want to set up, here's the money, you
can set up something. So Lucius set up a little conference room in the Mansfield Hotel for steelworkers to come in when they had problems. That didn't work so hot because if you're going to be talking about union business you ain't got no business in the Mansfield Hotel. The women didn't want their husbands to be going there too much and what women we had didn't want to be coming there too much. We had a few women that was interested in our affairs -- Lucille Loonie, Penny Hayes and Helen Marx. Then they had a lot of women who was Steelworker presidents' secretaries. Every time they turn around they're all up in the hotel, so the wives start wondering what's going on in that hotel? This was wrong so we had to get out and find a place and setup an organization so that we can do our steel thing. That still didn't cut our ties with Bill Abner, but this was why the Labor's Civic Affairs Center was established at 7415-17 Cottage Grove. We were supposed to hold the group of black steel workers together. We'd have meetings and then we decided to start a little counseling service out there. They had a man who taught that and we brought him on out and we had several meetings.

The biggest thing we did was when we organized these people at Galters. This woman who worked there lived at my house and she kept wanting to have a union. I told her, "You're talking about big business; you're talking about a lot of work; you're talking about a lot of heartaches; you're talking about a lot of trouble. But she wanted to go for it, So we had this meeting at my house and she brought this group of 62 people together.

Once we got them together and got them organized we tried to
talk to Lucius about it. He said, "Take them to Jim Kemp [Building Service Employees Union]. Jim Kemp is Mr. AFL, take them to Jim." We took them to Jim, sat down and talked with him. Jim told them a thousand different ways how it was best for them to stay in an amalgamated local. There was only one person in that shop that had a contract, the chief shop steward. This is the way the Teamsters did these people. They'd have a little group here. There wasn't enough of them to have a whole union. They'd have a little group over yonder. There were about 300 of these people, but they were just an amalgamated local, a little group here and a little group over there. They called a meeting and only one person came to the meeting. Only one person had a contract.

Well, we started off meeting with two or three and we kept talking and pretty soon we had them organized. They weren't satisfied to stay where they were. I said, "Lucius, what's wrong with putting them in steel? We got a lot of people that aren't steelworkers." So we made an appointment with Ray Sarocco and we told him we got 350 people here already organized. All you got to do is accept them. He showed us ten thousand different ways why Steel couldn't take them. He said we got a no-raid agreement. I said, "We don't have no agreement with the Teamsters, don't tell us that. These people want to come out from where they are. They are out, this woman has been fired already and we got to have someplace to go."

Then Jim Kemp sent for us to come back. We went back, sat down, listened to what he had to say. He put a proposition before us and we said, "No-dice. You told us you couldn't take us before, so you
can't have us now." They were a lot of earnest people and they were in a hell of a fix now because the company had fired their leader and they had organized a union. The Teamsters was trying to take them. They weren't going back with the Teamsters. There wasn't no place for them to go.

Then I thought of something. I got a dime from here and a nickel from there and I sat down and drafted a letter. I told them to each make a copy of it in their own handwriting. "Add something to it or take something away from it, anything, but bring them back here next week. We'll put them in a great big envelope." We sent it airmail special to George Meany and it wasn't long before John Yancy and I met. When he came I found out he was a staff representative for the AFL-CIO and that George Meany had a lot of local unions under his direct supervision. He sent John Yancey out there and the District Director of the AFL-CIO here came out and accepted them. They got a charter from Washington. It was a federal charter so they didn't be long to no international union, they was chartered direct by the AFL. That was one thing we did.

The main purpose of the Labor's Civic Affairs Committee was supposed to be to organize and coordinate the community activities of the AFL-CIO but it was mostly a paper organization. When we decided to go into counseling services, that shook up a lot of people. They said, "We'll send Jim Ganly out there and he can tell the people all they need to know." Jim Ganly, from Local 65, was the head of the Community Services Committee in his local. His president would always give him one day at his local union headquarters to service the
people that came in, so he made himself very active. Then Jim Ganly
got to be a Community Services representative for Steel throughout the
area. But there wasn't no way I could sit down and listen to what Jim
Ganly had to say because I was one of the originators of the Community
Services Program.

The Labor's Civic Affairs Committee started in 1955 and it
lasted about four or five years. By then the union leadership decided
it had served its purpose. Its purpose was to keep steelworkers away
from Bill Abner. When it was first established the union paid part of
the rent for that hotel for Lucius. Once we got a place, they financed
that for a little while. Then it had to support itself. The place we
had was for the headquarters of this committee but some unions held
their meetings there so they had to pay something. This was a way to
keep up some of the expense.

We had a few little social affairs there. This wasn't
nothing educational nor constructive. I doubt now if any of the
officers would even remember it. We participated in some of the
demonstrations against all that trouble [racial conflict] in Trumbull
Park. They played no part, as an organization, in the Emmett Till
case. There were some white names on the committee, too, but they was
just there in name only. Finally it just went out of existence.

Another thing I remember well in this period was when the
Negro American Labor Council was formed. When George Meany got bad
enough to attack A. Philip Randolph in 1956, very few Blacks were
there. Very few Blacks had an opportunity to go to the AFL-CIO.
Convention in the first place. When the AFL and CIO was merged there
was two Blacks head of their unions. This is one of the stipulations they had in their constitution: in order to be a member of this body of the CIO you had to be president of your international union. We only had two, Bill Townsend and A. Philip Randolph. I guess Meany had never realized old man Randolph had as much influence with Blacks as he did. Anyway he attacked Randolph.

In 1959 when the NAACP had their Golden Anniversary in New York City, I was there helping negotiate a contract. I didn't even know what was coming up. This is where the Blacks got together from all over the country and decided to form the Negro American Labor Council. I wasn't in on any of the discussions and I didn't know about it.

I happened to pick up the paper one day and I saw there was a steering committee meeting in Cleveland and I thought this should be the answer to our problems. All the guys were there that's generally around at these things: Boyd Wilson, Horace Sheffield, Joe Overton, Jim Kemp. The same group from all over the country that always meets at everything was there. I had an idea where they were so I found them. They came out from there with the idea that they were going to have a founding convention and they assigned people to organize various parts of the country.

They assigned a committee to come up with a name for the organization to be presented at the founding convention. During the naming, Lucius Love's name came up as one of the members to form a group in Chicago. Just prior to this Jim Kemp came in and suggested that Lucius Love be on the committee with him in Chicago, On the way back I
was approached that Willoughby Abner was going to call a meeting of all the people who went to this conference. As soon as I got back I called Lucius and told him, "You have been named along with Jim Kemp to setup a meeting and form a committee here in Chicago, so you and Jim better get together and set up the meeting. And you better move fast because Willoughby Abner is going to call a meeting and there might be a split from the go. Look into it anyway, I just brought you this information; When you all get together and get your committee together, if there is any difference in what Bill is talking about and what you all are talking about, then get together on it."

Well, they didn't move, Bill moved. Bill Abner called a meeting at his house in the middle of the week and he had labor leaders there. He had people I had never seen and they had the structure, the blueprint of the organization, already established. I knew Bill but a lot of those people I had never seen before. I said, "Look, it can't work like you say. First of all you already got a name for your organization and the committee that's going to form this organization is going to meet and submit a name at the founder's convention. How are you going to have a name prior to the founding of the organization?"

Well, they were going to have their own constitution and they were going to have their own autonomy. I said, "Ain't nobody going to allow you to be a subordinate to a national organization and you maintain your own name. Now Bill, you know better than that. You know they're not going to allow you to have your autonomy. I was at the meeting, I know what happened. First of all, you weren't
authorized to set up a committee here in Chicago. That authority was vested in Lucius Love and Jim Kemp. That's who was supposed to setup this committee." He said, "We got no time to wait for them. They're fooling around, they ain't moving. We're going to move!"

Lots of people believed in Bill. Bill was a pretty good leader. Anyway Bill got off ahead of Jim Kemp and Love. With me sticking my mouth in it, they said they wanted me on the Constitution Committee. So I told them at that Constitution Committee meeting, "I don't want no part of this thing." I thought this was going to be the end of our problems, we was going to be able to solve it, but I see right now there's a split in the thing from the go. There's got to be trouble.

Eventually they went to the founder's convention. Eventually Lucius and Jim tried to get together and set up a committee. But Bill's effort was stronger than theirs and Bill mustered more people than they did. Bill went to the convention with more votes than they had. Now Randolph's got two groups coming from Chicago. A lot of things went on that Randolph didn't know because at that meeting there was many people that got office that he didn't know their political background.

One of them, Lola Belle Holmes, was a spy for the FBI. She was a member of the Communist Party and she was able to maneuver herself into positions of importance. Those people knew each other in the organization and a lot of them got offices in it. They took strong offices. One was executive vice president for this organization, a member of the Communist Party and also stooging for the FBI. The way
Lola Belle got to be vice president of this organization is kind of interesting. It was by organizing the women. I still have my copy of the Proceedings of the Founding Convention and it tells it all very clear, exactly as it happened. It was the last thing that happened before the Founding Convention of the Negro American Labor Council adjourned. This is the way it's printed in my summary.

"A delegate moved that the slate be adopted and another delegate seconded the motion. Another delegate recommended that the slate be unanimously adopted. Another delegate, however, expressed a desire to nominate a man with a long experience in the labor movement, and he was informed by the President that he could either oppose the slate or support it. The delegate opposed the slate. Then Sister Jennings took the floor and gave forceful expression to the sentiments of the women delegates when she stated:

I would speak in opposition to the slate, not to take anything from the gentlemen who have been presented, but I am getting a little tired of our organization consistently giving us slates of men. We have a lot of women around here. You're saying to us, us rank and fileers are going to have a chance to nominate people from our local areas. That isn't enough, because according to this Consitution the vice presidents have a hell of a lot of power, more power than the board members that we are going to elect.

Some of the women have gotten together and have brought up some names, I think we should listen to them. I think we should be fair. We are fighting discrimination here. I am tired of being discriminated against as a Negro, but I am getting sick and tired of you men discriminating against me as a woman.

The President then recognized another woman delegate who delivered an equally forceful statement:

'Mr. Chairman, I do not oppose this slate as proposed just for opposition sake, but if we will look at the program that we have printed, we
will see that the National Steering Committee was composed with two women representatives. If these women were capable and able to assist the National Steering Committee in helping to set up this Convention that we are so proud of here today, then I feel that if we are going to do this on a permanent basis, women should not be deleted. I feel that the women of this country can contribute and do contribute a wonderful service, not only as mothers but also in other capacities. I feel that when any party, Democrat or Republican, comes down to the grass roots it is the women who bring out the votes.

We are fighting discrimination as far as the Negro in labor is concerned. Let us not here today discriminate against the women in this organization. Women work today, they work and they work hard.

I can finish this up in one sentence. We are willing to pay for freedom. The kids who walked the streets in the sit-down demonstrations weren't all boys. Elizabeth Eckford was the girl that was met by the State troopers in Alabama. That's the picture that went straight through the world. Elizabeth Eckford was trying to go to school. She is a woman. We want representation in this conference,

After the delegates voted on the slate, there followed a vociferous demonstration. The women delegates were demanding representation as National Vice Presidents. The President then entertained a motion to amend the Constitution to provide for two more vice-presidents on the executive board, and that made these two vice-presidents be women. The motion was made and carried by a standing vote.

The women delegates caucused, and then placed their nominations for Sister Agnes Willis from New York and Sister Lola Belle Holmes from Chicago. The president then read the slate again, with the two women included as National Vice Presidents. The delegates, by a standing vote, adopted the slate.

[Summary of Proceedings - The Founding Convention of the Negro American Labor Council, p. 4, typed copy.] So that's how that was done.
Anyway, we came out of the founders Convention in Detroit and Randolph said, "I've got to have one organization in Chicago." U.C. Crowder [Executive Board member of the NALC from the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters] was Randolph's man here, so he said, "Brother Crowder, you get these people together, merge them." When the merger came about got my nose stuck in something else that I had no business in at all. Crowder said, "I can't get nobody to take the vice presidency. I've met with Bill and I'm going to split it right down the middle. I'm going to give him the presidency; I want the recording secretary to go to him. Financial secretary will go to me. I've split the board right down the middle, but I can't get nobody to be vice president." He asked me if I would be it. I said, "Well, in order to save the organization, if they can come up with one group, I'll try it." This is like what happened to Randolph in Detroit. We didn't have nothing but trouble with this group.

We got a group together and we tried to work together, raised quite a bit of money. We had a convention at McCormick Place. I served as vice president for one term. When we had the conference here; there came up a split over trying to reduce the dues from four dollars to two dollars. They had this fight from the beginning of this organization in '60 through to the conference we had herein '61.

We went to Pittsburgh the day before the conference. Our president, Tim Black, was invited to the executive board meeting with Bill Abner but he couldn't go. He wanted to send the financial secretary. Mrs. Jones said, "Look, we've got a vice president and anywhere the president can't go, the vice president is supposed to go
in his stead, so I make a motion that Brother Mooty go to replace Tim Black." The motion went forward so I got a chance to go with Bill.

Then Mrs. Jones said, "Well, why don't you let Lola Belle represent them, she's a vice president?" I didn't know yet what was going on but I knew there was something up with Lola Belle. She was dressed too lavish. She was able to go to too many places that I couldn't afford to go and I worked every day. She never missed a meeting. One more thing, she always wore dark glasses. Well, they wouldn't allow her to represent them at this board meeting. They voted that we both go. I don't know yet what she's doing, but the way she was dressed that morning was out of sight.

Bill and I got to the YMCA in Pittsburgh and caught old man Randolph sitting at the table all by hisself, so Bill got a fair shot at him and he started off telling Randolph that we just had to have Adam Clayton Powell here as principal speaker. "We just must have Adam Clayton Powell in Chicago. We can't go without him." This was the first real big set back that I saw Bill get.

Randolph said, "Well Brother Abner, I know that Powell is indebted to us and I know we've helped him do a lot of things. I realize that, but we have discussed this with Brother Powell and he has refused Chicago, so we are not going to let that stop our progress. I have talked to a young lad by the name of Farmer from CORE and I have talked to another chap in the NAACP, Robert Carter, and Ralph Helstein from Packing and Paul Zuber. And we have decided that we would build a program around them. I am going to suggest you form the program around three principal speakers instead of one and I think we can get
along." That hurt Bill to his heart because he had promised these people he was going to get into Pittsburgh, he was going to convince Randolph to get Powell and he was going to jet back there and they were going to have a meeting that evening and finalize their program.

