

M- Philip Mason, Interviewer

March 26, 1979

<sup>C</sup>  
~~G~~ Gordon Chapman, Interviewee

Oral Interview-Gordon Chapman

m. I want to start out - this is a tape recording made with Gordon Chapman on March 26, 1979 at his home in Busby MD, I agreed, and have gone over the procedures with him to indicate that this will be the first, hopefully, of a series of interviews relating to his career in the labor movement, and also to make it clear, and I'll put this in writing to him that this interview and the transcripts derived from it will be closed until he has reviewed them, in their final form, to have an opportunity to edit or change or elaborate on them, and at that time determines the terms of access to them. He may, as I indicated, wish to close all or part of them for a specific period of time, or, on the other hand, he may after reading them, decide that they would be open to qualified researchers doing serious work on the history of AFSCME or upon his own career. But until such time as he has seen the final form, ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ we will make sure that these remain closed and no one has access to them. Gordon, is this approach satisfactory?

~~C.G.~~ Entirely satisfactory to me.

M Thank you, One of the things that I always find helpful in approaching oral history is to - also as a historian ( you'll have to forgive me if I take this approach) - I'd like to start at the beginning. I'm wondering whether you could tell me something about (from a biographical point of view) about your ~~xxxxxx~~ early days. You mentioned earlier that your family had come from the state of Maine, migrated to Wisconsin. Could you fill in ~~xxx~~ briefly about this move?

~~C.G.~~ Yes. My grandfather ~~xxx~~ on my father's side left his home in Maine at the age of 17, I understand. Franklin County, Maine. He spent awhile in Ohio and then moved on into Wis., and was one of the earlier settlers there.

Toma(?) Wis. in Monroe County, where I was born, and where my father was born,

M Did your <sup>grand</sup>father have a family - brother or sisters in Wis. - that also moved to Wis. or did he come alone?

C G. MY grandfather was the only one that moved from Maine.

M. I see. And how many children did your grandfather have?

C G. He had 3 sons and 3 daughters. And they all lived in the vicinity of Toma - I think it was Adrian Township in Monroe Cty. Wis.

M What were their names?

C G. I hope I can remember all these! - the boys were Fred Chapman, Dell, and my dad Allie, who was the youngest of the boys -

M How was your father's name spelled?

C G. My father's name? Allie. My grandfather was Jesse.

M There were 3 girls?

C G. ONE was Aunt Ida; I'll have to recollect the other two names because they were both dead before I was born.

M And you were educated in Toma?

C G. Yes, I was educated in the Toma schools, Toma High School.


M. What year was that?

C G. I graduated from Toma High School in 1921. No, I entered in '21 and graduated in '25.

M What sort of work was your father in?

C G. My father was a farmer until I was 11 years old, and he sold the farm and moved to Toma and worked at various jobs. He moved because that was the only chance we had - the children - getting to high school - was if we got off the farm.

M So he changed jobs from farming into---

C G. Various jobs that he had. 

C & (cont) He ran a taxi line for some years in Toma Wis.

M. What did you specialize in when you were in ~~High~~ high school?

C & I don't recall that I really specialized in high school, General courses.

M. What happened after you graduated from high school in 1925?

C & I spent two years working in Milwaukee - one year driving a truck with International Harvester Co., and a year with the Plankington (?) Packing Co., which was a branch of Swift & Co. before I got on to college.

M You went to college in 1927 - was that it? And where did you go to college.

C & 1927, University of Wis. at their Madison campus. That was the only ~~XXXXXX~~ university campus at that time.

M When you ~~went~~ into school did you know what you wanted to do ~~XXXX~~ as a result of your two years experience---a special ambition?

C & No, I just decided to train in business courses and I entered the School of Commerce. The packing company had offered me a pretty good job at the end of my junior year because I worked there each summer, as well as the year before. I was going to take it but my ~~XXXXX~~ <sup>older</sup> brother convinced me that I'd better finish the university first, and when I graduated ~~ed~~ from the university in 1931 those kind of jobs weren't available.

M. The Depression has already started and--

C & It was in full force

M Did the Depression have any impact on you and your thinking and your attitudes/- towards work for example, workers, and the plight of workers?

C & Well my first impression as far as the plight of workers was concerned came before that. It came when I was in high school in Toma. Toma had a rather substantial railroad industry, and I remember particularly my next door neighbor was a railroad worker - in fact my brother and I had spent some summers working in the railroad yards. And the railroad workers ~~were~~ came into a very difficult strike area, and the town was quite upset; and

I heard many comments about how horrible the strikers were. I couldn't quite picture my neighbor as they described. That was my first experience with unions. I guess it turned me to lean towards unions and workers more.

M. Just out of curiosity, what was the outcome of the ~~xxxx~~ strike in Toma? Was it resolved in favor of the union?

C. G. I'm not sure of that. I know that the railroad industry continued quite strong there after that, so apparently they (the r.r.) were successful. I know they didn't lose on it.

M Did the experience you had at the Univ of Wis have any long range influence or impact on you that you can recall?

C. G. In the ~~xxxx~~ School of Commerce I happened to have the good fortune of being able to join the ~~xxxx~~ <sup>Delta</sup> Sigma Phi Fraternity which was a professional commerce fraternity, training to go into business of some kind or other - we all were. We all anticipated that we would be great business men some day. I guess I didn't turn out quite that way - I turned out on the other side, which was my good fortune.

M Did you have any close associations from ~~xxxx~~ <sup>that</sup> experience in school with friendships and the like---

C. G. Yes. Some of them are continuing on.

M You graduated from the Unive of Wis in 1931 -- still at the height of the Depression - what options did you have? What were you able to do at that time?

C. G. The options were very few. I had worked part time in working my way through school, working in different clothing stores. I did that for a while. I had been trained in Accounting, but not as a CPA - I had some training. I had an opportunity to work with a Public Accounting firm for a few months during a rush period, and then found myself with nothing to do. And that was in '32. Well, I had some fraternity brothers who were

*Elgin*

in the same situation - one of them, from Elton Ill., and I got together and decided to go into business. We were going to go into the advertising business. ~~and~~ we rented a hand operated mimeograph machine and a typewriter and got in the car and went to go and look for a place to go into business and we wound up in White~~te~~water Wis. We had intended to go into a larger city but we were running out of gas and funds, so we located in business there with \$50. I spent ~~xxxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ about two years in that business, *daily advertising*

~~My This was basically xxxxxxxx accounting xxx~~

~~xxx No it was in daily advertising xxx~~

M Were you able, despite the Depression, to keep your haed above in <sup>water</sup> this?

C Q. Yes. We each of us had only ourselves to take care of and managed to live on a dollar a day apiece for a year; put the rest of the money in the business. We got along quite well that way.

M. This brought you up then to 1934. What happened in 1934?

C Q. A fraternity brother of mine who was working for the state called me from Madison. He was in charge of distributing surplus commodities for relief clients. He said he was in trouble becuase they were now going to start sending him meat and he didn't know anything about handling meat and since I <sup>had</sup> worked in a packing house ~~where~~ would I come up and help him set up some mea<sup>t</sup> projects. So I turned the business over to my partner, [the advertising business], and moved to Mad<sup>i</sup>son Wis and worked for the Wis Emergency Relief Administration; and went around the state setting up projects for ~~distri~~ distributing surplus commodities to relief clients.

M This was a federally funded program?

C Q. Yes.

M Did the state operate the money - was the money given to the state?

Were you a state or a federal employee?

C G. I was a state employee, The commodities were all shipped ~~into~~ through Washington headquarters - I think Aubrey Williams was in charge then. We would merely get notice that there was a trainload of food coming and we had to get those cars side-tracked off into various cities and unloaded, unpacked and repacked for the relief clients.

M It was a complicated task then.

C G. It was fun.

M But it was still difficult--

C G. As long as you didn't have any spoilage it was all right. The relief clients were the workers who did the packing and distribution. They were employed at minimum amounts. When we started shipping this meat we had to set up our ~~pack~~ projects where we had cold storage facilities. But they weren't hard to find because there were enough abandoned businesses- you could find abandoned packing plants and ice houses- so we didn't have too much difficulty.