When all the guys assembled they dismissed me from the room because I wasn't a president. Sister Holmes was there. She and Agnes Willis had flown into New York and spent the night talking to somebody -- I don't know who. But Sister Willis came in thirty minutes after Sister Holmes so people wouldn't realize they had been together. Randolph suggested to Brother Abner that he turn over his material to Sister Holmes because she is the vice president and she would be able to bring back everything. This killed Bill because he didn't want nothing to do with Lola Belle. Surely he didn't want Lola Belle to bring nothing from the executive board back here and she knew it, too. And I'm stuck in the middle of all this stuff, which I didn't have no business being stuck in at all.

After the meeting we went out for lunch and oldman Randolph was praising Lola Belle to the high heavens, "She's a dedicated person." We went to lunch at a big club in Pittsburgh where everybody goes to have a big social function or dinner. He kept praising her, "I'm going to treat her to dinner today, she's going to eat at my expense." She just sniggled and giggled and laughed and all that. This is why I know that he didn't know what was going on.
When we had our big meeting here in Chicago I wanted to take tape recordings of it. This is what I tried to do in this case just like I tried to do it in the Till case. I tried to have something to show that these things actually happened, but people couldn't see no parts of that. I finally got them to allow me to film them. When I said, "make some pictures," they don't know what I'm talkng about. They said, "Okay, Brother Mooty, you can make some pictures." What I got in mind and what they got in mind was two different things. I got in mind that when somebody important dies, overnight they throw a complete picture of his life on the screen. Everybody else that was famous and white, they been able to put their picture on the screen because they got it. Blacks don't have it. I wanted to be able to show what had happened, some parts of this organization. So the last week of the thing they said go ahead and take some pictures. My cousin knew a photographer that she used take lessons under and she told him to meet me, I didn't even know him. He met me at McCormick Place and I started him to filming. He had a silent film, you had to film this thing and then you had to narrate it. This is the only thing that has been filmed that gives any background of the Negro American Labor Council, but this was a pretty expensive deal. I think the man almost did it for nothing, it was an experiment for him. He was real proud of the opportunity to do this and at the minimum cost it was about $600.00. When I told them something about what it cost to film it they had a fit. They said, "We didn't authorize you to spend no money." I said, "How in the hell did you think I was going to film anything without any money? That's all right, it's worth it because
this will be a history of what happened." So I paid the guy for it.

At this convention they failed to reduce the dues. This was the objective of Bill's group. They were going to build a mass organization. They figured if they just charged two dollars dues they'd have three times as many people belonging to it as if they charged four dollars. Once they failed to do that, this structure that they had didn't work. They had a title, they had to disband the title. Bill had himself set up as an executive secretary. He said it didn't make any difference, he just called himself that. Well, there's a difference between a recording secretary and an executive secretary. So we had to get hold of Randolph to get this title straight. Then we had to get rid of the structure that he had. This antagonized him deeply and he was the key spokesman in Chicago for the convention.

At the next election they said, "We know our enemies, we're going to deal with them accordingly." So they did. Next convention was held in New York City. We had raised about $3,000.00 in the treasury. They elected all new delegates, all new people. They eliminated us who knew something about the labor movement, got all new people. Then they said, "We're going to take a position at this convention. We're going to reduce these dues to two dollars and we're going to make some other changes in this organization and we're going to vote in a bloc vote. Regardless of how many discussions, what disagreements we have in our caucusses, when we come out on that floor we're going to vote solid." That didn't give me no voice at all. I was involved in the thing, I was concerned about it. I thought this
should have been the organization that solved the black problems in all of these international unions but it wasn't. From the get-go it was destroyed because you had a split in it and it was just a matter of time.

We had that convention in New York. They voted that they were going to send delegates and they had two bus loads, all new delegates. We had raised money through memberships and through some concessions we had when the convention was held in Chicago. We had a little treasury. This money went to finance these delegates to the New York convention.

Well, I was going to the convention anyway. My wife and I went and we got there ahead of time. The committee had a reception for the delegates coming into the convention and this is the only time that the film I made of the Chicago convention has ever been shown in public.

During the convention we had a banquet at the Hotel Americana. This Hotel Americana was just opening up and this was the first Black group that had a convention there. I was glad I went to this banquet, too, because at this banquet Meany had to admit to Randolph that he was wrong in the position he took at the AFL-CIO convention in California. This was an answer to, "Who the hell are you to represent the Blacks?" This was his answer because the ballroom was packed.

Also at this convention Dr. Rosa Gragg, President of the National Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, was able to tell what a contribution she had made towards breaking down segregation and discrimination. She said that when the African countries began to
gain their independence the Black presidents began to come to this country. As presidents they were able to sleep in the White House. Anyway, there was a president from one of these countries came here and he toured from New York down to Washington. He didn't fly, he toured, and he got stopped in Virginia someplace because they wouldn't serve him. The news got back to Washington so they sent a motor escort all the way over to get him. Everybody got busy to get ready for this president and when he came they went into the dining room to serve him breakfast. And as black as he was, the Blacks who was serving was just spellbound. They didn't know what was happening. This was a big doing in Washington, she said. It went to the extent that President Kennedy had him review the guards. As they reviewed the guards this president asked, "Where are the Black guards?" Well, there weren't any and Kennedy raised a boat load of sand. "We got to get some Black guards out here, we can't be going on this way."

Now they have to get some Blacks to have dinner with this African president. They can't have a president coming over here and sitting down to the dinner and no Blacks at the table at all. Kennedy had to start to scour around to see what Blacks was up in the uppity recognized positions so they could get some of them. So she was invited to this dinner. She said after dinner was over the President and this Black president left the room so Mrs. Kennedy decided to have some talk with her and she took her around. Dr.Gragg has been involved in this struggle for years when Mrs.Kennedy didn't even know what it was about. She got a lot of things in her mind she remembered.

Way back in the forties I went to Washington to Frederick
Douglass's home. These Black women and Black organizations had fought and fought and scuffled and pleaded for money to renovate his home. It was left there but it had never been declared a national shrine. Frederick Douglass had married a white woman. She got a bill passed in Congress that that place would always be tax free. This is the only way it has survived these many years. Otherwise taxes would have eaten it up before then. But his house was sticking in Dr. Rosa Gragg's mind, so when Mrs. Kennedy was taking her through the White House where all these generals' pictures is on the wall and Mrs. Kennedy was explaining this and that, this was what was deep down in her mind. Finally she asked Mrs. Kennedy, "Among your rare collections, what chances would there be for you to place a replica or photograph of one of our great generals among yours?" The way she put it Mrs. Kennedy couldn't refuse.

This was the time, she said, that she was able to integrate the White House. They had to pay her something for coming there saving their prestige. And she said, "I would never have stopped at that. Eventually the president came back and he wanted to thank me for coming in and entertaining this foreign guest." When he got through she said, "I'm sure that you're a very busy man, but among the many bills that you have to sign that come across your desk, what chance would there be to make the home of Frederick Douglass a national shrine?" She wasn't so excited about being invited to this dinner that she didn't make him pay for her coming. The way she presented it to him he could hardly deny it.

Anyway this convention was held and it was the last big NALC
convention. There was other conventions but that was the last big one. By Ola Belle getting there ahead of time, notifying old man Randolph what was coming up about the dues, he was able to thwart it off. When it took off in the convention, the Chicago delegation was leading this dues reduction and Bill had spurred it up. He was the secretary so he was sitting way up on the rostrum with all the rest of the vice presidents and presidents. When it hit the floor old man Randolph was well aware of what was happening. So when the argument came up about the dues reduction he said, "We hope we'll be able to conduct this convention peacefully and quietly. Brother Abner, you go down and take care of your delegation and you see that they conduct themselves under the guidelines and procedures of this convention, so that we don't have to expel them from this convention." By him knowing exactly where the trouble was, who was the beginning of the trouble, he was able to thwart it.

They voted this dues structure down and all those delegates that was there on the zoom came back to Chicago. Chicago never was able to raise no more money because all of us had been voted out who had some prestige, like old Duke Hodges, who had been fighting for years and old man Daugherty. Duke Hodges had been fighting with the brick masons for years -- he was ousted. Old man Daugherty had been fighting the plumbers for years -- he was ousted. I don't think neither one of them went to the convention. All these people they had as members -- the thing just vanished. The Chicago chapter just went on down. I didn't see no more of them for a good while. When I did see them they said come on back and help us. By that time I had gotten
involved in the Ad Hoc Committee, which I'll tell you about later, and so that's how I went down with the NALC.

The NALC went along for a little while, very spasmodically, but after this convention was over, the time came when Ola Belle had to testify. It wasn't long after this convention before a hearing was held in Chicago by the House UnAmerican Activities Committee. There was some big testimony that had to happen here and she and all the underground people that had been working with the FB I had to testify on communist activities in Chicago. I don't know how all the details went. She testified and called names and there are public records of it.

The FBI only needs people till a certain time. After you have accomplished what they wanted you to do, they do you just like a person do a chew of tobacco -- spit it out. She didn't mind being kicked out from the FBI after doing her story. Now she'd go back to the Communist Party and they don't want no parts of her. She had named all of her activities, every meeting of everything that she had attended with the Communist Party or the NALC or anything else. She kept records of every move she made. It's all in a government report. Now the communists don't want no parts of her. She stunk to them because she was a stool pigeon to the FBI. Then she went back to try to make up with the NALC, When she went back to them, Randolph said, "I don't like a stool pigeon, but I hate a communist." By the time she got through the FBI didn't want her, the Communist Party didn't want her and Randolph wouldn't have her no way. Then she cried a bucket of tears.
What happened to the Negro American Labor Council? It was top heavy, it come from about the middle up. It didn't start from the ground. It was top heavy with staff men, international union representatives, what we call pie carders. From there up it went. These people was all gunning for top positions. In fact, I guess every one of them hoped that if old man Randolph would die the next day he would be the one would take over. It didn't ever get right down to the rank and file where they found out things they could do. These cats always do the same things that the rank and file don't take to too much.

When this thing popped open and a lot of people was exposed at the hearings and Lola Belle told who was who, I don't know how much damage she did to it. She did it some damage but they didn't blame the whole failure on what she did. It was proven out that all the people in the Negro American Labor Council didn't know what she was doing. I thought she was doing something, but I was convinced that Mr. Randolph didn't know what she was doing in 1961.
At the 1942 Steelworkers convention they elected district directors for the first time. Up until that time Phil Murray appointed every sub-district director and every staff man. You could count on one hand the Negroes that Murray appointed up to that time. Now Murray went before that 1942 convention to get authority to continue on this way. He setup the elective position of the district director, but still held the authority to appoint everything else, including all the people working under the district director.

The rank and file was shook up about this appointive business and they went into that convention with the idea of doing away with appointive positions. Murray knew it. John Doherty, who was the Chairman of the Constitution Committee, read Article IV, Sec. 7 from the proposed constitution, which said— "The International president shall have the authority to appoint, direct, suspend or remove such organizers, representatives and employees as he may deem necessary. He shall fix their compensation subject to the approval of the International Executive Board." [Convention. Proceedings, United Steelworkers of America, Cleveland, Ohio, May 19-22, 1942, p.2191]

When John Doherty read that, the motion was made to accept it and it was open for discussion.

The Convention minutes show Delegate Morley, from Local 1307 in McDonald, Ohio saying, "not that we think our President could
appoint anyone who was unworthy... but I do feel the only way we can get something a little more democratic is by defeating this resolution."

[Proceedings, pp. 220] Delegate Griffith from Local 1687 said he thought this question was so important that it should merit a roll call vote of the delegates. Delegate Strass forth from Local 2287 in Cleveland, Ohio spoke in opposition to the section, saying, "When I was affiliated with the SWOC I came from the American Federation of Labor. I joined this organization whole heartedly because I thought it would be an organization where we would have a little bit more to say than we did in the American Federation of Labor. I surely am surprised when I see this paragraph. Why in most of the A.F. of L. locals the business representatives are elected by the rank and file. We are laying the groundwork for a bureaucratic organization, Brothers, that is very serious." [Proceedings, p.221]

Now that's three delegates objecting right in succession and those were not Negroes; those were white representatives, one right behind the other. When these three delegates hit the floor John Doherty had to comment at length in support of Murray's position. This is where the division of black and white was made. Up till now black and white was working together. They had things in common. A black and white handshake was the insignia for the Steelworkers Organizing Committee, but now they don't need us no more.

One thing they didn't do, they didn't notify the white staff men what they were fixing to do. When John Doherty sat down, Delegate McHugh from Local 1305 in Pittsburgh said that in his opinion; "the section under discussion provides more or less for a dictatorship and
Murray couldn't stand that, he hit the floor:

"Might the chair try to enlighten the convention as to what the intent of this session is. You're changing from an organization committee. You will be some six years in existence from the 17th day of June next month. The work of the past years has been a work of organizing. My personal judgement is that your situations are not sufficiently well stabilized to enable you to move into an election of all your representatives for this organization...I would not want to assume the hazards incident to directing the affairs of this mighty organization with a provision incorporated in the constitution requiring the election of all my field representatives under these circumstances. In reading this constitution you will discover that it is not the President who will be the boss. The real boss of this organization between conventions will be your International Executive Board...I am now addressing myself to a few of the delegates who are anxious to have their organizers elected. I do not think, as good as your intentions may be, that you should assume the hazard of placing your Union in jeopardy. I tell you quite frankly and candidly that's just what you would do if you threw this convention into a state of confusion and you proceeded to attempt the election of organizers in this convention. I don't know when it would end. You would have political caucuses going on in this convention from now until Christmas. It runs to this: That the labor union and its membership either have confidence in their elected officers or they do not have confidence in them, and if they don't have confidence in them they should not elect them."  

There was a lot more discussion pro and con and then Delegate McKay from McKeesport said that he was speaking as a former organizer and he had a resolution submitted by his local union which proposed "that the Steelworkers, through their district conventions, have the right to elect district officers with full authority to administer the
affairs of each district."  [Proceedings, p. 228]  See, there was a lot of fighting against this appointive business.

Then Delegate DeLurie jumps up. He now has a job with the State of Illinois but he was the first president of Local 1478. He jumped up and said he was attending his first convention and he was disappointed in the way the delegates were acting. He said, "I've seen a lot of you fellows waving banners, talking about your confidence in Mr. Murray. Well, where is it? Forget about your political affiliations. Don't you know we are at war and if you are going to create another war we'll have eternal struggle. We're never going to get anywhere."  [Proceedings, p228]

Now the people wasn't talking about Murray. They was talking about authorizing authority in a president. But DeLurie wants to talk about Mr. Murray and the confidence people had in Mr. Murray. Even after that there was more opposition. Delegate Charles Federman from Local 2130 asked, "Does the President of the United States appoint his own Congressmen?...The locals should elect their own organizers. Congressmen are not appointed; they're elected."  [Proceedings, p.230]

Finally Van Bittner hit the floor and said,

"I desire to discuss the question briefly at this time. I think the delegates here will agree with me when I-say that we have had some experience in organizing work in the Steelworkers Organizing Committee as well as the labor movement in general. When we talk about democracy, my friends, we must talk about democracy as it affects the welfare of the united Steelworkers of America. You know none of us can live without air, but when we get too much air we get a cyclone and it becomes destructive. We can't live without water, but too
much water makes a flood which again is destructive...if you are going to support Philip Murray, if you are going to appreciate the work he has done for the Steel Workers of America, their wives and little children, then you will accept his advice and adopt this report of your Constitution Committee." [Proceedings, pp.232,233]

Now old Van Bittner was organizing in the mineworkers union for years and Murray did that, too. That union was always controlled from the top. This is where I can never forgive them. He went on and on and they just talked the delegates to death. The guys ran out of wind. When Murray shot his big gun, Vann Bittner shot his big gun, Clint Golden shot his -- they shot bull all the way. Now the delegates are just about beat down. They took a standing vote and Murray won.

If you read these proceedings you can see where Murray and Vann Bittner and all of them stopped talking about "the president" and talked about Murray instead. They sold the people Murray. Up to that time Murray had not appointed one Black district director and he had appointed very few Black organizers. After they adopted this resolution giving him that authority he still didn't appoint any Blacks.

At that convention the biggest mouth that we had there from this district was Joe Cook, who was President of Local 1029. All of us thought a lot of his elaborate way of expressing himself and we thought maybe Mr. Murray would put Cook on the staff. John Doherty thought different. Boyd Wilson had an eloquent way of addressing himself and he had worked with John Doherty down in the St. Louis area, so John
Doherty's recommendation was Boyd Wilson. They put a few other Blacks on the staff. There was a Jimmy Jones out of Philadelphia, Jim Hart out of Cleveland and eventually they took Sam Stokes. These was the key Black guys throughout the country. Then there was Jim Throop from St. Louis and George Kimbley from here. Every time they was organizing some Blacks somewhere George Kimbley had to be in front on the reception committee so Blacks would think they was doing pretty well.

There was a discussion about discrimination at this first convention. A delegate from Local 1798 talked about the fact that in issuing the call for the convention, arrangements had been made for colored delegates to be quartered in hotels apart from the white delegates. Secretary McDonald said that the delegates misunderstood the instructions, that there were hotels in Cleveland which catered to colored people and many of the colored delegates wanted to be in those hotels and that was the reason the information was sent out in the instructions accompanying the call to the convention.

When this thing began to get pretty hot they presented somebody else as a speaker. Mr. Murray interrupted the regular order of the convention at that time and presented Mr. Joe Curran to the convention. This throws you off. You don't get down deep into these things when you keep interrupting the discussion.

The Steelworkers Constitution was set up to provide that there would be no discrimination regardless of race, creed, color or national origins or anything else. The Resolutions Committee passed a resolution giving the president the authority to enforce that.
Vann Bittner was the chairman, Charles Miller was the secretary and I.W. Abel was one of the members of that Resolutions Committee. When I complained to them later, I talked to them about the intent and purposes of the United Steelworkers of America.

We passed Resolution No. 5 on Racial Discrimination which said, "It has always been the policy and the practice of the CIO and the SWOC to fight for equal treatment for all workers regardless of race, creed or color," and it went on to talk about how we were fighting racism in the war against the Nazis and weren't going to have it at home. This resolution was presented by several of our local unions, including Local 65 from Chicago and Local 1422. [See Appendix A for complete reading of Resolution 5] But all the resolutions from various locals that dealt with a particular subject was jelled down into one. When this resolution come up the response was good. Vann Bittner called it "an all-out declaration without any qualification whatsoever. We are all God's human beings and we should all be treated as God's human beings."

Joe Cook president of Local 1029, endorsed the resolution but warned the union of the dangers of not living up to it. The minutes quotes him as saying,

"The resolution speaks for itself but I feel that I want to say how much I appreciate the letters embodied in the resolution. So far as racial discrimination is concerned, in my local it is scarcely noticed, but in the plant where I work there are only 9 Negroes, 8 of whom are in the union, 5 of whom are holding office. I have been president since 1937 without any opposition.

"In the Chicago District and throughout some of the midwestern sections recently there
have been some forms of organization showing up here and yonder among Negroes. One was the Progressive Negro Steelworkers of America which held its meeting last month in Chicago. They say the Steelworkers Committee has written on paper "that there shall be no discrimination against race, creed or color and they pointed back all the way to 1860 at the time of the Civil War and what happened after that war and said that it was soon forgotten. They had high respect for Mr. Murray but they said that Mr. Murray will not live always and he will be hampered with Ku Kluxers and Black Legion and the whole CIO will turn against us as things happened at the time of the Civil War." [Proceedings, p.139]

You see a lot of Blacks wanted less generalities and something more specific in the way of equality. You can't just rely on good intentions because one leader might have them and another might not. Talk is easy, it's what people do that counts!

They never would put Joe Cook, our favorite black leader in this area, on the staff but they did put Boyd Wilson on as the president's personal representative. He tried the best he could to help Blacks but his hands was tied most of the time. Boyd never had a particular job to do. Whatever he did, nobody questioned it. He always had the rank and file at heart, just sitting there in his office, nobody telling him what to do. He asked the president what did he want him to do. All they wanted was to keep him there so the Blacks could see him there. I corresponded with him off and on throughout the years and I have his letters telling about lots of different problems he ran into.

I wasn't at the 1944 convention but there- was three resolutions on discrimination that year. One was an anti-poll tax resolution; one was for FEPC and against the Klan; and one was
against discrimination in the union, by the companies and by the armed forces. Resolution 9 was the last one and it was the only one that had any possibilities for improving life for Black steel workers.* When they discussed that resolution Delegate Sallie from Local 1557 tried to tell them they needed to clean their own house and what was happening to Black workers in the mill. He said,

"Unless this resolution is carried back home, not by word and not by deed, but physically, it is not going to be worth the paper it is written on.

"There has been a seniority clause in our contract since its inception back in 1937, but that seniority section was an empty clause so far as the Negro worker was concerned. He would move so far, then stop. Other workers would come in and detour around him...Whenever a Negro worker was placed on a job, especially when it upgraded him, the other boys decided they wanted to go out on strike. What for? To stop a fellow member from progressing...

"In the course of two years we had eighteen cases that went into the fourth step dealing with seniority, and each one of these cases was turned back -- "no ability" -- in spite of the fact that some of the men has as much as twenty-five years, had worked at the job effectively seventeen or eighteen years,...Within the last year we have been able to advance exactly one man to the top in a particular department." [Proceedings of the Second Constitutional Convention of the United Steelworkers of America, Cleveland, Ohio, May 9-13, 1944, pp. 188-190]

In 1946 at the Constitutional Convention in Atlantic City the question was raised again about promoting Blacks on the international staff. Murray promised to call a nation wide conference of Negro steelworkers to discuss the problem. We held several meetings about it here in Chicago with Boyd Wilson and Carl Davis from Pittsburgh and Alex Fuller from Detroit. But Murray never called that meeting.
The only time that we got Murray in a meeting was when we was in Boston in 1948. He didn't call a meeting to discuss nothing with us until the convention and then they were really set for me. They had one of the guys from Texas there to jump up and object that he didn't want no part of a Jim Crow meeting and that broke it up.

Out of all the Blacks, Boyd Wilson was the only one man to sit beside me in 1948 to talk about a Civil Rights program. When I introduced Resolution 31 at the convention he knew all about it ahead of time. He's the only person that ever took any real interest in Resolution 31 besides me. When I called for this resolution to come to the floor you could almost count the people in that hall because they had all gone. [See Appendix D for full text of Resolution 31.]

Resolution 18, which was passed at the '48 convention, established a Civil Rights Committee composed of district, directors to work in the field of legislation, public agencies, etc. [For complete text of Resolution 18 see Appendix C] Resolution 31 was my effort to make them look at themselves — at us — at our own union in considering discrimination, not just point the finger — in other directions. Resolution 31 would have set up machinery to deal with questions of discrimination within our union.

When that resolution come up there was only two men at the microphone, me and the guard. I didn't have no trouble getting recognized by Murray. Murray told me they had already established a Civil Rights Committee that he thought would deal with the problem I was referring to. But all during Boyd's period from 1948 uptill 1964 Boyd continuously tried to point out the difference between
Resolution 18 and Resolution 31. He pointed out that Resolution 18 did not deal with the same subject; it dealt with the subject of outside agencies and outside discrimination. Resolution 31 dealt with the implementation of a civil rights operation within the union.

It would have made sense to me to make Boyd Wilson the head of the union's Civil Rights program—but they didn't. Instead they kept him busy running around the country appearing at NAACP banquets and FEPC conferences. The Shane brothers, two white men, was put up to run that committee, Tom and Frank Shane. Tom was Chairman of the committee. He was District Director over Detroit and part of Michigan and Ohio. Neither one of them had a single Negro on their payroll anywhere. Boyd Wilson wrote me once that it seemed strange to him how the Auto Workers Union could find plenty of qualified Negroes both for their staff and the offices and the Steelworkers couldn't find none. Things like this stick in a man's craw. Along about 1952 I think they finally did put a Mexican on the International staff out of California.

Now the whole time that Shane was the Chairman of the Civil Rights Department he just did whatever he wanted. As far as Boyd's job was concerned, his job was never spelled out, not even when McDonald was elected president in 1952. He wrote to McDonald and asked him to define his job cause he began to deal with Civil Rights problems and he began to run into Frank Shane, who was Secretary of the Civil Rights Committee, Boyd didn't have no protection because his job wasn't spelled out, what he was supposed to do. He never got an answer to that, so whatever he wanted to get involved in, wherever he
wanted to go, he did. He had an office down on the lower floor there and he stayed there for twenty years. He was a decent guy, intelligent, an elaborate speaker. But what was he supposed to do?

It got to the point where we would have to request his presence, through the district director because when he came in here he and I began to have a lot of talk and Joe German, our district director, didn't like that. A lot of times he'd go in and talk to the Blacks on their problems and the district directors would say he was stirring up trouble. They didn't want that so they cut some of that out. He wasn't stirring up trouble, he was talking about what was wrong.

Boyd helped me write this Resolution 31 calling for the establishment of the Civil Rights Department in the union. When I got to that convention in 1948 I never was so hurt in my life. I've been hurt but never that bad by Blacks. When I brought that resolution there, before I got to that convention they had me painted as a red, and Blacks walked around me like I had a skunk in my pocket. Boyd had told me, "You won't find many people like you, who are aggressive, who are willing to put their jobs or their lives at stake," When I went to that convention with that resolution they kept it till the last day of the convention.

There was a guy named Nick Migas, I think, out of Local 1010. He had put out some kind of leaflet that evening before hand. He had blamed Murray for being a dictator and a lot of stuff and had gone to the press. That morning Murray jumped on Migas and he told him, "Come to the microphone, I want you out in the middle of the floor," Migas came up there and he talked to Migas like he was a convict. Migas was
branded as a communist and everybody wanted to get their hands on him. Murray said, "I don't want anybody to touch him." Then he shot Migas down like a dog standing out in the middle of that floor. Finally he told them to open that door. "I don't want anybody to put their hands on him." When Migas got to that door, then they put their hands on him and they beat him up all the way across the street.

And that morning there wasn't but one Black would even sit beside me. I'd been waiting all through the convention for that resolution to come. It didn't show up till Friday morning: Boyd had told me what to expect. He said, "You can't win, there's no way for you to win. I can tell you exactly how the cards are stacked. But you go to the mic and you ask them to read the resolution to the convention. They've got to read it."

Now every resolution that ever hit the floor, everybody wanted to be recorded in the minutes. Everybody wanted it in the minutes that he said something about something and the folks back home didn't pay his way down there for nothing. So they're around the microphone like gnats around Fido. Murray got to pick out who he wanted to talk. They learned the art of doing that. As particular subjects come up he would tell a district director, "You go to a mic and I'll recognize you because I want your opinion." The membership don't know what's going on. The guards got the mic and they pick the people Murray wants to recognize. Joe Germano wouldn't state his name as district director; he would address himself as delegate from local so and so and this is the way that went.

Finally this resolution comes up. The resolution committee
reads now that the resolutions have all been acted on. Boyd tells me, "You go to the microphone right now." I go down there and I'm standing at the mic and there's nobody there but me -- nobody! I said, "What about the resolution on Civil Rights?" And he said, "The Resolutions Committee recommends that all resolutions that were not acted upon be referred to the executive board for their disposition." Boyd had told me when they do that, then you ask that your resolution be read to the convention. I said, "Mr. Chairman, I'm Rayfield Mooty from Local 1422 and I presented a resolution on Civil Rights and I would like for my resolution to be read so that the delegates here will understand what it contains." So they had to read the resolution.

Murray took the floor and said, "Brother Mooty, for your information we have already appointed a Civil Rights Committee yesterday afternoon and I'm sure that this will deal with some of the problems that you had in mind. I promised the Negro delegates in at the founding convention that I was going to hold a meeting with them at some future date to discuss their problems and this afternoon we're going to meet. I want you to know that there are more Negroes at this convention than have ever been assembled at any convention in Boston."

That meeting was to be held at two o'clock. Now with me being already branded as a trouble maker, this meeting was held. At this meeting Vann Bittner had his pets among the Blacks. They had them keyed up that this is the guy you all need to attack. They yakked around and they got through shaking hands and taking pictures. Finally Murray called the meeting together. Now this is Friday evening and the train leaves there at 3:45. You have to leave then in
order to go to work Sunday night on the midnight shift. After all the 
handshaking Murray got up and said, "I promised the Negro delegates 
that we were going to have a meeting and I know you have a problem. You 
don't have to tell me what it is, I already know. I know what you want, 
I know what you need. You want more Negroes on the payroll of the 
United Steelworkers of America. I already know that. Not only I 
know that, I know you're entitled to have more. I also know whose 
responsibility it is to do that, it's my responsibility, and I know, why 
it hasn't been done. I'm here to report to you that it hasn't been 
done because, among them any other duties that I have had to perform, I 
have let that to somebody else to do and they haven't done it. But I 
will assure you that this will be done because I am going to take the 
responsibility of doing that part of my duties. I can assure you 
there will be more Negroes on the payroll."