M Did this experience bring you any closer to any feeling for the worker?

C G. It sure did. When you saw the conditions under which they were living, you wondered why there wasn't a revolution. One of the interesting features we had was when they started shipping us cotton by the trainload, and told us to make mattresses. The Simmons Co in Kenosha, the mattress manufacturer, objected very strongly to that. We made it clear to them that the ~~people~~ <sup>(who)</sup> were getting mattresses from us would never buy from them because they never had mattresses before. We set up mattress projects by finding someone who had worked in that kind of a ~~field~~ field, was unemployed, put him in as foreman and had them make mattresses. We distributed mattresses all around the state to people who had nothing but a straw tick(?) before that.

M What was the reaction of people who were receiving these services from you? Were ~~they~~ they appreciative? Did they look upon it as a state project?

Did they look upon it as something Franklin Roosevelt had done? How was this perceived by the people receiving such aid?

C. G. Generally, I think it was received quite well. It was surprising, sometimes, that they weren't more violent about it. I only had one bad experience: on a Saturday morning, I received a call from ~~the xxxxxx~~ LaCrosse Wis which was about 120 miles from Madison, saying that there was 2 carloads of meat there without ice. What should they do? I said "Have a half-dozen men there ~~at~~ <sup>in</sup> 2 hours and I'll be there and we'll get ice in those cars." And they said we can't get them because it's Saturday morning, and I said you'll get them or they won't get any relief products. When I got there in about 2½ hours, the men were there. That was the only bad experience I had. They were willing to work Saturday morning. We iced the cars and got by <sup>(?)</sup>

M. Did you have any security with the state at that time or was this merely a temporary position?

C. G. I was not under the civil service, no. It was a temporary position. M. Wisconsin, by this time, had pioneered in the civil service system, had they not?

C. G. By this time, Wis had gone through the danger of losing it (Civil Service). This was in '34 and '35.

M. How did this come under attack then? ...the depression, I take it.

C. G. It had come under attack in a strange way, and that's how the union happened to be formed, because of this--AFSCME was formed because of this. You will recall, historically, if not from memory, the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt. With his election, there was a Democratic landslide in many areas including the state of Wis, which had the custom of Republican governors. (There was) a three party system: the Republican, Democratic and Progressive.

With the election of Roosevelt, the Democrats won. A fellow by the name of Schmederman(?) was elected governor. In those time, jobs weren't easy to find, and Wis had a pretty good Civil Service system, I didn't happen to be under because I didn't take the Civil Service Test; I was an emergency employee. The Democrats looked at this situation of these state jobs which may not pay much, but they were paying quite regularly. And they wanted to put Democrats in those jobs. Roy Kabista(?) can give you a better history of that than I. The attempt was made to abolish, or at least change, the ~~Wis~~ Civil Service system. At the time, Col. A.A. Geary(?), who had been a state Senator, was Director of the Civil Service in Wis. He saw this danger of losing a good merit system—the Civil Service System—in the state, because of the political pressures from the newly elected Democratic landslide. He went to <sup>Paul</sup> Pal Smith, who was the AF of L Area Director for Wis., and talked with him about it, and, as I understand it, the two of them talked with Henry Hohl(?) and Jack Hanley, ~~the~~ President and Secretary-Treasurer, of the Wis State Fed of Labor. They decided that they had better get an organization going among the Wis state employees, to see if they could keep the civil service system - stop this legislation from ~~the~~ abolishing the civil service. (I've got to remind you - I'm sure Roy could give you a better description of this than I.) There was a young man working in the personnel dept of the Civil Service by the name of ~~Arnold~~ <sup>Z</sup> Arnold Sander.(?) I understand that Col. Geary selected him to start this union; I think that started back in '32, '33 - at least by '34, I hadn't been involved at that time - (not until) after it started. (It) came into existence(as) the Wis State Employees Association. I think that they received a federal charter directly from the AF of L - I think they were chartered federally by the AF of L at that time. During those few short years, Arnold <sup>Z</sup> Sander did quite a job in expanding the union, and they did protect the civil service - <sup>Z</sup> they saved it. <sup>Z</sup> Sander became more and more interested - he was from Two River



Wis.; his father, I understand, was quite a liberal - (what was it they were known as then?) Arnold got the idea of expanding this union further, and getting it on a national basis to establish and protect Civil Service throughout state and ~~federal~~ local government. There developed from that the urging, on his part, to bring organized public employees together, because there were a number of them established in other parts of the country; a number of federal charters. I could name off a few of those places - in Milwaukee, the street sanitation department had a federal local; in Minneapolis, there was one; St. Paul; some state employees in Minnesota, some city employees in Duluth MN; city employees in Toledo Ohio; the state hospital in Elgin Illinois; some city employees in Chicago; ~~some state~~ a small group of state employees in the labor department out in Virginia; city employees in Atlanta Georgia; county employees in Fulton County at Atlanta GA; state employees in Denver Colorado; these were all ~~federally~~ federally chartered local unions, I understand, Sander got the names and addresses of the officers of these ~~places~~ places, and started to contact them by correspondence, regarding establishing a national union. We later chartered all those different places that I've mentioned. I could name off the local union numbers for most of them for you, Am I going too far on this?

M: No, this is fine.

C: ~~Q.~~ We did not have an international or a national charter. The American Federation of Government Employees was in existence at the time, and had been for some years. We (AFSCME, as it is now known) was included under the AFGE for a short period of time. So, from being federal locals, these unions became lodges of the AFGE. I can recall the numbers - the federal local numbers I think were five or six digits; the AFGE was a four digit number. Up until 1936, October 1936, we were a part of the AFGE. Until

we received a charter from the AF of L.

M. That union which became AFSCME actually urged to become a separate international under the AF of L.

C G. Yes. (The union) which became AFSCME held ~~xxx~~ its first convention in Chicago in 1935. That was prior to my activity in it. I became involved in it about July or August of 1936.

M. Had you known Arnold Zander before you became involved in it?

C G. I had only known him from attending meetings that he had called of State employees before we joined WSE. (?)

M What was your first impression, do you recall? (When) you first heard Arnold speak or present his ideas?

C G. I agreed with his ideas because I could see what was happening and ~~what~~ that the state employees needed organization as well as other workers, and of course joined.

M Why did AFSCME affiliate itself with the AF of L rather than the CIO. It has always seemed that they were a very progressive union, and certainly some of the progressive unions of that time chose the option of going with John L. Lewis and that group. Is there any special reason that you can recall?

C G. I would say the special reason was that the CIO, such as it was known then, was just getting started in '35. THE WSEA(?) - the state employees in Wis and these other unions were organized prior to that ~~time~~ time.

Arnold Zander's contact came through Col Geary and his acquaintance with Paul Smith of the AF of L, and Henry Hohl and Jack Hanley, <sup>officers</sup> of the state AF of L. There was no CIO in Wis ~~at that time~~ at that time. So, it would be only natural to turn to the established <sup>labor movement</sup> way of maneuvering(?).

M: We were discussing your first impressions of ARNold Zander; how you first came to know ~~xxxx~~ him, hear about him, ~~xxxxxxx~~ <sup>and his work</sup> Would you give me the background of how you became involved in AFSCME, and take on an active role in a leadership capacity as Secretary-Treasurer?

C: I sure can. It's a rather strange story. I was trained in ~~Accounting~~ <sup>accounting</sup>, but ~~I~~ was working in surplus commodities for the state and I got a call from Leo Dugan who was one of the older fraternity brothers, and had graduated some years before I had. I think he was working with the tax department <sup>of</sup> for the state then, and he asked me if I would like to help him, work with him in setting up the books for the union, and take care of the books afterwards on a ~~part~~ part time basis. He had been asked to do it, but he didn't want to spend the part time on it. I thought "Well, sure, that would be fine." A little part time extra work with a little extra income would come in handy, with a \$150 salary, which wasn't too bad in those days. I think it was ~~xxx~~ around June <sup>or</sup> July of 1936, or maybe earlier than that, that year, that Leo and I sat down and set up the bookkeeping system for AFSCME. It was a rather simple bookkeeping system - it was a small organization, We had the matter of identification of unions because some of them had come in as federal locals ~~with~~ with a five digit number, and then there was the fact we were part of under (?) the AFT, (?) and they had the four digit numbers- but it wasn't too much of a job. We set up a bookkeeping system. I met Arnold again, more personally, at that time, and discussed the situation with him. He offered me the job of keeping the books on an hourly basis at night after I got through working with the state, or whenever I had free time, if I was out traveling, and I would just come in and do it when I had the opportunity to do it. So I did that. Then came the convention--

M: May I go back one minute? At this time, keeping the books involved getting per capita amounts from the various locals affiliated with AFSCME?

C: Roy Kabista was Secretary-Treasurer at the time. My work was just doing the bookkeeping on it. I didn't have to do the correspondence - just keep the records up.

M: This would be the original journal.

C: The original journal entries, and keeping the records of all income, all expenses, making up an operating statement, and a financial statement each month.

M: Was this a difficult time financially for the union in this period when you worked part time?

C: The income was very meager.

M: Was it at a point where you were constantly called upon to find out if there was enough money to do anything?

C: Always. It was very limited funds. Arnold was the only one that traveled, and his travel expenses were minimum, mostly by train and hotel rooms \$4 and 2 or 3 dollars a day for meals.

M: But you still were called in to find out if we have enough to conduct this program, expand negotiations, and the like?

C: Yes. About the only program was Arnold's travel to the other unions that he had been in contact with, in getting them to affiliate. And his travels to Washington D.C. and talking with President Green(?) about getting a national charter.

M: At this time, were you paying dues to the AF of L?

C: Yes, ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ but I forget just what the tax was to the AF of L directly but we were. And then we - when we switched into the AFT (?) we paid the per capita tax to the AFT.

M. Please - continue then with the convention you were describing,  
C. In August of 1936 - I didn't attend that convention - it was held at the Book-Cadillac Hotel in Detroit. By that time we had included in AFSCME a large group <sup>out</sup> of the Welfare Department in New York. Under the leadership of a fellow by the name of Abram <sup>Flaxner</sup> Flax(?). We also had some membership in Pennsylv. that I wasn't acquainted with at all, just who they were - I think they were state employees, probably mostly in the welfare field, same as in New York. I didn't know much about the operations of the union except the financial operations. When they returned from that convention, (it had been held under the auspices of the AFGE, originally; the first part of it, I think). A fellow by the name of Babcock was president of the AFGE at that time, from what I could gather, Babcock was quite happy to see us on our own, and not a part of the AFGE. I gather that we held our own convention, which included the group from New York and Pennsylv. Most of our membership was in the midwest; Zander was president, elected in the '35 convention of about 35 members in Chicago, and Kabista was the Secretary-Treasurer. When they came back from the convention in Detroit Arnold was still President, but we had a new Secretary-Treasurer by the name of David Kanes(?) out of Pennsylv., whom I had never met. This is information they give you now as gathered from word of mouth from people; I have no records to support it, but apparently <sup>Flaxner</sup> Flaxner(?) had enough votes to cause great concern on the part of Arnold Zander, who was being re-elected as President. The result was that to keep peace in the family of this small union (now probably, with the group from New York and Pennsylv. included, maybe 8000 members) (I think that Zander had the majority of votes, but it maybe was pretty close in that convention) arrangements were made that he would continue

*Flaxner's*

as President, but Flaxner's man Dave Kanes would be the Secretary-  
Treasurer. And Roy Kabista would take over the job ~~of~~ that Arnold  
originally had as the Executive Officer of the Wis State Employees Assoc.  
That's where it stood. Dave Kanes came to Madison (interrupt me anytime  
you want) and took over the office of Sec-Treas.; <sup>(was)</sup> installed in  
the office of Sec-Treas physically. We had offices in the First National  
Bank Building on the corner of the square and Menona (?) Avenue, I  
think it was the 7th floor. The President had an office and a secretary,  
the Secretary had an office and a secretary. The secretary <sup>(- Treas)</sup> ~~(S-er-s?)~~ sat  
in a central office and there was a third office that <sup>was</sup> used at night  
for bookkeeping and accounting work.

M: Did you continue, then, after Mr. Kane's came in?

C. Oh yes. I <sup>continued</sup> in that,

M. In the same capacity?

C. Yes, and I reported directly to Mr. Kanes as well as to Mr. Zander.

M: <sup>How</sup> Did you find him in terms of a work relationship?

C. He was easy enough to deal with. I had to interrupt his reading books  
to go in and give him reports. The only thing that I <sup>don't</sup> recall of his doing  
was some correspondence and reading in his office. I recall of his ever  
getting and contacting people. The highlight to me was when I went in  
with a financial statement, a profit and loss statement, or what we call  
~~the~~ <sup>an</sup> operating statement, and said "Mr. Kanes, we took a loss last month."  
And he said, "Well, does that make any difference?" I said "Well of course."  
And he said, "Well, it shouldn't make any difference - we're a non-profit  
organization! Does it make any difference if we show a profit or a loss?"  
I didn't have much dealing with Dave after that except to give him copies  
of the statements.

M: Did his position as Sec-Treas during this year or two when he served---

C. Less than that.

M. Less than a year -- was there any indication that he was an appointee of or a candidate for Mr. Flaxner? Were there signs of factionalism within -- between that group and Arnold Zander?

C. I didn't discern it because I was only there on a part time basis, I don't know what the relationship -- if there was any -- between Zander and Kanes. Maybe there was, but I don't think there was much of a relationship between the two of them at all.

M: Kanes had no influence to deter what ~~Zander~~<sup>Arnold</sup> wanted to do in his work? He (Arnold) was still out organizing, and building up an organization, and Kanes did not stand in his way in this respect.

C. Right. The next experience that I had that was a highlight in my career was that we had built up enough membership and income to employ one field representative. Arnold employed Frank Schneider from Toledo, an old union man -- a ~~XXXX~~ city employee -- out of Local 7. I'll take that back -- it wasn't my next highlight of experience. In October of '36 we received our charter from the AF of L as an international union. That meant going back over the records, as far as the local unions were concerned, issuing the charters, numbering the local unions. ~~and~~ Wis State Employees had the charter ~~number~~ number one, of ~~course~~ course; Milwaukee was number 2; Fulton County GA was number 3; Atlanta city was number 4; Denver, Colorado had number 5 (these numbers were rather important to these people).

M. How did you make the decisions as to who got the numbers?

C. I didn't.

M. How ~~were~~<sup>were</sup> the decisions made?

C. I assume that Arnold made the decisions.

M. Did it have anything to do with the seniority of the founding of the local?

C, I don't think so. They had elected a board at the convention in Detroit of eleven men (I guess it was all men) that included Abe Flaxner, two others from New York, and Dave Kanes as Sec-Treas. It included Arnold Zander as President, ~~and~~ George Turner from Richmond Virginia as Vice-President, Frank Schneider, whom I've already mentioned, from Toledo, Fred Stevens from Fulton County GA (I think he was a deputy sheriff), Cliff Noxen(?) from Denver State Employees, Jim Clancy from Minnesota, C.T. Olson from Chicago ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ~~I might~~ --I think there were 13 on the Board including the two officers. The records will show all the names - I might have missed Brad Chase from Elgin - he might have been on the Board.