Then he said, "Now you must have some spokesman and I know that 
you want to have something to say on the subject." I jumped up to 
thank him for the opportunity of expressing ourselves and said that we 
had Boyd Wilson. Naturally I wanted to put some honor on Boyd Wilson. 
And man, just about that time they jumped on me! This guy said, "Mr. 
Murray, I want you to know I come all the way from Alabama and I didn't 
come up here to sit in no Jim Crow meeting." Another cat jumped up, 
"Mr. Murray, he don't represent me. I don't know nothing about him. 
I never heard tell of him before. Mr. Murray you already appointed 
one." Those Negroes shot me full of holes and that's the way the 
meeting broke up. I'm telling you I was hurt, I was hurt, I was hurt! The meeting broke up in chaos.
Well, a lot of white guys didn't really get a fair shake in the union either. Harry Harper was one of them. At that 1942 convention they not only gave Murray the right to appoint everything except the district director, people also voted to keep the directors he had already appointed before that. In our district that was Joe Germano. Harper was the only man who could have beat Joe. Harper was honest, he was a hard worker. I don't know why he wouldn't run.

In 1942 my wife was the only Black woman delegate at that first convention held in Cleveland. They went down there to support Harper and then Harper didn't run. If you read McDonald's story, Union Man, he said that somebody was challenging Joe Germano for District Director that had a communist background and had lost an eye in the Republic Steel strike. McDonald met with John Doherty and Vann Bittner and they were maneuvering around among the delegates, feeling out the delegates ready to support Joe. John Doherty said he was confident they had everything well in hand. Later when Joe and McDonald had their fight and Joe broke loose from McDonald and supported Abel for international president; McDonald came out with these kind of statements, talking about "all the things I have done for Joe" and how Joe turned on him. Well, this was what he did for Joe. He helped keep him district director when he wasn't really that popular with the rank and file steelworkers in his district.

Lots of people here on the West side of Chicago knew Harper because Harper worked here and he was always sympathetic and cooperative. He was a man that we all loved. But they overworked him, they worked him too hard. They didn't give him enough help and
that's why he finally quit. Harper backed down in 1942 at the first convention when the international union was formed. Murray's aid that at that time he had appointed all the district directors and he had confidence in them and he would like for it to remain as it was. Harper could have beat Joe if he had run against him at that time. Later when Joe got his machine in place nobody could have beat him. But Joe always seemed to feel Harper was a threat to him. You know Harper was the guy who lost an eye in that 1937 strike at Republic Steel, the one they call the Memorial Day Massacre.

Along in 1946 I got this letter telling us to come to a meeting, that all the staff members, Harry Harper, Oakley Mills, Jesse Gonzales and Tony Coldrake, would be there. Harper had complained that he was overworked and that he couldn't get no help. Germano knew this would drive him out. Joe was a smart politician, whether you liked him personally or not. If he had any opposition he knew how to drive them out. He put this kind of weight down on Harper. So Harper sent all the local unions that he was representing a letter to come to a meeting at crane's Hall on Archer Avenue. At that meeting he made an announcement that he and three other staff men was quitting. Four people was going to quit, Harper, Gonzales, Coldrake and Mills.

When we come to the meeting that night, Harper told how they were putting so much pressure on him that he couldn't work. He was over worked, he was understaffed. They didn't give him no more people to work and organization was expanding beyond anything they imagined when they set out to organize. He said they not only had to organize, they had to service locals, arbitrate, negotiate contracts. All the
work was piling up and they wouldn't give him no more help. Then he said, "Much as I love the union I can't endure it anymore. I want to show my appreciation to you people who have worked with me for so many years. That's why I notified you to come here, so that you would know what happened. I just can't do it alone."

Well, now what were we supposed to do? There was a young white fellow, Marvin Tauerline from Amatroft Trust, and Lucius Love from Local 1422. We elected them to a committee that night to go to Pittsburgh and see Murray about what was happening back in District 31. Murray was in Washington and they couldn't see him. The secretary got Murray on the phone. They told Murray that they were concerned about Harry Harper. "Harper has been with us a number of years. He's in trouble and we want to know, Mr. Murray, can you come out and investigate what's happening between him and Joe." They told him they were selected by a group of local union people to ask him to investigate. So Murray sent Dave McDonald to Chicago.

Dave McDonald called a meeting with all the locals in our sub-district. He said they were going to make a report to us that night. We met at the Amalgamated Hall on Ashland Avenue. Then McDonald got up and said, "I don't know about Harry Harper. Joseph Germano says there's no discussion between he and Harry Harper, Harper just quit the union, So who in the hell is Harry Harper? This union is bigger than Harry Harper., We don't have time to be wasting with one man. No one man is bigger than this International Union of Steelworkers."

Well, I had had my doubts about the steelworkers union top leadership for a longtime, especially when they talk out of one side
of their mouth about one thing and then do another, and especially the way it affects the guy on the lower part of the to tempole. I sat there and finally when McDonald got through, I asked for the floor. I said, "I don't know what happened between Harper and Joe, but we've slept on these picket lines with Harper. Harper lost his eye at Republic Steel. He's been a fighter in this district ever since I knew him and Harper is no quitter. Mr. Murray sent you here to hear Harper's case and you stand up here talking about you're going back tomorrow, you're not even going to hear Harper's story. You say you called him this evening and he didn't come. Well, may be Harper won't come talk to you but we are representing Harper. It won't kill you to stay one more day. Let this committee go and try to bring Harper to your office. You ought to show that much courtesy so long as you're here representing Mr.Murray. May be Harper has got pride, but one more day won't kill you. If he refuses to come then you can leave. You'll be in discharge of your duty."

He agreed to stay one more day and the committee agreed that they would go try to bring Harper to sit, down and talk with them, but Harper didn't come. He told them, "The union is more important than I am, I don't think I am more important than the union. My problems aren't worth' going into, let it drop like it is. I've made my statement and I'll get by." He knew that they weren't ever going to cooperate with him and the union members would just suffer.

At that meeting Oakley Mills jumped up, "Hold it, hold it! All the locals that I represent, all will be serviced. But Oakley Mills couldn't come out of that office. They didn't allow him to come
out to service local unions. He stayed in that office I don't know how many years. They kept him on the payroll and they stuck him out in South Chicago and various places but not where he could get out and service locals. They kept him boxed up for years. Tony Coldrake left, I never heard of him again. Jesse Gonzalez tried to get a job back in the mill. Everywhere he'd land he would only work for a week and then the company would fire him. They'd blackballed him altogether.

It was a longtime before I saw Harper again. He went to work under some ward committeeman or alderman. He got a job in the recorder's office in City Hall. When Harper didn't run the first time, then it was too late once Joe got his machine set up. But I couldn't tell my story without mentioning Harper. I knew the part he played, I knew—his value to the union.

To carry the story on a little further about how the International Union treated Blacks, I have to go back to the Shane brothers. Tom Shane was Director of District 29 in Detroit for about twenty years and he was named Chairman of the International Committee on Civil Rights. His brother, Frank, was secretary of the committee and he actually did all the work, as much as was done.

In 1963 when the Civil Rights Movement marched in Washington, D.C., McDonald sent out a letter to all the locals. He didn't know the Civil Rights Movement was going to be as strong as it was. McDonald's letter said that the union was endorsing the march, but any one who went would have to procure his own leave of absence and couldn't say it was for union business. Then he would have to pay his own way, there would
be no union funds spent on this march on Washington.

We took up quite a bit of money in my plant. I went to everybody that I had ever spent any money with and they responded. The man I bought my car from gave me a check for $100. We raised the money and we took a lot of people. One of them was a young fellow named Carlos Nelson. I think we had him on the Civil Rights Committee in our union. I helped him to pay half of his wife's fare so that we'd have a large delegation. I raised about five or six hundred dollars over my fare and gave it to them.

When he got there he was amazed at how well represented some unions were and how little you saw of steelworkers. We wrote McDonald a letter and asked McDonald why was it there was no steelworkers contingent in the march on Washington. McDonald handed it to Frank Shane and Frank Shane answered Carlos, saying, "I regret you have been incorrectly informed regarding the manner in which the United Steelworkers of America participated in the march on August 28. Hundreds of steelworkers from all parts of the country took part in the march and if you will refer to the October issue of Steel Labor you will find pictures and printed accounts of the extent to which this participation was carried out. I hope that in the future you will ascertain the facts before taking the position you took in your letter. In closing let me say that if all unions had participated to the same degree as United Steelworkers of America it would have been even more of a success." [Francis Shane to Carlos Nelson, Sept. 24, 1963]

Carlos brought me the letter and asked me to answer it for him.
I wrote to Frank and reminded him how we tried in the '48 convention to establish a Civil Rights Committee and that had led to the establishment of the committee he worked for. I reminded him that it never functioned the way we wanted it to, that it operated for years with minorities on it. Then I told him how disappointing it was to bring in a new young Black union officer, like Carlos, and have to raise all the money ourselves to go to Washington with no help from our union, and then to see only one steelworkers banner in that whole parade while other unions had hundreds. I said, referring to Director Younglove of District 29, "He not only defied the letter from Mr. McDonald, if he got one, but he raised the banner of the United Steelworkers of America in this struggle for freedom, and identified himself along with his staff men and local union men. Where was the banner of the United Steelworkers Civil Rights Committee?" I said, "Since there are thirty eight districts in the United Steelworkers of America in the United States and one in Canada, when you could only mention three districts participating in the march it gives us something else to think about. When we see the United Steelworkers of America banner in a parade where 230,000 people are displaying thousands of banners, flags, pennants, hats, lapel buttons and signs of all descriptions, and when we see other unions such as the UAW, the ILGWU and others marching in wave after wave like a regiment of soldiers from all over the country, identifying their state and their locations, and we see only one steelworkers banner, this causes us to form an opinion. But when you try to cloud these issues and tell Mr. Nelson in so many words that he doesn't know what he's talking about,
then you force us to reach a conclusion... I hope in the future, you will gather a few facts before you try to discipline Mr. Nelson or any other member for taking issue on this subject."  [Rayfield Mooty to Francis Shane, Nov. 4, 1963]

These are the kind of things that happened in the background that led Blacks finally to form an Adhoc Committee to try to change our own union. I'm going to talk about that next. It came after a whole lot of things had happened and it didn't take nothing to get it started, it just sprang up spontaneously.
CHAPTER 11

BLACKS TALK BACK THE AD HOC COMMITTEE

The Ad Hoc Committee was just a spontaneous movement. You see, when the unions came in, these old union leaders like Vann Bittner and Murray knew what had happened to Blacks prior to the unions coming into operation. They knew how Negroes were transported up North and used as strikebreakers. This was the only way Blacks could work. It wasn't that they wanted to break strikes. If you read the history of the labor movement this was the only time Blacks could work because whites had them barred from the craft unions. So, the CIO organizers said we're going to form an organization and we're going to make it clear that we're going to take in Blacks. The only way they could form a union was to say that, because there was enough people left out by the craft unions to form an industrial union.

The idea of no discrimination excited a lot of Blacks, including me, so they got the union organized and they took us in. They only really took us on board until they got it going. In 1942 the whole ship changed. During the organizing period Mr. Murray appointed all district directors, all sub-district directors and all staff men. The staff men at that time were crying about being elected. Murray said, "Let me do the appointing and I will take care of things." He took care, of the situation by not appointing no Blacks.

Blacks had been watching that over the years and in 1948 they
bunch of people together and you have a lot of people who know how to talk but not too many know how to write. So we started writing up a program -- what should be our objectives.

Aaron Jackson and I, we set up office all night trying to get suggestions jelled down as small as we could so we'd have a smaller program to present. By the next morning we had it down to this three point program: 1) Black representation on the executive board. 2) All fourteen departments should be integrated, and 3) The Civil Rights Department should be reorganized. We went to the printer that morning at eight o'clock and got it printed and distributed among the delegates.

Then we got a small committee: Aaron Jackson, myself, Tom Johnson from Birmingham and Hugh Henderson from Youngstown, and we attempted to get a meeting with McDonald before the convention was over. He said, "I haven't 'got much time, boys. I've got a news conference." We talked to him maybe about five minutes and that was that.

Now the word is out that Abel is fixing to run against McDonald for president. We decided we'd have, our first meeting in Detroit and Abel announced his candidacy. When we got to Detroit, District Director Chuck Young love had already had a meeting with all the Blacks in Detroit ahead of time and they had already made up their mind that they was going to endorse Abel. We had a big meeting, I don't know how many of us went. Joe Germano, the director of our district, got Lucius Love out of bed to go because he wanted to know what happened. Lucius was sick but Joe wanted to know how Blacks feel about Abel and
how did they feel about McDonald. He's going for Abel.

When they got on the floor that afternoon to start the discussion, Alex jumps up and says, "Mr. Chairman, we said this morning we was going to make an endorsement and I want to make a motion that we endorse I. W. Abel, Burke and Malony, the team." Somebody seconded the motion and, the discussion was on who was better Abel or McDonald? One was for Abel and the other one was for McDonald and finally somebody called for the question.

I said, "Hold it, hold it, I haven't had a chance to express myself yet. Nobody's going to vote on this thing until I have my say. I drove all the way over here last night and I'm going to have my say before you close this debate. I've been in this union a longtime and I've seen many a thing happen but I want to make myself very clear so nobody will misunderstand me. As, far as I'm concerned they're all dogs of the same breed. There's no difference in McDonald and Abel. They've all been sleeping in the same bed, eating in the same restaurant, riding on the same train. They've been holding conventions and sessions all together up until now. Every time McDonald came to a meeting it took Abel thirty minutes to introduce him. Every time Abel came it took McDonald thirty minutes to introduce him. Do you mean to tell me now you're going to sit up here and endorse either one of them without getting a commitment from either one of them? These people endorse congressmen, senators, mayors of cities. They support them but they don't endorse nobody until they get a goddam commitment from him. You mean to tell me you're going to give Abel 150,000 to 200,000 votes without even
getting a commitment?"

They said they hadn't thought about it. Then they said they'd meet with him and get a commitment and they included me on the committee. Well, we met wth Abel, Burke and Maloney. We tried to meet with McDonald but we couldn't meet with him. We got hold of Burke and Maloney. This looked like a business deal so they said they'd meet with us any time, any place we said. We agreed on a motel in Indianapolis, Indiana. We had a good delegation from Birmingham, Youngstown, Detroit, New York, Duquesne and Chicago and we met with them.