M: Did this mean any difference in the structure of the International - the way in which -

C. Yes. (It was) a matter of chartering. Do you charter each of these as individual local unions? Yes, we did, generally. The Fulton City employees, and the Atlanta city employees, the Toledo city employees, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, St. Paul. St. Paul was number 8, Minneapolis was number 9. ~~DM~~ Duluth came in later. It meant a seven to four Board, which became important a few months later. Very important. The question came up of chartering the new York ~~xxxxxxxx~~ ~~xx~~ local, and Arnold chartered it as one local union. Flaxner wanted a number of charters within the department of Public Welfare, or whatever he had in New York. They represented about 4,000 members. This became a very critical situation in February of 1937. I mentioned - in my own personal experience - and the employment of Frank Schneider, which I think is quite important. I got a call in my office working for the state, along in December of '36, I think, from Frank Schneider. He was in ~~Detroit~~ Detroit. He says, "Gordon, you've got to get on the train and be over here in a day or two," I said, "I'm working for the state." He



said "I don't give a damn." I said "Check with Arnold Zander." He said "He's not there, he's out traveling someplace. Get the money and get on a train and get over here." I was - you know - a little bit concerned about whether I should do it or not. But I did. ~~I went to Detroit.~~ I went to Detroit, I don't even recall if I got in touch with Zander to get approval or not, I got over to Detroit and checked in at a hotel near the courthouse. Pretty soon, Frank Schneider shows up, I hadn't met him. He says, "We've got a good one going," I said, "What is it," He said "I need your accounting help. The Hotel and Restaurant Employees have organized a local out at Eloise Hospital." (the Wayne County hospital at Eloise - a huge hospital, I think some 8-9 hundred members,) He said "I'm claiming them under jurisdiction, and I think I've got the business agent talked into it. Tomorrow morning we're going over to his office - you're going over the books with him on the membership that he had taken in - how much initiation <sup>fees</sup> and dues they've paid - you're going to agree with him on how it cost him to do that. We're claiming that membership and any excess amount of collections over his expenses." I think the business agent's name was Lou Walters. Well, I didn't have a very good night that night, but I did (it) - Frank and I went over there and we worked it out. Before ~~xxxx~~ the day was over, I had a check for 11 or 12 hundred dollars from the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union. I was soon on my way back to Madison and deposited the check before they stopped payment on it! We had no right to claim that money, *Really.*

M: On what basis did you make the claim? Was it under ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~  
~~XX~~ like article 20 of the AFL-CIO?

C. There wasn't any article 20. It was just that Frank Schneider <sup>had</sup> has convinced him or influence <sup>to</sup> him that those were our members and that he could just reimburse for what it cost him to organize them. And we took the Local <sup>(it)</sup> and <sup>local.</sup> became local 25 - a big one.

M, And you continued to hold that,

C, Yes, It was an interesting experience,

M, What was Arnold Zanders response when ~~he~~ you told him what had happened?

C, He wasn't unhappy about it, It was a good booster, financially and in members. That's how local 25 came into existence - it's been a good local ever since, ~~There's~~ I was still a part time employee. I think it was in January that Arnold suggested that I'd better come on full time, and he offered me \$50 a month more than I was getting. My friends all told me I was crazy to leave a secure state job to go with such a risk but I went, and was there for many years afterwards. The next event was in February of '37. There was a meeting of the International Executive Board in our headquarters office - Arnold's office - which was a very <sup>good sized</sup> ~~large~~ office, I could hear a lot of rumbling and shouting going on, and it went on pretty much the day. Along about 3 o'clock in the afternoon C.T. Olson from Chicago came out and said "Gordon, come on with me. We've got to go out and have a drink somewhere." So, I went with him, and we went over to the Park Hotel. He said "Things are rough." I guess the argument was ~~whether~~ largely on whether Flaxner would get one local union or whether he would get a whole series of them - a series of them gave him a lot of votes in the convention, because voting then, under the constitution, wasn't on the basis of one vote for every member - it was a graduated scale - a large local's vote went down the larger it was. Before that Board meeting finished, or as it finished, Dave Kanes was no longer Sec-Treas because, under Flaxner's terminology, they pulled out. Under Arnold's terminology, we kicked them out. We had ~~about~~ between 10 and 11 thousand members, and when they left, it left us with little over 6,000. That was in February '37.

And there was no Sec-Treas around! So the Board says, "Gordon, you're Sec-Treas

That's how I became involved.

M: You were elected by the Board and served until the next convention-  
C. In August of '37.

M: At this point, then, did you- what was the situation in terms of financial- the financial situation of the union as a result of the loss of the New York members? Did this put you in a tailspin or were you stable enough to continue?

C: It didn't really put us in a tailspin. We had one field representative and the president, myself, and two secretaries. But we were able to do with that.

M: <sup>Was</sup> ~~What~~ the field representative - did his responsibilities include primarily organizing or representing?

C: Organizing.

M: So that person was out actively in new areas organizing <sup>the</sup> locals. At this point, did you work closer with Arnold Zander? Inevitably, you would have had to, because of the nature of the job, Would you say at this time you started to get to know him better and to see him in operation?

C: Yes, and respect him more.

M: What sort of a person was he? What motivated him? You've indicated he was out on the road all the time - he had a drive. Would you describe it as a sense of mission?

C: I would describe it that this union was built on a sense of mission, or maybe two missions. One - to protect the merit system where it existed, and second - to protect and improve the conditions of the employees in state and local government service. That was the tone of our end - that was the tone of it. And it was good. It even was reflected in the community around Madison where we had our headquarters - "This is a good union, a decent union." That was the kind of tone that Arnold gave to the union.

M: Let me ask you ~~you~~ a few other questions - this has come up about Mr. Zander - how did he relate to the various types of workers? He has often been described as an intellectual, and yet many of the workers in this union <sup>over-</sup>uneducated, <sup>they</sup> did menial tasks in public service and the like - in sanitation, in hospital work and the like - how did he relate to them? C. He held their respect, They had very high regard for him, I can't say that he had really a close relationship, a human relationship. The relationship was more one of "He's our great leader," (they) really (had) a high regard for him - people in all walks in the public service field. Public officials as well as workers in maybe say the lower grades of employment, They all seemed to respect him. I did - great respect for him.

M: What sort of relationship did you have working with him. ~~Was~~ Did he have a sense of humor, or was he strictly business?

C. It was pretty much business, but he <sup>also</sup> had a sense of humor. He'd sit down and play bridge, play ping pong, go to lunch together. He didn't relax easily, but it was easy to work with him.

M: Am I correct that he was a Christian Scientist?

C: Yes.

M: Then that would preclude him drinking.

C: Yes.

M. Did that - this deep religious conviction, with such restrictions on behavior - impede him at all? Do you think that that was in part what gave him the sense of mission, because he represented a minority religious group?

C: That may have given him a sense of mission, but Arnold's father, I think, was known as a Milwaukee Socialist. And Arnold was (a Socialist).

M: That's a very curious combination, isn't it - between Christian Scientist and Socialism?

C: A Milwaukee Socialist is a special breed. A Wisconsin Socialist is a special breed, in my estimation.

M: That may have transcended <sup>the</sup> his restraints of his religious views - they're not oriented toward social problems at all, to any degree, in the Christian Science Church. Did this also apply to the (change sides )

In terms of other members of the Board, what type of leadership did he select, or at least, work well with?

C: ~~As~~ I can describe to you the personalities on the original Executive Board that might be of some insight into Arnold's tolerance, because he was not a user of alcoholic beverages, I've mentioned Fred Stevens from Fulton County GA. I think he was a deputy sheriff. I wouldn't say that Fred was a civil rights activist, and I don't know what his habits were in Atlanta. But when they were at a Board meeting, Fred would hit it pretty hard. Hard enough, one time, that when Arnold drove him to Milwaukee for something, they had to stop along the ~~route~~ road to relieve Fred. But Arnold was patient with people. C.T. Olson, who invited me out for a drink, was a pretty heavy drinker at Board meetings. Not that they were drunk during the Board meeting, but they were heavy drinkers. Frank Schneider did pretty well at it. Cliff Noxen was<sup>a</sup> rather stately fellow, a very intelligent guy. George Turner, from Richmond VA, I think was a very good Baptist - would~~not~~ take a drink before dinner, a social drink, and would serve a drink in his home (I've been there in his home). Jim Clancy, from Minneapolis, a very devout Irishman. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Quite a gentleman. There was really quite a mixture on the Board.