We had a good conference. We sat on a studio couch and Abel wasn't too big to sit down and talk with us on that couch. He was receptive, very receptive. I remember Joe Malony saying when the election was over he wanted to be Chairman of the Civil Rights Committee. "And I can assure you that the director will have a voice on the executive board. The other point will have to take a constitutional change for them to have a representative on that board." After the meeting was over we all sized up the conference and thought it was pretty good. We still wanted to meet with McDonald, too, so we went to Pittsburgh. McDonald still didn't have time to talk. Finally we said the hell with McDonald!

Anyway, this is how Ad hoc got started, spontaneous, because. people was sick and tired. (The original name of the group was Negro Steel workers Leadership Committee, but they referred to themselves so often as an ad hoc committee that the original name fell out of use.) They decided they were men, not boys. They still hadn't realized
where they got left off. They got left off way back in 1942. Then when they got the dues check-off, hell, union leaders didn't need nobody after that. If they had to come to the plant and beg for money like they did when they used to collect dues a dollar a whop it would be a different union. Then they had to come to a meeting once in awhile and explain what was going on.

Now their problem is how to conquer the Ad hoc Committee. Right away they promoted Alex Fuller. Alex Fuller had been Vice President of the Wayne County Council for years. He came out of Local 1299, the same local that Chuck Younglove came out of. Then they got to promote Tommie Turner to the opening in the Wayne County Council. This got Tommie Turner off of Ad hoc. They moved Aaron Jackson off of Ad hoc by making him a staff man. Each one left Ad hoc when they got promoted, just walked away and never looked back. We had to call and call them to even draw their attention. Aaron Jackson stayed on a little while. He still realized how important it was. He was the first Black sub-district director in District 29.

Still, Ad hoc kept gathering members. I believe after Aaron Jackson left as secretary, Hugh Henderson became chairman. Stanford Givhon had an investment in the company he worked for. When an opening on the executive board came he accepted it, so he left. W.A. Davis didn't get nothing, but it was just too much running around for him, all the way from New York all over the country. After that I became secretary treasurer.

All this was done in 1965. By that time we were really moving. They moved Curtis Strong outright away. We Had a meeting in
Detroit when Hugh Henderson left us. They had a place for Hugh Henderson on the staff in Milwaukee. He came out of Youngstown where he was chairman but they sent him to Milwaukee. Norris Green was secretary, so they put him on the Auditor's Committee. This was the first time they ever had a Black on the Auditor's Committee. That got him out of Detroit. Oliver Montgomery moved up and was real active in Ad hoc out of Youngstown. They moved these guys in Detroit and that left it almost dead in Detroit. They moved Curtis Strong up from Gary to the International Civil Rights Committee and Jonathan Comer come in. Jonathan Comer was one of the strongest men we had but in '69 he moved out. He got the same job that Curtis has. Alex Fuller's got two staff men, both out of District 31.

When the Ad hoc was formed Curtis Strong was one of the founders of it. He and his wife had been big in the NAACP in Gary. As this committee jumped off making such a strong attack, Germano knew, like every other district director, that some Blacks had to be promoted. He would have liked to have gotten Curtis out of the Gary area altogether. When they talked about making a Black the head of the Civil Rights Department, Germano felt this was an opportunity to get rid of Curtis. But he didn't make it, because Chuck Younglove already had Alex Fuller in his mind. Fuller had been Vice President of the Wayne County Council, which gave him some administrative knowledge. Fuller was ahead of Curtis. So then Joe thought if he couldn't get Curtis the top job, he'd at least get him on the international staff. That would get him out of the district because he'd been a challenge to Joe. Curtis has always been aggressive.
This is what I would consider is how he got promoted.

We tried to meet with Abel every chance. German was I identified with the Abel campaign and I made it very clear that Joe and I had been at odds many years but this was one thing that we agreed on. We supported Abel. We supported him but we didn't think much of the literature he was putting out. We wrote up our own literature to appeal to, Black steelworkers, based on our conversations with him and our Ad hoc program. We got it approved by Germano and they added the pictures to it and that literature went out all over the country. I remember Abel and Burke and Malony was having a meeting out in Gary and the snow was so high I couldn't even drive. I had to take the train out there. I had worked all day getting this literature out and I walked from the train station to the union hall in Gary, with snow up to my knees, to take the literature out there. I worked like hell for Abel's election!

When Gloria Llorenti came into Ad hoc and got active, she really got on Carcella, her district director in Philadelphia. She breathed down his neck. Walter Reeder had been a staff man out there and he had seniority on that staff. Carcella had two openings he wanted to fill and Gloria was breathing down his neck so hard. She thought that because Walter had the seniority and the ability he should move up. Carcella came to Walter and had a good talk with him and told him that he had ideas. He had gotten permission to build a third sub-district office and he wanted Walter to hold off until he got these white boys set. They didn't know about this other office. Once they got their two jobs they would be satisfied and then he'd take
care of Walter. So he built a third sub-district in his district. He
told Walter to go over and locate it and lay it out just like he wanted
it. When we had our conference here in 1969 Walter didn't come
because he was laying out his sub-district office. I believe he was
about the third Black sub-district director.

All of these sub-district directors that we have, and I
understand we've got seven now, they all have been appointed because
of this power that they thought Ad hoc had. They had to promote some
of them and most every one that they'd promote never looked back at the
rest of us. Curtis Strong is the one staff man that's had a continuous
association with the Ad hoc Committee.

They would like to destroy Ad hoc completely. With an adhoc
committee you're not begging. An ad hoc committee is the same to an
organization as children is to a family. You can whip your children,
you can do a lot of things so long as they don't know what they're
entitled to under the law. But those children have certain rights in
that house and there's certain things you can't do to them under the
law. The only way you can do it is if they don't know the law. Well,
it's the same way with an ad hoc committee in any organization. And
this is the first time that they ever had an ad hoc committee in the
Steelworkers Union that exposed them.

When we put that picket here in Chicago we had tried to meet
with Abel. Every time we went to meet with Abel it would be Joe Malony
and Alex Fuller. I told Alex; "You better get out of the way so you
don't get hurt, cause we're talking about those people at the top."
Every time we met with them it cost us. All these trips were expensive
and we paid for these trips. We went to Pittsburgh, met with Joe Malony and he wouldn't get to the point. He kept telling us what he'd been doing for civil rights. I said, "Man, you ain't doing nothing, going out there across the field, meeting in this conference and getting up there making them flowery speeches. That's all Tom Shane did. We're talking about the same thing that we talked to you about in Indianapolis." So they'd knock off one here and promote one there.

Joe had trouble with Bob Pryor. He succeeded me as president and he stayed president for about nine years. Then he got so big he thought he could shift from president to vice president and shift the vice president to president. When he did that we built a machine under him and beat him. He couldn't go back in the mill so he went to work for the IUD (Industrial Union Department). Then when IUD folded up they told everybody who had people on IUD they should take them and put them some place. Just at the time Pryor was out on the limb, Lucius died. When Lucius died, as bad as he didn't want Pryor, Joe took him. That's how we got Tommy Barker on in 1956. We made a raid out on Joe and he told us he'd already told Tommy he was going to put him on, so he put Tommy on. Next time we met with Joe he told us, "I got two Negroes on. I have no intention of putting more on. If one of them dies I will replace him with another Negro but so far as increasing the amount I got on there, I think you got your quota." He told us that right down there on Michigan Avenue and he didn't meet with us no more.

As soon as they got an opening in Pittsburgh they put Pryor on Pension and Insurance so he had to leave Chicago and move to Pittsburgh to carry out that. So now we got Pryor on Pensions and Insurance. On
Research we got Oliver Montgomery. On Auditing we got Norris Green out of Detroit. On Civil Rights we got Alex Fuller, Curtis Strong and Jonathan Comer. In the Education Department we got Alex Powell and now they got a Black in the Legal Department, too.

When Ad hoc came up I thought this was the answer. We fought in Ad hoc to get Abel elected and we got a lot of Blacks promoted, with the idea that they would at least hold hands with us who were down below. We would always be able to push people up and we would always have them pulling us up if they didn't do nothing but help us financially. These ideas were expressed in the Ad hoc insignia. I designed it, I'm not an artist, but I had the idea. The artist that works for Muhammed Speaks did it. When I told him what I wanted, then I went back and it was just like I had dreamed. It shows a Black man climbing up a ladder and reaching back to help another one up behind him.

Well, after Abel was elected president they started holding Civil Rights conferences all over the country. All the districts were supposed to hold them before the union convention in Atlantic City in September. The press covered these conferences and the top leadership of the union made a big deal about how they were taking so many actions to implement civil rights. They said the District Civil Rights Conference idea was an outgrowth of a proposal advanced by the Negro steel workers leadership conference in '65 prior to the election of officers to head the international union. Then they went on to talk about our three point program just like the union had come up with the whole thing through regular channels. They sent these stories
all over the country. There's even one in a Florida newspaper about a speech by Joe Malony congratulating the NAACP for picketing U.S. Steel because of their discriminatory practices in Birmingham, Alabama. He sounded like the union had already cleaned its own house, but those guys in Birmingham finally sued both the company and the union and won their case. (In February, 1967 seven Black steelworkers filed suit against U.S. Steel in Birmingham, Alabama for discrimination in job assignment and promotion. They also sued the union, contending that it failed to enforce the seniority provisions in their contract.)

One thing I want to get clear and that is about me talking to Abel about Asbury Howard. Just before the 1968 convention, the Steelworkers Union merged with the old Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union. One of the main points of our three point program had been to get some Black representation on the International Executive Board. When this merger came with the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, this was an opportunity to do that without hurting anybody or changing any rules because Asbury Howard from Bessemer, Alabama was already an elected vice president of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union. He was on their International Executive Board. The first thing the Steelworkers Union did with Asbury Howard was bust him down. He went back to Bessemer but he's not even a sub-district director.

Now Asbury Howard is quite a man! He was very active in the Civil Rights movement in Alabama. He and his father, back in 1959; was mobbed and beaten up right in the court house. Asbury Howard's father had hired a white painter to copy a picture he cut out of a Kansas City newspaper. They were going to use it in their voter-
registration campaign. Some white person found out about it, saw it or something, and called the police. Howard was arrested for breach of the peace and inciting to riot.

When they were leaving his trial, about forty men jumped them right there in the court house and beat them up right there. Finally the police broke it up and the only one arrested was Asbury Howard for trying to help his father. They got him on disorderly conduct. He had fought in Korea. When Asbury Howard made bond they said the papers wasn't made outright and he had to work out his sentence on the streets of Bessemer, Alabama. This was a man that we all looked up to and we really wanted to keep him in a top spot when those unions merged.

We wanted to discuss this with Mr. Abel, but no dice. We finally cornered Abel at a convention herein Chicago and this was the first thing I brought to his attention. I said, "Mr. Abel, you know what we were talking about with this three point program. We were talking about Blacks on the executive board. This was an opportunity for you to have done that without hurting anybody. But instead of you preserving Asbury Howard, you busted him down. He said, "Brother Mooty, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Brother Howard is well contented in the pay he's making on the job he has. He's making more money now than he was, even if he was elected International Vice President. He's making more money than he was in that little old union that was drying up."

I said, "Mr. Abel, you sure don't understand Negroes. We're talking about going up and while we're talking about going up we meet him, coming down. How in the hell do you think we feel? If you have an
executive board and you couldn't convince them to preserve that office, then at least you could have preserved Brother Asbury Howard somewhere. Every time you showed his picture you had him locked hand in hand with all your executive board. You preserved Skinner, another vice, president of the Mine, Mill and Smelter workers union. Howard was an international vice president, too. You could have given him something. Man, you sure don't understand Negroes!"

That's another thing I hold against our international leadership. In the Steel workers Union, if the membership rejects one of their favorites they make a job for them somewhere. As soon as Sam Evett lost his election for District Director in District 31 they created a brand new appointed position for him. When this Sub-district Director out here in Sub-district 2, Joe Jeneske, lost out they created a job for him. These were people who were rejected by the membership. Those who had been elected should surely have been preserved when that merger took place. This is one of the reasons Ad hoc had to take such a strong position in 1968.

I sent out the letter that called for a meeting of Black steelworkers in Detroit before the '68 Steelworkers convention. In the letter to Ad hoc members I said:

"At the 1964 convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, a survey showed that of 1,500 employees of the U.S.W.A. less than 30 were Negroes. Of the 14 departments, none were headed by Negroes — no Negroes on the Executive Board or in Policy Making.

"Your International Officers Report of March 20th, at the Special Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, showed of 1,250 employees of U.S.W.A., less than 100 were Negroes, after 30 years of dedication and loyalty."
"Your officers feel deeply concerned about this segregated system and have asked the International President for a meeting to discuss our three point program, which would eliminate this condition. To date, we have had no reply.

"No International Union can wage an effective campaign against companies who do not comply with State and Federal laws on Equal Employment, when they are guilty of the same practice."

(Rayfield Mooty to Ad Hoc Members, April 2, 1968)

This is the major part of the appeal that stirred up enough Blacks to get together and stage a demonstration at the convention here in Chicago. I said here in this letter that we had tried unsuccessfully, that Abel never listened to us. In a letter I got from Ray Pasnick stating that Mr. Abel turned this over to someone else, he said it was not unusual for Abel to delegate some of his work to somebody else. I told Ray, "Important a subject as this is, you don't delegate that to somebody else. You deal with it yourself. This is why we're going to put a picket line around that convention. Come hell or high water we're going to put it around there."

We got more support from the news media, the radio and television and all the people that was interested in this subject. That did more to get things changed. A lot of people didn't know what it was all about until we got to that point. We had to put their business in the street. Iron Age magazine gave a pretty accurate report of our picket of the convention. They said:

"The demand for more Negro representation at district and national levels was expected but it hit with perhaps more force than could be reckoned earlier. A black caucus drew 500 and at least 6 of 33 USWA locals are deeply involved. The 'Ad-hoc'
Committee formed by Negro officials of locals played it cool, stated that it would not bolt the union or do anything to weaken the USW but would work within the union framework.

"The committee brushed aside a comment by I.W. Abel, union president, that 'discrimination does not exist in the USWA.' 'The USWA, a union with 25% black membership has not one black on its 33 man executive board, black officers head none of its 14 departments, and not one of the districts is headed by a Negro,' according to Thomas Johnson, national chairman of the Ad-hoc Committee.

On the convention floor, delegates voted down by a 2 to 1 majority two resolutions aimed at placing a Negro in a national vice presidency. The voting odds suggest that a number of whites backed the Ad-hoc Committee resolution.

(Iron Age, August 29, 1968, p. 15)

What we asked for at that convention was two spots on the executive board for Blacks. We said that we had 25% of the union's members and ought to be included in top decisions. As usual, there was some Blacks, appointed to jobs they would never have had without our organization, who stood up and said we should wait until we were strong enough to elect Blacks to the Board.

Abel said the same thing. He said he had been putting Blacks in staff jobs and had even been sued by white members who charged him with discrimination for making some of these appointments. The charges were dismissed by the Civil Rights Commission in Pennsylvania, but he and other top union leaders argued that Negroes should compete in election for the top spots and not ask for what he called "separate but equal treatment." Of course, he could ignore that Asbury Howard had been elected to a top spot in his union and they could easily have kept one when they merged, with Abel's support.
If you remember, Chicago was a hot spot that year. A lot of people was trying to say you can't put a picket line around the convention. But you can if you go about a thing right, if you know that you're not being sneaky, you're not playing dirty. I have always been a union officer and I have always lived up to the code. I have always pressed for them to do what the constitution says -- make sure there will be no discrimination. Anyway, we came to put this picket line up around the convention and I had told Joe Malony that this was going to happen.

Gloria Llorenti came from Philadelphia and when she got there I said, "Well, we got to go make preparations for this picket line." We got a public relations man, Augustus Savage, and he sat down and we talked. We still tried to meet with Abel when the convention was about to open up. Saturday morning we was going to meet with Abel, going to sit down and have a talk with him, but we couldn't find him.

We decided to go down to the hotel and the first man we met was Joe Malony. We asked Joe to set us up a meeting with Abel and he said to give him about fifteen minutes. While we was there waiting on him, we decided to go in the place to have a cup of coffee and there sat Abel talking to Leander Simms. Simms is the Black that ran for district director in Baltimore, Maryland. Abel said, "Hello Brother Mooty, how are you? I was just sitting here talking to Brother Simms." I said, "Simms, that's the man we're looking for. That's the man we heard that they were trying to get to run for district director in Baltimore." Abel said, "Yeah, Brother Mooty. Sit down and talk with him, he's a good boy." Good boy! He's not thinking of Simms as a
gentleman or even as a man, he's thinking of him as a boy. Anyway we let him go ahead.

We sat down and talked with Simms to find out what his problem was. Simms had a problem. There was about three white guys planning to run for this job of the director, A.L. Attular, who was retiring. They all wanted Simms's support. Simms had already pledged himself to support one of these guys. Simms ain't even dreamed of being a district director. This was the predicament that Simms was in, he wasn't ready for that job. He had only dreamed of maybe an appointment as sub-district, director under this cat that he was supporting. That's all the higher he'd dreamed, he couldn't have dreamt no higher than that. And Abel here is trying to get Simms to run for district director. He said, "I've been talking to him. You boys want somebody for district director, you want somebody on the executive board. Now here's an opportunity." He was trying to persuade Simms and Simms had already committed himself to these cats.

Abel still didn't meet with us. Joe met with us, Joe and Alex. We told Joe no dice. He couldn't tell us anything different than he'd been telling us. We decided to prepare for a picket. Gus Savage asked us, "Where's your headquarters?" We had a place picked out on the South side. He said, "No, no, you can't do it that way. You got to have an office right in this building, right in this hotel." We told him we ain't got that kind of money but he said, "You got to have it. In fact your headquarters needs to be right here where Joe Maloney's got his, right here on the corner of the building. You need a big suite." Gus Savage was our public relations man, a little man
but he got a lot of guts.

I went down and started wringing the arms of the hotel manager for a room. Finally we got two small rooms joined together. I called Gus to look at it and he said; "Uh-uh, too small." This was fifty dollars a day. We went back again and finally came up, with one right over Joe's. It was a great big double suite, bath, shower, TV, bar and everything, one of the finest in the hotel. He, said, "This will cost you a hundred a day." I called Gus to come up and he said, "This is it!" I said, "Man, he's talking about a hundred dollars a day. How we going to pay a hundred a day for a room when we couldn't pay fifty for the one down yonder. I don't have no money." He said, "You got, to have it, you're fixing to make an impression. You can't make no impression with that little room down there. This is it!"

Then he said, "Now you got to get a headquarters at the stockyards." I said, "Now you're talking about a hundred a day for this and we already got the Gold Room sewed up for a meeting at night. I put a deposit on that and I don't have no money." He said, "You have to have a headquarters right in that stockyards somewhere, because while Abel's going to be standing up there talking, thinking that the news camera's going to be on him, the cameras will be in that back room trying to find out what's going on. This is why you got to have it. You can't drag them cameras out of here and back down somewhere else, but it's going to be easy for them to take them right out of the convention floor and come back in this room. While Abel's out there thinking he's talking, to the public; you're going to be talking to the public down here."
The manager said he had a room that Senator Humphrey was going to use and the minute Humphrey comes out of that room we could get it for $44.00. "We'll make arrangements for you," he said, "and you'll have to be timed. The minute Humphrey comes out of there we'll snatch everything out of there and set it up for a news conference." So now we notify all the news media and all the commentators and everybody that's got anything to say about news what's going on. Those expensive suites paid off. When U.S. News and World Report sent a reporter to find out more about Ad hoc we had a decent place to accommodate all the news reporters.

Next we got to go to the police station. You have to have an understanding. Gloria and I went to the 35th St. Station and we got hold of the captain of that district. We had our literature and we sat down and talked to him and told him, "We came down here to get an understanding with you because this is what we're going to do tomorrow morning. We have no intention of running from your police and we have no intention of getting beat up. We have an investment in this Steelworkers Union. We have had arguments about the top executive officers carrying out the policies of this union. They have not done it. We have every intention of exposing them the minute this convention is opened up. This is our literature. This is the literature that Abel has his picture on the back of. Germano gave me permission to put Abel's picture on the back of this literature. We ran it and we distributed it and we told why we were supporting I.W. Abel. Abel hasn't done what he said he would and we intend to put his business in the streets tomorrow morning, as Soon as that convention
opens. We have no intention of being beat up by the police. We want you to understand what this is all about. Read it over."

He read it over, looked at it. I said, "We're not outsiders, we're members of this union. We pay dues to this union and we intend for him to live up to the constitution that was provided at the constitutional convention. We want you to understand it that way. We hope we can get along on these issues." He looked at that literature and he said, "I don't see anything wrong with what you're doing. You shouldn't have trouble out of my men. I will notify all of them as to what's going to be happening. If you have any trouble out of any of them just call this office."

Gloria looked at me and she said, "Mr. Mooty, what am I doing at the police station at 11 o'clock at night?" I said, "I told you when you came down here you didn't need all those long dresses and high heel shoes and wigs. You didn't need nothing but a pair of dungarees."

The next morning, sure enough, guys who had been promoted up, by that time they walked by us high hat. I hollered at two or three of them, "We're still out here, man. We need a little mazoola."

The police came up and attacked Comer on the line and took some of his literature. The police said he, had to go & to the office and check with Abel to see if it's permissible to do this. Comer called the police captain up and he was up there in no time flat. We showed him who took our literature and he chewed them out. He said, "Were these men violating the law?" They told him they had to check with Abel and he told them, "You're supposed to know the law. The next time
something like this happens you're going to be out of a job. You're out here to uphold the law." And that settled that argument!

Anyway we kept the picket line for about two days. All the news commentators, Len O'Conner and everybody, blasted them like everything. He reminded Abel that less than twenty years ago, less than five miles away from here, he was fighting for the same thing -- recognition -- when workers were massacred at Republic Steel. So this was the work of the Ad hoc Committee up to that point.

Abel finally sat down and talked to us. That's when I finally talked to him about Asbury Howard. I don't think he ever did understand what we were all about. All this happened in 1968. Right after that we picked up Ola Kennedy. Gloria had just about had it. She stayed with us as long as she could but the thing didn't build as fast as she thought it should. She was too enthusiastic about it. She thought it just ought to move. People should see that we were right and change. About the time that Gloria got tired, Ola Kennedy, from Gary, began to come to Ad hoc.

We had this big conference in Gary. We worked like hell to put it over. Most of the guys was down in Mississippi to the NAACP convention, including Jonathan Comer. He didn't tell us that he had gotten an assignment from the international union. And this hurt! If he had just told us we could have broke the news, but Herb Hill from the NAACP legal staff, he broke the news. Anyway, everybody was really shook up. We had already made arrangements to go on the air that afternoon before Gloria left and Warner Saunders talked to us about Ad hoc and what we was doing. We had about a half hour program.
We had the film converted to tape and I have the tape of it.

Finally we employed an attorney down town and he sent Abel a letter. Abel sent Alex Fuller and Joe Malony here. We told Joe again we didn't want to be bothered with him because he couldn't make no decisions. We said, "When Abel was running for president he wasn't too big to sit down on that couch with us hisself, but you can't make no damn decisions, so what you want to keep taking up our time for?"

By the time the convention was held in Atlantic City in 1970 we saw we still weren't making no impression on Abel. We talked about it herein the district, that we really needed to put his business in the street in Pittsburgh. The people in Pittsburgh think that the steelworkers union has been so fine all these many years. Nobody has ever challenged them so we thought we'd go down and put a few dents in it here. We made up our mind and got a few things together and sent out notices to guys from all over the country about what we were going to do. I left Friday evening, went into Cleveland and stopped into see how many guys I could pick up there. I couldn't pick up anybody. I did pick up a few dollars for financial support.

In the meantime TUAD (Trade Union Alliance for Democracy) had its first conference here in Chicago and I met a guy from Pittsburgh that had a Black caucus there. His name was Ashton Allen and he had steelworkers and workers from a whole bunch of unions in his caucus. He asked me what I wanted and I said, "All I want is a landing place in Pittsburgh. I been in and out of Pittsburgh for many years but1 don't have a base where I can stop at when I get there so I can get lined up. I want to come in there on a Saturday night or Sunday morning and get
lined up because I want to put a picket line around the international
Union Monday morning. I want to surprise them and I don't want nobody
to know nothing about it." He said, "That's all you want? You don't have nothing to worry about."

I got out of Cleveland Sunday morning, got into Pittsburgh about one o'clock and Allen met me at the toll road. He carried me around through the mountains over to his sister's house where we had dinner. We got everything lined up, took a circle round the headquarters and learned our way around so we would have a direct shot in there Monday morning.

We hit the union that morning and everybody was surprised. Joyce Dilosa and Ola Kennedy came in from Gary to join the picket line. Some of the guys that had gone up in the union since this Adhoc had been on didn't know whether to go across the picket line or what because they knew us. Anyway they went on across. We didn't try to stop them. Bob Pryor did stop and say, "You all are doing a good job. I got to go on upstairs." So he cut on upstairs.

I got on the phone and called up all the news media and all the television people and told them something was fixing to happen down there. They wanted to know what it was. I told them I didn't know but I did see people getting out of their cars with picket signs. "They're going to picket this building and I thought you might want to know." Then I hung up on them. Everyone wanted to know what it was, you know. I'd say, "I don't know what it is. I see one guy got a sign says, 'We accuse the Steelworkers Union of Discriminating.'" I know it's something to do with the steelworkers union." Then I'd hang up
and keep calling all the way down the list. Pretty soon they came running down there like flies.

Finally a motor truck came down with cameras and everything and they took pictures and interviewed people and wanted to know what was going on. They didn't get hold of Abel because he wasn't in, but they got hold of Ray Pasnick. Ray said there wasn't no discrimination in the Steelworkers Union. We created some excitement! That's what we went down there for -- to create some excitement, to let the people know everything wasn't hunky dory, everything wasn't peaches and pie.

Now I thought at least these Black cats would come down and show a little respect. They could come down and say, "You know can't be seen but we'll pick up you alls lunch tab." And them cats didn't even come down. Finally about two o'clock I called Pryor and I asked him "What time do you go for lunch? I haven't seen you come down all day." He said, "I been busy all day. I'll be down there after while." Finally he came down and said, "You all doing a good job." I said, "Look, you mean to tell me that these girls here gave up a days pay, paid for their own expenses over here, even paid for their hotel here, and you didn't come down here to offer them a cool drink of water or a bottle of pop? You mean to tell me you don't even do that?" "Oh yeah," he said, "I will." I said, "Well goddam it, just keep it. We don't need it that bad." None of them gave us a quarter, not a quarter. At least they could do that even if they couldn't be identified with us.

Pretty soon the convention was going to be in Atlantic City, so we go down to Atlantic City. We got all our stuff ready from here,
our picket signs. We had a little money in the treasury. We had a big fish fry in Gary and we raised a little money. We got ready to go on the boardwalk. We got all the committees that we was going to have, notified the rest of them throughout the country where they were.

That's when had some brochures made up and I worked like hell to get all that stuff. I had a picture made up of the first Blackwoman local president in 1946 when *Ebony Magazine* was at 51st St.in a little back room. There had been a white woman elected president at Atlanta, Georgia and the steelworkers' union gave her a big spread in their paper. So when this Black woman became president I went to the staff man and I told him, "Louise just made president. I want her to have a spread. Steel Labor ain't going to give her no spread but I'll get a spread for her. I went to *Ebony Magazine* and discussed this matter with them. They said when they did a story on labor they would include her. So *Ebony Magazine* went to the plant at 33rd and Calumet Avenue and made the pictures of Louise Anderson and her co-workers and gave it a big spread.

I remembered that, so when I got ready to make this brochure I went to *Ebony Magazine*, told them what it was and approximately when it was. They dug back in the file and I paid $25 for that picture. It was that important to me. How many people know when the first Black woman was president of a steel local? Anyhow, we had this brochure made up. Because I was recording secretary in 1942, I had these pictures of all these executives and I had this story. I had the discussion, the passage of that article, all that down in my files, so I took all that stuff and made this brochure.
When we get to the convention Alex gets with me and says Joe Malony wanted to meet with me. I couldn't get hold of nobody but Ola so we went into meet with Joe together. I don't know what all he was intending to say because I got so hot that I gave him the cussing out of his life right there. In less than five minutes that meeting was over. I just told him how I felt about him. I knew what he was trying to do. He was trying to stop this picket from coming on the board walk.

I said, "Number one, all this time we been trying to get a meeting with Abel when I could have my committee together. Now there ain't nobody here but just Ola and me and you want to talk. Now what the hell you want to talk about? You ain't got a damn thing to tell me no more than you had before." And I gave him one of those brochures. I said, "Here, take this. Don't tell me who you are. That was you in that group in 1942, you and Abel both in that group. You're doing the same damn thing that Murray did then, the same damn thing. All this segregation and discrimination, and you running all over the country telling people how great you are. But at home, this is the thing that we're talking about and we're going to put a picket line around it." He jumped up and said, "We just can't talk to you!" I said, "Hell no, you can't talk to us. Just leave it like it is."