M: I didn't mean to overemphasize drinking, but often in dealing with Christian Scientists - it's the same with Mormons - they are sometimes quite critical of those who do drink, etc., and I was trying to get an

insight into the type of person he was,

C: I recall Arnold commenting about other people that he associated with, ~~with~~ leaders of other unions, sometimes he'd make a rather critical comment about their drinking, I learned not to hesitate about it, or hide it all all - if we had dinner together and I wanted a drink before dinner I had a drink before dinner, and he was tolerant about it.

M: And you felt quite at ease.

C. Yes. Arnold and his wife Lola and Fern(?) and I traveled on several occasions together, to AFL conventions, in his car. Lola took the same views as Arnold did about drinking, but they didn't object if Fern and I wanted a cocktail before dinner. There wasn't any objection to it. We had good times traveling together. We had fun making those trips together.

M: You became one of his closest associates, in subsequent years, is that correct?

C: I think I was his closest associate.

M: As you came to know him, did you change toward him, in terms of gaining respect, understanding what made him operate, what motivated him?

C: We had a few times in our experience where we differed, on the operation of the union. Our biggest one came in 1950. Up until 1950 we had no disagreements.

M: Let me go back to a couple other points in this early period. How did your union associate with the other international unions? Were you an active participant in Madison and Wis in the AFT, in the state federation? Was there a good interaction between the different ones, were there any <sup>ma</sup> jurisdictional disputes that had to be worked out?

C: Not as far as the state itself was concerned, but we were in a constant turmoil on jurisdiction because in granting us the charter, there were members of the Executive Council who did not want that to happen. Yes,

... jurisdictional turmoil. Dan Toltman(?) of the Teamsters wasn't

particularly happy that we got the charter, The Hog(?) carriers - Joe Muerschi - who was not on the Executive Council, but he was completely anti to our having a charter in the public service, Our charter was granted on the basis that we could not include in our membership those under the jurisdiction of other international unions, And to get the definition of the charters of other international unions was practically an impossibility in some cases, because their charters were so broad that you couldn't get a definition, We constantly had a running battle - Arnold did - with Bill McCuttridge(?) of the Building Service, Bill Cooper, the Sec-Treas and I got along well together, Arnold and Bill McCuttridge didn't because their's was a different position, We had pretty good support from the Electrical Workers - <sup>Joe</sup> ~~Bill~~ Canan was then in Chicago - <sup>before he became an Internat'l Sec-Treas -</sup> he was quite an influence in the ~~Chicago~~ Chicago labor movement, In Wis we had some problems within the state federation of labor, from national unions there, but not from ~~any~~ Henry Hohl(?) or Jack Hanley, the officers, We had good support from them, And we participated actively in it, I participated more than Arnold did in the Madison Federation of Labor, And we had some problems there on jurisdiction, I recall one meeting particularly that was rather bitter, Steve Clark, Harold Springer(?) and I came out pretty good in that meeting, but we had some rather bitter battles on jurisdiction with the laborers(?), the building service...

M: What was the machinery to resolve these jurisdictional disputes, This was before there was a so-called article 20 that was later passed, Did you go to the offices of the AF of L and plead your case? Did they have the power to resolve it in favor of <sup>one of</sup> two parties?, or more than one party?

C: Yes. President Bill Green, whom I respected very highly, would listen patiently and said "I shall write a strong letter to President So-and-So, and see if we can't get this resolved." I was in President Green's office

in the old AF of L building on a problem with Joe Muerschi of the Laborers, President Green said to me, "Well, Gordon, have you talked with President Muerschi?" "Yes," I said, "I've talked with President Muerschi." "And what did Pres Muerschi say?" "He said, 'Keep your god-damn hands off the people we want.'" He (President Green) said, "What was that?" I said, "President Muerschi told me to keep my god-damn hands off the people that he wanted." If you knew President Green, that was quite a <sup>jolt.</sup> ~~joke~~. I thought I might as well quote it. "I certainly will write a strong letter to President Muerschi," which he did. It didn't do any good, but he wrote the letter. That was the jurisdictional situation.

M: Did you have any relationships with any unions not affiliated with the AF of L? Any of the CIO unions - did you get any help from them, or work with them?

C: No, you see, after <sup>Gordon</sup> ~~ED~~ Flaxner left, or was kicked out, whichever side you want to take the definition from, he went to the CIO and got chartered as the United Public Workers of America from the CIO. And we had competition. We had problems with our local unions, because if we couldn't give them the services they thought they should have, with our limited resources, they could use the ~~xxx~~ threat of going to the CIO. And same with those that Flaxner organized - he had the same problem - they could threaten to leave there and come with us.

M: After Flaxner went out and you came in, <sup>in this period</sup> ~~this was~~ after 1937, was there a smoother operation as a result of his absence?

C. Yes,

M. Would say this was reflected in the growth of AFSCME?

C. Yes, very much so. It operated very smoothly within the organization.



M: What was Arnold's view on the situation in Europe in the late 1930's, particularly in Germany and the pact <sup>between</sup> ~~with~~ Russia and Germany? Was he an isolationist? Did he support Roosevelt? How did he stand on this one?

C: He supported Roosevelt. ~~XXXXXX~~ Arnold was a World Federalist, if that gives you an answer to his views on Europe, I never discussed it too much with him, but he certainly was a strong supporter of President Roosevelt, of the World Federalist movement. He wanted to be an officer of the Americans for Democratic Action, and our Board influenced him not to get lined up party-wise.

M: Did you have in your union, like so many did, <sup>such</sup> as the UAW, <sup>and</sup> the Steelworkers, <sup>and</sup> the <sup>mine</sup> Farmworkers, any strong factional alignments based upon political parties such as the Communist party or the Proletariat Party, or any Socialist party and the like?

C: We had trouble with Communists.

M: Did this result in a major split within the organization? Were they ever a major force prior to the war?

C: No major split, no major problem after Flaxner and his group left. That's <sup>for me</sup> where the real problem was. It was healthy, that we got rid of that problem earlier.

M: What impact did the war have on the leadership?

C: By that time, we had grown enough to convince Col Geary to leave the Director of Personnel's office and come work for us as our Civil Service Council. Col Geary was a former colonel in ~~the~~ World War I. He went back into the service as a colonel in World War II. We lost him during the war. We lost some of our leadership in the service, of course, I wanted to go in. ~~The~~ Colonel discouraged me, but I <sup>made</sup> application to the Navy and they wanted to take my secretary and not me. They offered to take my secretary right away after I had written them a letter giving them my qualifications. I didn't make it - I stayed with the union. And the

Colonel's advice was good, I guess, that I do that,

M: At this time, in 1941, <sup>(if)</sup> you had to name the major <sup>groups</sup> that you represented, or which was strongest in the union, what would they have been?

C: Hospitals, city employees, street workers, county highway employees, mostly in ~~the~~ the labor force - hospitals and labor force. Not too much in the clericals. We did in the state services get some clerical.

M: At this point, you didn't have any police,

C: No.

M: Was the issue of a no-strike pledge a concern? ~~of~~ These weren't vitally in the war interest, but did you <sup>take</sup> such a pledge, or did the union take such a pledge?

C: I don't recall that it was an issue. We didn't use the strike.

M: What happened during the war years, as far as your membership was concerned?

C: It grew; we had one or two years that showed very small growth. We continued to grow. We had one problem that Arnold invited unto himself; that was a gap in having conventions. He convinced the Board that we should not, during the war, have conventions. <sup>and</sup> At it went on too long a time. We skipped too many. And when we did have a convention, there was trouble.

M: ~~What~~ What was his rationale for not having conventions?

C: His rationale that he used was travel - expense and so forth; people were encouraged not to hold unnecessary conventions.

M: In 1944 was a turning point in your career, to some degree. At least your title changed within the union. If my research is correct, you were appointed Executive Assistant to the President.

C: Was it '44? I've forgotten just what year it was.

M: That's the date I have.

C: The way you can tell is when Jack Colier ~~was~~ became Sec-Treas.

M: What did that involve as far as your responsibilities to the union were concerned? ... a closer working relationship with Arnold?