So that morning we came out on the board walk. Litch and his group were trying to pass out literature and they had some of them in jail. Litch was on that dues protest committee from 1965 on, objecting to them raising the union dues. I said, "We'll go down and see where the guys are in jail." We got down there but they didn't
detain them in jail, they turned them loose.

Then I said, "Who is the mayor of this town?" They told me who the mayor was, where the mayor's office was. I went up there and met with his secretary and she said the mayor was out of town. I said, "Well, we want to talk with him about some things because we're going to put a picket line around that convention hall." She said, "You're not allowed to put pickets on the board walk. You can put them down in front of the hall on the street."

I said, "Don't nobody go in the convention hall from the street. Everybody goes in from the board walk." I told her that's where we intended to be and showed her our literature. I said, "This is our literature, this is what we're intending to do. We're not outsiders, we got an investment in this union. The union card that I signed says that this union will represent me in all matters. The constitution provides that there will be no discrimination and there is discrimination existing in this union and we intend to do something about it. We're going to publicize it on the board walk."

"Well," she said, "you're not allowed to picket on the board walks. I'll get in touch with the mayor at two o'clock. He'll call me at two." I said, "Well, then just call me and we'll be down here to explain it to him." Sure enough she called me. She said, "Mr. Mooty, I just got through talking with the mayor and all you have to do is take those sticks off the signs. If you tie a string around them and tie them around your neck you can picket all you want. Just try not to leave any rubbish on the board walk."

By that time we had met some more young fellows, including
James Lyons from Chicago who had just took over Local 1033 out here. And we met another bunch of young fellows out of Houston, Texas. Emil De Gree had just been elected an officer in his local in Houston. Naturally it was the first time they had ever seen anything like this. This is how we got our pickets. We only had one woman on that board walk and that was Ola Kennedy. Ola led the picket line on there and them young fellows got acquainted. So we staged our picket there and made a success out of it. Now they got to get the Blacks to come in and tear it up.

There had been a lot of problems about having staff men belong to Adhoc at first. The guys down in Birmingham, they have a strong Ad hoc committee. They operate in Birmingham and they had no intention of lining up and sharing their finances with the national office. When I went down there they really set me on fire; they really blamed me for letting staff men be on it. They said, "They ain't no good. Everyone of them has got bits in their mouth. They get that car every year, get that little expense account, that little side money that they don't have to account for. You know they ain't no good, so why do you keep them?"

I said, "Well, when we meet in conferences you ain't at the conferences to register your protest and when the vote is taken you're not there to cast a vote, so what am I supposed to do? I got to abide by the majority vote so this is why I let them in."

In '68 I was elected chairman after the convention and all the Black staff men came. In 1970 they paid for the room we had, but they came in to assess this picket. This was just before, the picket. They
came into the meeting and naturally I was happy to introduce them. "Here's Aaron Jackson, he helped draft the three point program. And here's Ray Dennis, who was district director in Chicago with the Mine, Mill and Smelter, and now he's been busted down." That cat got up on that floor and said, "I don't think it's time at this time for us to put a picket line around the convention." I'm expecting this cat to be on my side, he had crossed over already. You know I was surprised. Everybody sat and looked.

I got up and said, "Now I don't know nothing but one thing. I made an announcement that at nine o'clock in the morning I'm going to put a picket line around that convention hall and I'm going to do that. Nobody has raised any objection to it to this point. My office will be open all night tonight. Anybody want to come in here and talk to me about what we going to do, or not do, they got the privilege to talk to me between now and in the morning. The only change I would accept is one hour later. Instead of starting it at nine, I'll start it at ten. And I don't give a damn who gets in my way they're going to get hurt. I don't know what you're talking about. I came to Cleveland and told you when I was going to Pittsburgh and I told you what I was going to do in Atlantic City. If you had any objections to what I was going to do you had every right in the world to discuss it with me and you ain't discussed nothing. Now anybody or anything get in my way between me and the picket line tomorrow morning is going to get hurt. I don't care who it is." That settled that. So we went on and put out our pickets.

Then they tried to cut my money off, a day ahead of time. I
went down and paid my bill just before the convention closed and then I called them on the convention floor. See, the staff guys was paying my expenses so they cut me off Thursday night. I said, "You all cut me off last night. What happened? The woman told me I owed another day's rent. I don't owe no day's rent. You all are supposed to pay this rent. I want all of you all together now. I want to know what happened. Bob Pryor, you paid it. The woman told me who paid it and got the receipt. Now what's going to happen for this next day?" When I got through with them they paid that day, but they ain't paid no more.

So we existed and we kept it together but it wasn't easy. You got a bunch of young guys in Baltimore and the guys in Birmingham that don't want no parts of no staff men. When everybody comes together their vote is over voted that you keep the staff men on. You see, all the staff men and all the guys that have gotten jobs, the money they have to throw away, they could throw it this way. They all have an expense account. I think they have about ten dollars a day that they can use without being recorded. We thought that they would use part of that to help us along financially. I got a bill for $390.00 for running off them books. And a little help from them, whether they identify themselves openly or not, it would help.

Anyway we got along alright till this guy, Litch, and his group wanted to form a coalition. George Edwards had another group, the Steelworkers Rank and File team (RAFT). Those are two different groups headed by white guys. In Adhoc we don't say this is no Black Adhoc committee, but when you see Blacks controlling it, whites don't want no part of it so they go and form them something. Litch is still
carrying on the old dues protest thing. George Edwards has got his thing going. Both of them want to be president of the Steelworkers Union. Anyway, here's an opportunity to form a coalition so they want to form a coalition. You would be doing wonders if you could form a coalition and had all Black and White. Then down in Fontana, California you got a strong Mexican group. They came into help form this coalition.

We had a meeting in Cleveland. George Edwards, he's interested in getting the guys together. Saturday night we met and talked. Sunday morning we got up early in the morning and talked some more and then we broke off at noon. At two o'clock Litch comes in. I don't have no choice but to let Litch have it with both barrels. I said, "I don't know what the hell you're talking about, trying to form a coalition with Negroes. You don't know nothing about Negroes. You ain't brought nair one in here with you. We sat down here all night trying to formulate ideas. You have to talk to people to get acquainted with them, to understand. You think you're going to walk in here at two o'clock this evening and form a coalition? It ain't done like that!" When I got through yelling and telling him what I thought about him, he cut on out.

But George still wanted to forma coalition or at least issue a statement. So I let him issue a statement. I said, "When we sit down and form a coalition we're going to have something in writing. I'm going to understand what you're supposed to do and you're going to understand what I'm going to do. You don't just form no coalition by asking if you and me are going to form a coalition. Hell, it ain't
Anyway, we issued a statement and that scared the steelworkers to death because they know if all three of these groups of people get together they can do wonders. We had a picture made together. This picture struck the news media and the news got out that steelworker Rank and Filers had formed a coalition with Ad hoc.

George sent out a letter. He sent me a copy and he called me on the phone. I said, "Well, you know we didn't form it. Me and you know we didn't form it. If ever we form a coalition we're going to sit down, we're going to print it up, type up the operation of the thing, the purpose and the operation."

That thing hit the streets and Abel and the Black staff men clamped down on us completely. I went to a meeting in Cleveland, the Black staff were there. They had invited me to the meeting and then they didn't let me in the meeting. I paid my own hotel bill and I didn't have no opportunity to talk. I didn't know why they didn't let me in till a year later, but they were sure scared that coalition had been formed. So I had to set George straight.

Before the next convention in 1972 in Las Vegas the guys wanted me to come down to Baltimore. When I went to Baltimore that group hit me in the face with that coalition business. They said, "That's a communist outfit, it's no good." I said, "Look man, you young fellows don't know it, but if it hadn't been for the communists you'd never have had a union. The only thing that made the labor movement draw close together and organize was because they had such tough competition from the left. This I know," I said, "we did NOT
form a coalition."

Before the Seventeenth Constitutional Convention of the Steelworkers Union met at Las Vegas, I not only went to Baltimore, I visited Birmingham, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Youngstown, Detroit, Gary and Houston -- talking to Black steelworkers everywhere I went. I was concerned that the spirit for Ad hoc was so low.

The staff men and technicians in the union had got their own union by then. When Abel challenged McDonald, the staff got nervous about how secure their jobs were. Now they were protected, with their own union, so once a guy got on the staff he didn't need Ad hoc no more.

The Black staff men had promised to pick up the tab for the executive office of Ad hoc at this convention, like they did in Atlantic City. But I wasn't prepared for what happened. This is the meeting where dues are paid. Every chapter pays $25.00 a year dues to the national organization of Adhoc. Some of them hadn't paid that year and somebody made a motion to suspend the registration fees. That would have cut our treasury completely and made us totally dependent on staff contributions. Some of the younger fellows didn't want to pay no dues and didn't want the staff men in the organization either. The ones of us who had done most of the work had paid most of our own expenses traveling across the country to meetings all through the years. At Vegas the national officers of Adhoc were forced to huddle together in a small apartment to stretch our finances. The only original members still with me there were Mr. and Mrs. Sylvester Palmer and Ola Kennedy from Gary and James Lyons from Chicago.

At that point I had to reevaluate. our progress. And I
realized that the reason we were having so much trouble hanging together was because we had actually completed the program that we drew up for ourselves when we started. Unless we developed a new set of goals --and I could always think of some things still worth working for -- we didn't really need Ad hoc at that point.

In our progress report we could point to many, many changes that were made as a result of, Ad hoc's work. The Civil Rights Committee, which had been a sham, had been reorganized into a Civil Rights Department under Alex Fuller. A Civil Rights Manual had been approved and civil rights conferences were being held in every district. Between 1968 and 1970 Civil Rights Coordinators had been appointed in every-district. That fulfilled the third point of our program.

After our picket of the 1968 convention more Black sub district directors and technicians had been appointed. That increased the degree of integration of the union's staff and fulfilled point two of our program. Many publications had joined Ad hoc in publicizing their struggle for equal representation within their union, including Tuesday Magazine, which published a series of articles on Black workers. The union had reprinted the article by Thomas Brooks in Tuesday Magazine on Blackworkers and published it as a pamphlet.

Through the grapevine I had got word that the International was going to promote Leon Lynch to the Executive Board temporarily to fill a newly created position, Vice President of Human Affairs. Lynch had been sent from District 31 to Memphis in 1964, as an
International representative. He had never been associated with Ad
hoc but he was associated with the A. Philip Randolph Committee and the
NAACP in Memphis, so may be this would at last complete the first point
of our program.

This was the end of my second term as Chairman of Ad Hoc and it
was also the year of my retirement from the plant, ending thirty-five
years of my life as a member of the united Steelworkers of America. I
pondered my mind through the years from 1937 to 1972, the struggles,
the ups anddowns, the bads, the goods and the uglies. And as I saw the
agenda proposed for the convention,nothing gave me more satisfaction
than to know that I was apart of it and that our three point program had
been completed. Not the formation of the union itself, the March on
Washington, the passing of the Civil Rights Act, the establishment of
the Civil Rights Department in our union --nothing! In 1948 I felt so
by myself, with only Boyd standing there beside me. But history had
cought up with me and it was gratifying to live to see it.
APPENDIX A

Resolution 5

WHEREAS, (1) It has always been the policy and the practice of the CIO and SWOC to fight for equal treatment for all workers, regardless of race, creed or color; and

(2) Inherent in labor's whole hearted support of the Victory Program is its hatred of doctrines of racial and religious prejudice characteristic of our Axis enemies; and

(3) Our war effort requires complete unity of all sections of the population regardless of race, creed or color; and

(4) The practices of these industries which discriminate in employment on the basis of race, creed or color violate our democratic principles, impede our program of production for Victory and constitute direct threats to the success of the national war effort; and

(5) Policies of segregation, Jim Crowism and discrimination in our armed forces, in housing and in any sphere of our national life undermine our democratic institutions and serve to demoralize and disunite our people, now, therefore be

RESOLVED, (1) That the United States of America declare its firm opposition to any discrimination in industry, in government and anywhere else on the basis of race, creed or color; and

(2) That the United Steelworkers of America pledges itself, its members and its local organizations to the fight to secure equality of treatment for all workers, Negro and White, and all races and creeds in industrial employment and promotion, in vocational training, in union leadership and service in government and in the armed forces.

APPENDIX B

Resolution 9

Negro Steelworkers.

Whereas, (1) It is a cardinal principle of our union that all steelworkers, regardless of race, creed or color, shall be admitted into membership and receive equal treatment;

(2) We have not rested upon pious hopes or expressions but have effectively improved the economic conditions of the Negro steel workers and afforded the full protection of our Union to collective bargaining contracts to all of our members, white and Negro alike;

(3) Today more than ever as a demonstration of the full meaning of American democracy as against the practices of the Nazi regime, we must make certain that every vestige of Negro or other discrimination be eliminated from our national life; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, (1) Each member and officer of our union must recognize his solemn obligation to prevent and eliminate the exercise of any discrimination within our organization, by any employer, by the government or elsewhere. We must persist with untiring efforts to protect all our members against any form of discrimination, because of race, creed, or color:

(2) This convention desires to express its vigorous condemnation of the specific acts of brutal treatment that have occurred or is being practiced against the Negroes in our armed forces and call upon responsible Army and Navy officials to forthwith eliminate this evil.

Proceedings of the Second Constitutional Convention of the United Steelworkers of America, p. 188.
APPENDIX C

RESOLUTION 18

Protection of Democracy

Today in America civil rights are under attack as never before in our history. Un-American doctrines of intolerance have steadily grown stronger since the end of World War II. The same pattern of repression which followed the last war is again reproduced with grave danger to our democratic institutions.

The workers of our nation are among the chief victims of this drive against our basic liberties. The Taft-Hartley Act has marked an intensification of this movement against freedom. The legislative attack upon the basic rights of labor has been accompanied as well by an attack from the courts. During the past year a shockingly large number of injunctions have been issued by courts restraining the constitutional rights of free American workers.

Police brutality against labor and against other groups in our population has occurred with increasing intensity. During a strike called by our union in Nashville, Tennessee, state police distinguished themselves for their ferocious strike-breaking tactics and abuse of authority through violence and other means against peaceful strikers. It was the same Tennessee police who shocked the nation by its indecent attacks upon Negroes at Columbia, Tennessee.