C: Not ~~only~~ <sup>any</sup> closer, because I don't think it could have been closer. I was (already) somewhat his assistant; ~~as~~ <sup>not</sup> as defined by the Constitution as Sec-Treas - I didn't do that. I worked as Arnold's assistant and Sec-Treas. I worked as an organizer; I worked as a negotiator; I went out an organized local unions, in the <sup>(local)</sup> area particularly, I attended a lot of union meetings that he (Arnold) couldn't attend. I think I was serving as his assistant long before he officially did that. And he talked with me about it: he needed an assistant; would I be interested, (It would be) ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ leaving an elected office and taking an appointed office working under him. My answer was, "At the present time, I'm second in Command <sup>in this union.</sup> ~~of the union.~~ All I want to do is stay second in command." And he said, "YOU will be," And I took the job as his assistant. The Board, under Arnold's recommendation, appointed H.C. Collier from El Paso Texas, who served as Sec-Treas. He was a very fine gentleman. He was not an organizer, he was not outgoing. He was very quiet. We had \_\_\_\_\_ (?) as an Accountant by then, so we didn't need the Sec-Treas., but Heck(?) did a good job. That was until 1948.

M: And then you were re-elected Sec-Treas at that time. Let me ask you this: in the period from '44-'48, did your union have problems relating to the returning of service men? Or finding them jobs, as it did it the auto plants, for example.

C: I don't think we had that problem. How would you characterize the post-war period as far as your union was concerned, Was it one of rapid growth, sudden change, or was it steady?

C: It was mostly a steady growth. We had a couple years in there where the - there is a schedule showing our membership each year; I'd have to look that over to tell you which was the poor year, I don't think we experienced a year without some growth; ~~(and)~~ only one or two years where it stayed almost constant.

M: Originally, in the earlier parts of our discussion, you've mentioned certain cities where you had locals, and you also indicated that the strength was in the midwest. At what point did you start increasing your membership on the East coast? And, if you did, on the West coast?

C: We had substantial membership in Massachusetts.

M: From the beginning?

C: From quite early. We had a little local in Boston, the Bridgetenders(?), probably 10 or 12 members, <sup>that</sup> (it has) been in existence for many years. I don't recall just how Mass. organized so rapidly except that it came as a result of the work of Bill Ward, who later became <sup>G.</sup> the Vice-President of the International union. (It was) quite early he became a vice president.

M: What kind of work groups were in the state of Mass?

C: State employees.

M: In what period did you come back into New York city, in that area?

C: We came into New York City when we took over - brought in - four unions in the sanitation department, under the four horsemen - John Deluery(?), Ellis Shapiro - each had sections of the sanitation department, I cannot remember <sup>but I can find</sup> the names of the other two that we called the Four Horsemen. There were four unions in the department of sanitation that gave us a good base in New York City.

M: That's ~~what they~~ <sup>what they</sup> (the Four Horsemen) were commonly referred to as?

C: Yes. That was during the LaGuardia regime. And then we did get established in the Welfare Department.

M: At what point did you start going into the state of Pennsylv, New Jersey and those areas?

C: Not much in New Jersey but we did get a start in Pennsylv when Jim McDevitt was president of the state federation of labor, We hired a fellow by the name of Bob Lonerman(?) as the organizer and representative in that state. That was probably in the early '40s.

M: ~~Was Atlanta~~ Was Atlanta the only southern state(sic) you represented? (And) Fulton County ? Did you have much ~~strength~~ strength in the South?

C: We had some over in Texas, Of course we had a Board member from Texas for a while, (It was) around Houston - I think it was Tarrant(?) County employees, We had a local there quite early,

M: You had one in Denver, (that) you referred to earlier, What about California?

C: Yes, we got established among the state employees in California in a small way, That was early in the '40s too, That's where you saw this picture of Richardson(?) - he was from Napa State Hospital, Yes, we had established there, and in San Diego, We had a good local out of San Diego of city employees.

M: Would it be accurate to say that by the 1950's your base had swung away from predominance in the midwest to a broader geographical coverage?

C: Yes, We had a good local in San Diego; we had some county employees in Los Angeles; I think we had San Bernadino County in California (The employees in California were)mostly in the state service, Quite a few hospital employees, We had a good local in Portland Oregon, Local 103, We had ~~a~~ several good locals in the state of Washington; Seattle city employees, Dallihan(?), Spokane, We got established in Montana among the state employees, Pueblo city employees in Colorado and Colorado state employees, WE had spread our base considerably during the 1940s.

M: Minnesota was always a strong state.

C: Minnesota was strong, and we developed quite a bit in Michigan - Detroit, Wayne County, and outstate in Michigan, and the Michigan state employees.

M: In the 1950s, according to my notes, you were Sec-Treas from 1948 again until 1961. Is that an accurate statement?

C: Yes.

M: Were there any developments - I think I should mention that in our first interview I thought we'd stop anytime you wanted in the 50s - we've been very general in this way, and I'm hoping with the access to these records and some more intensive study, after getting a good rapport with you, that I'd like to come back with some more specific questions on special events in the 30s and 40s, possibly specific strikes that you may remember, where there is a gap in the record. I wanted to be general and get a broad sweep of your career, if we could, and then with the understanding that we can cover more specific detail in our next interview.

C: Yes, such things as the '38 convention ~~and~~ in Atlanta - I think I was at that conventon where we went on record not to oppose state and local government employees being federally income taxed. The 1940 convention in Duluth when we went on record to bring public employees (state and local government) employees under social security, and the problems we had in the movement with that. Those were highlights. The '47 convention of the AF of L where <sup>live</sup> practically put in a collective bargaining resolution at the AFL convention for state and local government employees and it was butchered terribly. You wouldn't recognize it if you read the resolution now in the proceedings.

M: Were there any changes in the voting regulations that you had in the union?

C: There were some changes, but the major change came when we changed over to one vote per member.

M: What year was that, do you recall?

C: No, I'd have to look that up. That was after Jerry Wurf(?) came in as president.

M: That's later, then, in the 60s. In this period, up to 1950, and indeed in the next decade, would you say that ~~Arnold~~ Arnold Zander increased his power or authority over the direction of the union? ~~Was he~~ As he stayed in longer, were there any dissident forces that crept in, and on what issues? How would you characterize them - were they issue oriented, or were they personality oriented?

C: The first challenge at all to his leadership was on personality, and that was, I think, 1946 in Chicago. The second was a real campaign to unseat him in 1948 in Boston, and that was a debacle that I can describe to you in more detail when you want it. The third was on an issue in 1950, and we split. That's the first time that Arnold and I had publicly differed. He promoted our going to the CIO, and I was the rallying point of staying with the AFL. And we stayed.

M: I want to get into this in more detail in our next meeting - this is very important. We're running out, right now, on the end of the tape, so maybe this is a good time. I've had you almost two hours on tape, so this is a good time.

C: I've enjoyed it.

M: Let me go off the record here, ~~if I can figure out how to do this.~~





This is September 30, 1985 at Chesapeake Country Club Estates,  
Busby Maryland

M-Philip Mason, Interviewer

C-Interviewee

Oral Interview - Gordon Chapman

M: Were there some things in the first part in your career up to  
1946 that we overlooked?

C: Yes, one very important one--in 1935. I had been in business  
in \_\_\_\_\_ and had met a lot of people. It was a college  
town and there were a lot of pretty girls in that town. I met  
Fern Everhardt. I knew her dad. Her dad was a dealer there and  
I had done business with him for a long time. I met her and  
eventually I convinced her to marry me.

M: How was her maiden name spelled?

C: E-V-E-R-H-A-R-D-T

M: Did she have any special interests at the time?

C: No, she had just graduated from college.

M: Also at the University of Wisconsin?

C: Well, it's now the University of Wisconsin--at Whitewater.  
She had a job--one of her friends had a job in the same town,  
Mayville Wisconsin. Her dad suggested to me that it might be  
well if I could wait a year. That was in '34 and I decided to do  
so. I was working in Madison then and had a reasonably good job,  
for those times. So we were married on June 28th, 1935.