Another manifestation of this growing type of lawlessness has been the action of the Kansas City, Kansas police. These police officers made a mockery of their oath to uphold the law and freely used violence against peaceful packinghouse strikers. These lawless policemen so completely identified themselves with the employer in their strike breaking tactics that in clubbing innocent strikers they warned them to return to work and abandon their strike.

Racial minorities are faced with the tragic revival of the persecution which prevailed after the last war. Violence against Negroes by mobs and by local law enforcement officers has increased. Discrimination in employment because of race, creed or color has grown to alarming proportions. The evils of segregation and discrimination in educational opportunity and religious intolerance have secured a dangerous beachhead in our country.

The infamous Thomas-Rankin Un-American Activities Committee continues to demonstrate its complete disregard for the constitutional rights of minorities with whose ideas it disagrees. As in the past it continues to slander minority groups in our society and engage in witch hunts, to use its authority for anti-labor proposals and, as in the past, it continues to function as a kangaroo court denying to accused persons the right to be informed of the
charges against them or the opportunity to answer such charges.

This committee with its long record of repression and anti-labor bias has sponsored a new bill, the Mundt-Nixon bill (H.R. 5852). This bill contains a dangerous threat to freedom of speech and freedom of association. Its provisions endanger bona fide labor organizations.

The Keefe rider to the Federal Security Agency Appropriations Bill (H.R. 6355) likewise presents a serious threat to the labor movement.

The President's Loyalty Order, Executive Order 9835, purporting to weed out those who are disloyal to the Government fails to protect employers against unfounded charges of disloyalty. This order disregards basic democratic principles of a fair hearing and imposes undemocratic controls upon the political freedom of our Government workers.

There are hopeful signs that we have not remained completely indifferent to the monstrous growth of intolerance and repression in our land. The President's Commission on Civil Rights has presented a vital program of recommendations for legislation and administrative action. The support which this commission's report has received demonstrates an awakening of the people to the importance of civil rights in our democratic society.

Congress must act now to protect our civil rights. Legislation must be enacted to protect the right to vote. The most precious civil right of a free American is being denied millions of our people either through the poll tax or through other devices to prevent Negro citizens from voting.

The growth of racial intolerance in this country has been encouraged by the failure of Congress to enact a Fair Employment Practices Act establishing the right to equal job opportunity without regard to race, creed, color or nationality.

Congress has refused to enact an anti-lynching bill, thereby denying to Negro citizens Federal protection from mob violence.

At this time we are faced with a danger to our democracy. We, together with millions of freedom-loving Americans, must rededicate ourselves to the American idea of preserving and maintaining freedom.

We demand:


2) The establishment of a Fair Employment Practices
Commission with power to eliminate discrimination in the Government service and in employment on Government contracts.

3) The abolition of segregation in the armed forces.
4) The enactment of a Federal anti-lynching bill.
5) The passage of Federal and state legislation outlawing poll taxes and other restrictions on the right to vote.
6) The passage of measures to ban segregation in interstate travel.
7) The enactment of safeguards against racial discrimination in Federal appropriations for state aid.
8) The enactment of civil rights laws in all states which now do not have such laws eliminating segregation.
9) The abolition of the Thomas Rankin Committee.
10) The enactment of laws protecting aliens long resident in the United States and regulating their status.
11) The defeat of the Mundt-Nixon bill (H.R. 5852) as a threat to the civil rights of our people. Similarly, the defeat of the Keefe rider to the Federal Security Agency Appropriation Bill (H.R. 6355).
12) The establishment of guarantees to protect the freedom of thought and freedom of political views of Government workers and the revocation of Executive Order 9835.

Now therefore, be it resolved:
In recognition of the vital importance to our democracy of safeguarding civil rights, we authorize the creation of a special committee of Executive Board members to foster the above objectives.

APPENDIX D

Resolution 31

(Submitted by Lucius Love, President Local Union 1422, Rayfield Mooty, Recording Secretary, Local Union 1422)

Whereas, This great organization, United Steelworkers of America, CIO, has rendered noble and valuable service to its members in the field; and

Whereas, The constitution provides equal opportunities for all of its members and despite the progress that has been made there still remains much to be done in translating our constitution into practical action to see that the lawful purpose of our constitution is adhered to, and

Whereas, This International Union is supporting the passage of a national Fair Employment Practice Act and at the same time discrimination exists in hiring practices of this International Union therefore, be it

Resolved, That this International Union Convention convening in Boston, Massachusetts, May 11,12,13,14 and 15, 1948 goes on record as endorsing the establishment of the necessary and effective machinery with authority to implement the provision of our constitution to end discrimination, Jim Crowism, or any other maladjustment that may exist within our International Union; and be it further

Resolved, That the principles of the Fair Employment Act be the yard stick by which all employment within the International and District offices shall be measured.

WHY ALL NEGRO STEELWORKERS Should Support I. W. ABEL for President of United Steelworkers of America

Negroes have made a great contribution to this Union, serving faithfully in every category they have been allowed to fulfill since 1937. Despite all their loyalty they are still confined mostly to Local Union officer positions.

The President of this Union exercises a lot of authority. He can hire, fire, promote, demote, appoint, replace, designate or use a dozen other methods to employ people.

1964 Audit Shows: the United Steelworkers of America Union has 1500 employed Negro Staff Men. A survey taken at 1964 Steelworkers Convention disclosed that many Districts still have no Negroes at all.

NO NEGROES ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD!

IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE!

OUR PROGRAM

I  NEGROES ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

II  FULL INTEGRATION ON ALL LEVELS WITHIN THE VARIOUS DISTRICTS AND NATIONAL OFFICES AS DEPARTMENT HEADS AND POLICY MAKING

III  REORGANIZATION OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS DEPARTMENT

Under the leadership of the late Philip Murray, this Union was built on the principle that there shall be no Discrimination regardless of Race, Color or National Origin. During the time he reigned as President, he fought to preserve these principles.

Since Mr. McDonald has been President he has drifted too far from these principles to ever return.

The Negro can no longer continue to accept less than what was prescribed for him in the Founding of this Union.

This Program was presented to Mr. McDonald at the Convention in September. December 18, we were given 15 minutes for discussion. It was presented to Mr. Abel December 11, we had four (4) hours of discussion.

Sponsored By: THE NEGRO STEELWORKERS LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE
You Be The Judge

Here's the 8 point program—be the judge whether it would be good for you—or just bad for McDonald.

1. We will restore rank-and-file control over policy.
2. We will make the bargaining table the focal point of collective bargaining, and return the Human Relations Committee to its proper function, fact-finding.
3. We will recognize local conditions as a vital part of the collective bargaining process.
4. We will work for industrial peace by making sure that management doesn't miscalculate the true temper of the rank-and-file.
5. We will fight for better answers to the insecurity caused by automation.
6. We will get Steelworkers a fair share of the fruits of technology.
7. We will utilize fully our Union's manpower resources.
8. We will provide full-time leadership, be available to rank-and-file members.

Get more action at the bargaining table—with Abel, Burke and Molony

It's "All Out" for Abe and Russ at Youngstown

The time was 6:30 of a Sunday night. The place—a hall in downtown Youngstown, supposedly the heart of McDonald-Griffin "territory." The result—a big rally for Abe and Russ.

More than 500 steelworkers loudly cheered when Veep-to-be Joe Molony told them that "after February 9, trade union democracy will prevail, and once again it will be your Union."

They cheered when Campaign Chairman Joe Germano told them of a convention conversation with the incumbent in which he said: "Jimmy, whatever became of the guy who told me in 1952 he was running against the incumbent to give the Union back to the membership?"

And those Ohio steelworkers agreed, with cheers and stomping feet, when Russ Thomas said, "We're going to win."

Pittsburgh—McD made his first local union campaign appearance at the so-called "safe" Homestead local—and then stalked off the stage in disgust when the handful of workers started asking embarrassing questions.
National Ad Hoc Committee
Concerned Steelworkers

Annual Meeting
and
Election of Officers

September 28 - October 2, 1970

Atlantic City, New Jersey
EXPERIENCE HAS NO SUBSTITUTE!!

TWENTY (20) YEARS RECORD in public office proves he is Willing and able to represent hard-working people.

TWELVE (12) YEARS in the General Assembly.

FOUR (4) YEARS in the Senate, Harold Washington stood in the forefront of those who fought for consumers, fought to protect the rights to work for the unemployed, the poor and members of ethnic and racial minorities.

HAROLD WASHINGTON is beginning his second term in U.S. Congress fighting Reaganomics, extending voting rights, marks him as a public official who delivers his campaign promises.

IT IS NO WONDER HAROLD WASHINGTON has been endorsed by the A.F.L.-C.I.O. and rank and file of labor, The Coalition of Black and Hispanic Committee, Congressional Black caucus, hundreds of Ministers, Civic and Business people, Youth groups and many Political leaders.

WITH HAROLD WASHINGTON AS MAYOR OF CHICAGO:

HE WILL utilize all this vacant land, make it produce tax for the City.

HE WILL use Government Grant to rehabilitation vacant housing, providing shelter for the poor.

HE WILL improve the public school system, and provide better education for all youth.

HE WILL open a line of communication between the community and city hall, so citizens can become a part of the government.

HE WILL seek more cooperation from State & Federal Government making these agencies accountable to the people.

HE WILL open job training programs for youth.

The Concerned Citizens of Lawndale are proud to join these and many thousands of other who support HAROLD WASHINGTON for Mayor of Chicago. These are only a few reasons that the Concerned Citizens of Lawndale support and ask your support of

FEBRUARY 22, 1933          HAROLD WASHINGTON          PUNCH NO. 9
Address given by Rayfield Mooty at a Washington for Mayor Rally.

"Out of the night that covers me, black as the pit from pole to pole I thank whatever Gods may be for my unconquerable soul."

These words describe our honoree more than any statement, poem or phrase that I could find, because he refuses to wear any man's collar or be put in any man's pocket.

Indeed many Negroes have carried the torch of freedom through the years -- Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Nat Turner, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, Booker T. Washington, A. Philip Randolph, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King and Mamie Bradley -- to mention only a few. That flame has never been put out, it has only been quenched.

Only after the murders of President Kennedy, Medgar Evers, Emmett Till, Malcolm X, Rev. George W. Lee and Lamar Smith, we remembered the famous words of Frederick Douglass in his 4th of July address prior to his death in 1895. "He who desires to be free must strike the first blow. Without a struggle there can be no progress. The struggle might be physical, it may be moral or it may be both. But it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing, it never did, and it never will. Men may not get all they pay for, but they must pay for all they got."

So we started burning, marching, demonstrating and protesting until President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Bill of Voting Rights. He said this would strike away the last major shackle off
from Negro rights. The first and most vital of all rights is your right to vote. Unless you have that right, no other right is secure. He also said, "Let me say to every Negro, you must register, you must vote and you must learn. Your future and your children's future depends on it."

I want to assure our honoree we, the concerned citizens of this city, have done that. We have placed our confidence in your hand because we know you refused to take a back seat to anyone or to quit before the job is finished. You ask no questions but seek only justice and equality for all people. In the vernacular of the ghetto, "You are our kind of nigger."

To help us join the many other cities of this nation who have elected Black mayors, Ladies and Gentlemen, I refer to our honoree as Hanley the poet said, "It matters not how straight the gate, how charged with punishment the scroll, he is the master of his fate, he is the master of his soul." We will elect him to represent us in the City Hall of Chicago April 12, 1983.
JESSE L. JACKSON IS A CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, FOR ALL AMERICANS. HE IS "A MAN WITH A VISION!"

COORDINATED BY
RAYFIELD MOOTY, RETIRED STEEL WORKER - MAHIE TILL MOBLEY, RETIRED SCHOOL TEACHER

JESSE LOUIS JACKSON

AMERICA IS FACING A NEW DAY - MARCH 20, 1984

HIS CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVITIES
* BEGAN UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
* SPANNED MORE THAN A DECADE, FROM THE EARLY '50's THROUGH THE MID '60's
* A PRODUCT OF THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL.
* HIS OPERATION BREADBASKET, WITH HEADQUARTERS IN CHICAGO, WAS THE ECONOMIC ARM OF SCLC

OPERATION PUSH - PEOPLE UNITED TO SAVE HUMANITY
* BORN DECEMBER 25, 1971
* HE WAS A FOUNDING MEMBER AND NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THIS ORGANIZATION
* IT HAS BECOME A VITAL FORCE IN THE COURSE OF AMERICAN POLITICS

IT WAS TIME FOR A CHANGE
* THE EMPHASIS SHIFTED FROM CIVIL TO ECONOMIC JUSTICE
* THROUGH PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS, REV. JACKSON HAS BROUGHT MILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO THE POOR AND UNEMPLOYED
* PROVIDED MUCH NEEDED RELIEF FROM ECONOMIC INJUSTICE

WITHOUT VIOLENCE
* HE HAS REACHED TRADE AGREEMENTS WITH COCA-COLA, HEINLEIN, 7-UP, BURGER KING, SCHLITZ, MILLER HIGH-LIFE, AND COUNTLESS OTHER CORPORATIONS

HIS SATURDAY MORNING FORUM
* PROVIDES AN AVENUE FOR ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE TO EXPRESS THEIR OPINIONS, FEAR, HURTS, HOPES, ETC., REGARDLESS OF THEIR RELIGIOUS OR ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS
* HAS PROVIDED A SPRINGBOARD FOR MANY POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS, AND INDUSTRIAL LEADERS AND YOUNGSTERS, AS WELL, TO VIE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

HIS MOTTO: "I AM SOMEBODY!"
* IF YOUR MIND CAN CONCEIVE IT, YOUR HEART CAN BELIEVE IT, YOU CAN ACHIEVE IT
* THESE WORDS HAVE INSPIRED MANY YOUNGSTERS TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THEMSELVES
* WE, THE CONCERNED CITIZENS, ENDORSE AND SUPPORT JESSE LOUIS JACKSON FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA - 1984!

***********

JESSE LOUIS JACKSON

HE IS SEEKING YOUR, YOURS, YOURS, AND YOUR VOTE.
WHY SHOULD YOU VOTE FOR JESSE JACKSON?

BECAUSE:
* IF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE TO REMAIN FREE AND PROSPEROUS, THERE MUST BE A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP
* WE CAN NO LONGER LIVE WITH THE FEAR OF NUCLEAR WAR HOVERING OVER OUR HEADS
* THE LEADER OF THESE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA MUST RELIEVE THE TENSIONS OF THE BODIES AND MINDS OF THE UNEMPLOYED MILLIONS IN THIS COUNTRY.

WHY SHOULD JESSE BE PRESIDENT?