M: So you just celebrated your 50th anniversary this year.

C: I celebrated my 50th anniversary this year.

M: Did your wife share with you the same interest in the union and union activities?

C: No, she didn't, and I never tried to convince her too much. Her remarks about the union and union activities is--the one thing it does is it keeps your husband away. I guess you realize that. I feel sorry for women who marry union men. You have to work hard because they're never home. That's not the only business that that happens, but it sure happens in the union business.

M: I've noticed that at convention meetings when I've been there and she has been there, she is quite at ease with the union officers and leaders.

C: Yes, she's at ease.

M: While we're speaking of your family--you had a son, as one article indicated, and you told me recently you have a daughter. How many children do you have?

C: We have two sons. Bruce, who is the oldest, is out now in Phoenix Arizona and is moving Dallas. I have Terry--he's the second one, and lives down near Savannah Georgia. Cheryl, the third one, is married to a Tennessee boy. She went to school in Tennessee, got her doctorate degree. She is teaching there, and her husband is principal of one of the elementary schools. They are pretty well established in Tennessee.

M: So there are three in all?

C: Yes.

M: What years were they born?

C: This may be a little difficult.

M: It is for me too. Were they born in the thirties?

C: I think Bruce was born in '39. Terry, in '42, and Sherry in '48.

M: There was a biographical sketch that I was reading which had your picture as a young man, and it indicated that you had one child. Were there any other things in retrospect before the year 1946 that I might have overlooked or didn't cover satisfactorily?

C: I think we covered them quite well. You asked about my relations with Arnold Zander and I told you. He was held in very high regard by me and by the people who worked with him, and by the members. Some people asked if he was aloof. Yes, I guess he was a little aloof. He was quite a student and a good speaker. He influenced a lot of people and then sometimes he had the problem of encountering somebody who wanted to differ with him, which is a natural thing in this business. He had several of those. They used to sit down and right him long letters. He would show them to me and I said, "Just file the letter and call them up and tell them you'll pay their expenses to have them come in and talk with you." But he wanted to answer their letters so he would write 8 page letters to go back. It never did resolve the problem. There were minor problems.

M: What happened during World War II to AFSCME? Was it effected, as other unions were in the switch to war related production?

C: No, we weren't effected that way. We were effected by losing some leaders. We lost Colonel Garry, who was our Civil Service Council. He was Colonel in the Army and he went back into service during the war. A lot of the major problems we had was

the emphasis on not holding conventions. Arnold took that a little bit too seriously. We had had a convention every two years. He got the Board to post-phone it several times, so we went four to six years without a convention. That caused a lot of antagonism out in the field. They wanted their convention.

M: By post-phoning the convention, did you also keep the incumbent in office, like Arnold Zander, so there was no election during this time?

C: Yes

M: The war ended in '45, '46, what happened to AFSCME? How did it adjust to peacetime economy?

C: We held our own and most of time. We grew some and we kept growing. Some years it was very small. About '43 and '44 the gross was very small, but we did keep growing. We adjusted to it alright. Then in the 40's the CIO started and they didn't effect us at first, but they took on the public service too. They set up a separate organization--government, civic employees organizations under the CIO. That gave us competition but not too bad.

M: Was that Milton Murry's organization?

C: Yes, Milton Murry.

M: What areas of growth did AFSCME experience after the war. Any particular geographic parts?

C: Mostly in the hinterland, in the smaller communities. Some in the big cities, but not too much in New York. There was quite a bit in Boston, some in Chicago--not too heavily there. It was mostly in the hinterland--county highway, state highway

departments and their institutions where most of the growth was. Not too much in the white collar field at that time, mostly the labor force.

M: Did the issue of recruitment of minorities, especially blacks, come up? Was this an area that AFSCME concentrated on?

C: We had black membership in Miami and Atlanta. Some of the unions, like the AFT, wrote to their people and told them that they had to clean it up. I didn't write a letter. I went into those areas and talked to the leaders. I said, "This is your problem. It has to be done and you work out how to do it. I don't want to come back here and find all White people sitting on one side of the hall and Blacks on the other. I want a mixed organization." That's the way it was when they went to their meetings at that time. We held a convention in Atlanta in '38, and I found out during the convention that the Black people could come in but they had to come in through the back door. I got letters from other communities from big cities inviting us to hold our convention there. My answer was, "We will consider it when we get assurance from you that there is no decision on Colored on membership attendance." I never received a reply back. That took care of the White problem in the South at that time. We just didn't go back South again. We went down for their local union meetings and their State Council Conventions, and they were mixed.

M: Did your position during this period change? Was in the late 40's when you became Executive Assistant to the President?

C: Yes, this was about '46.

M: Later you went back to become Secretary-Treasurer.

C: A fellow from El Paso Texas who was a wonderful guy and was a member of our Board. He accepted the position of Secretary-Treasurer. I told Arnold that I would make the change except that I accustomed to be second man in position and I liked to be considered as second man in position, although I wasn't a member of the Board. Then we had internal troubles. We had Director of Organization, by the name of Roderick McDonald and who was a very able guy. He did a lot travelling and we didn't have the resources that we should have. We should have raised our dues long before this but we didn't. He'd go into meetings with people and say, "Well, I'd hire a man and send him in here but Zander won't let me do it." Well, he couldn't do it. He didn't have the money to do it--he didn't tell them that. Then he got associated with another staff member from Pennsylvania--Robert Lonigan. \_\_\_\_\_ couldn't have Pennsylvania help because he worked that area. He had Philadelphia help too, which was bad. He associated himself with Bill Ward, up in Massachusetts. He was going to take over the Presidency. That was in 1948. He got a young fellow from Chicago who was Treasurer of one of our locals there. We got into a Convention in Boston and I had made arrangements with them to have typewriters and all the equipment available for us when we got there. Well the equipment was there but not any of it could run. I had to throw it all out and rent new equipment. I had, right in the state where the convention was, great opposition to deal with. Connor had not done travel. His people

didn't know it--he was a nice guy. They didn't know him and the situation got awfully rough. So I finally sat down and said that if we wanted to win this election I will have to go back and run again myself and not leave it up to Connor to try to carry his load. If we go back and work together I know we could do it. Well, we did that and it was pretty close. Our people were leaving on Thursday because most of the work had been done. I went to Arnold and said, "They're not going to have half of our people at the convention tomorrow. They can change the rules on this and throw out the old \_\_\_\_\_ convention if they want to." He said, "They won't do that." I said, "You agree, when we get into the convention tomorrow, we'll have somebody to make a motion to close off the convention and refer all in-coming work to the in-coming Board that controls the convention and send everybody home. If you'll do that, I'll call all of our friends around in the various hotels and tell them just to stick around long enough for the opening session." We did that and we got by on that. We closed off the convention, referred all unfinished work to the in-coming Board. We breathed easier and started home.

M: About this time after the war, Arnold Zander became interested in international affairs. He probably was always interested in it. Precisely what form did this interest take as far as AFSCME was concerned?

C: The first form it took was that he wanted to become active in Americans for Democratic Action. Being from Wisconsin, we didn't have to register our party to vote. We had three parties from

which we could vote--The Democratic Party, the Republican Party and the Progressive Party. You didn't have to register to become a member of any of those. We had Colonel Garry with us by then and he was pretty sharp on these things. He said, "Gordon, we better not let him join the ADA. That is a Democratic organization and we are not a political organization." So we got together with members of the Board and talked with them individually. They told Arnold not to run for the ADA. He could be active but not a member. Then he got interested in The World Federalist. You probably know of that too. I didn't mind that, that was alright. They just talked about a world government. That was a little out of my field. I wanted my work to be just with the union. He got active with the The World Federalist--that was alright.

M: This was where he supported the Third World unionization. There were a lot charges that came up, either at this time or later, perhaps used for political purposes, nevertheless they were there--that he had been duped or made a part of a program of the CIO that launder money through the union to friendly governments in South America?

C: I guess that there was a basis for those charges. I don't think that he got duped through the CIO on that. I might have been from there. He did get interested in the CIO--very much so. He had wanted to be a member of the Executive Board of the AFL, but just couldn't make it. People talked with about it and said, "Just don't try to do it \_\_\_\_\_. You have to wait for President Green to say, 'I want that man,' You can't do it any other way."



The CIO did contact us. I was invited with him to a meeting in Harrisburg, where they talked with us about affiliating our union with the CIO, rather than with the AFL. We'd bring the two groups together. I looked over the CIO. It was strong in the automobile industry. Our strength came from our relationship with the State Federation of Labor and central labor unions, scattered throughout the country. They didn't have that. They didn't have that kind of relationship for us out in the field--just in the big cities. I explained to Arnold that we had to have the support \_\_\_\_\_ in Detroit and of Bob Olson in Minnesota and Joe \_\_\_\_\_ in Chicago. We needed that kind of support. Those were AFL people. Then he had some further meetings with them. I was not included. The issue came up at our Board Meeting. It must have been 1950. We had \_\_\_\_\_ from Minnesota, Ed Stackhouse from Oregon and Glen \_\_\_\_\_ from Montana. All closely related with the AFL. We had a wonderful guy from California--I can't remember his name. We had quite a battle from the Board--a real good battle.

M: Did you or Arnold get to know Walter Reuther in this way. I notice that he was invited later to some of your meetings?

C: Arnold knew him very well. I met him but that was all.

M: At what point did Mr. Zander get involved in the housing projects? How did he do that? What was the motivation for that?

C: Well, let me finish the CIO question first. At the convention at the \_\_\_\_\_ Hotel in Milwaukee, Bill \_\_\_\_\_ and his group were violently AFL. Bill and Bob Willard, the Secretary-Treasurer, got me up in their room on the

second night of the convention. They said, "We got to have a showdown." I said, "Okay, what do you want me to do?" They said, "We want you to go to Arnold..." I said, "It's midnight, he's in bed." They said, "We want you to up and tell him that either he declares himself for the AFL tomorrow morning and this whole issue is dropped, or we'll make a fight of this on the floor." So I got Arnold up and told him about it. I said, "That's the way it's going to be. We're going to fight it out on the floor unless we get the issue closed off tomorrow." Well, we won that one. We closed it off.

M: Was Arnold wavering at this time, not knowing which way to go?

C: He knew which way he wanted to go but he didn't have too much support. He had Jerry Wurf, Leo Cramer and the rest of the staff was against him. He knew which way he wanted to go but he knew he would not make it. It caused quite a bit of disruption. He managed to kick \_\_\_\_\_ off the Board. He was from Deluth Minnesota. Then he regretted he did it so after he had done it, he appointed \_\_\_\_\_ as Vice-President Emeritus. He would come to all of our Board meetings but did not have a vote. So he got by that one. That was the first real battle that Arnold and I had, was the CIO. That was a rough one.

M: You took the position that the union remain with the AFL.

C: Yes, no touching the CIO. I said to Arnold, "If we leave and go the CIO, we are going to loose a lot of people, because they're not going to go. They'll stay with the AFL somewhere else." We had people that wanted to leave to go to the CIO--as

we have now and as they have, we had people--it went both ways--them coming to us and us going to them. \_\_\_\_\_ affiliations. Anybody can jump--you can't complain at all if anybody leaves. Well, that was the first time that we had any great disagreement. It was a good one but we lived through it alright.

M: You were able to persuade Arnold to change his position in this case. At least to accept the realities of the position.

C: No.

M: Because there is some indication later that Arnold wasn't that astute in reading the opposition to him as we'll get into in a few minutes.

Going back again to the housing projects--I am not sure the date that AFSCME got into these projects. Was it in the 50's?

C: I think it was in the 50's.

M: How did that come about? Was it an interest in the issues of aging?

C: I don't know how it originated but there was a fellow by the name of Martin Frank who was a promoter. He was going to handle the business of building the houses and running the operations. I didn't like Martin Frank anyway. I just didn't trust him. He was quite a promoter alright.

M: Was he from Washington?

C: Yes. I said, "If you want to go into the housing business, you go ahead, but it doesn't go through our books. It has to be your own separate one. Our books will be dues and initiation

fees and so forth." It was just an entirely different operation. I could see getting our financial records in one awful mess.

M: So the housing projects' books were kept separately?

C: I guess so. I didn't keep them.

M: Was AFSCME liable in the event that the housing projects defaulted?

C: Not AFSCME. They couldn't do it with just the President doing it. We asked not to be liable for it. I was never asked to be liable for it. I was called up to Arnold's office one night--about 10:00 one night with Martin Frank on some proposal that didn't smell good to me. I think it had to do with

\_\_\_\_\_ Mayor or something. I said, "Give me a little time to think about it and I'll come back in." I went down to my office and called our attorney. Herb Thatcher was our attorney then. I told him what it was. He said, "Don't touch it." That took care of that. I don't even remember what the proposal was.

M: Do you think this was a question of judgement on Arnold Zander's part? That he would get into some of these arrangements that proved very embarrassing to him and ultimately led to his defeat?

C: Yes, I think it was the things he wanted to do. He wanted to accomplish great things. Our difference was that I felt that if we were going to accomplish anything, we had to do it straight union-wise. Not in other activities. We had too much to do as it was. I decided just to devote myself to the union work and no other activities.

M: What was the origin of the Special Arrangements. Did that just develop out of the necessity to give assistance to local regions?

C: Just to give help.

M: Did it expand into bigger and bigger things?

C: It expanded too much. I was a part of that problem by participating in it. I saw people out on the street who was taking advantage of it. Special Arrangements was that they would turn over their income and we would run their operation for them.

M: As Secretary-Treasurer, did you have to handle the receiverships or the financial arrangements for a local, for example when they had problems? This tendency, though, to centralize the power in the Office of the President ...

C: That's where it was. Centralize the power in the \_\_\_\_\_ . Both of us had power.

M: In the end of our earlier interview, you mentioned that there was opposition in '46 in Chicago against Arnold. There was a beginning of opposition in '48 in Boston. You also told me that in 1950 that you yourself had a split or a major difference with Arnold. Was it over the CIO?

C: The CIO. That's where it was. It was the only split we had.

M: In the 1950's there was growing opposition to Arnold. A great deal of attention was given to this--the so-called term Young Turks, etc. From your vantage point of Secretary-Treasurer and knowing these people, what was the origins of this growing opposition?

C: Well, as far as Roderick McDonald was concerned and as far as Robert Lonigan was concerned, it was a personal desire for power in the union.

M: There were some issues involved or Special Arrangements involved. Was this just a vehicle to use \_\_\_\_\_ [microphone distorted voices]

C: Maybe it was a vehicle when we got rid of--I finally started to get rid of Special Arrangements. I ran into trouble with Jerry because we had it with New York and he was on the International Staff. I said to him and his board, "We will end Special Arrangements. You keep your own money and run it." He didn't like that because that meant he was off the International Staff. Well, it was all to his advantage because then he was free. I got rid of Special Arrangements because I saw abuses by staff members. Especially after Leo Cramer got active as Arnold's assistant.

M: I've never met Leo Cramer. What qualities did he have that made him close to Arnold, or that Arnold accepted him? Was he energetic or ambitious?

C: Yes, he was energetic. I was partially at fault for hiring him because I met with him in Boston. Colonel Garry was partially... he was energetic and a nice looking fellow. He had a nice looking wife. He worked hard. But then I began to see that there was a selfish motive behind Leo Cramer. He helped Arnold in hiring certain people from around certain areas \_\_\_\_\_ finances into them. I had a call before the Convention from one of them. Charlie \_\_\_\_\_ in Michigan. He wanted

\$400. I said, "For what?" He said, "For expenses." I said, "No." He called me back later that night about 12:00 at home. We were in bed. He started laying into me and Fern said, "Tell him off." I guess she knew him better than I did. Well I just told him off. When the Board Meeting came up he appeared with a bunch of his friends with a tape recording of that conversation. And I told him off. I sat and listened to it. I said, "I agree with it. It is exactly what I told him and I'm still telling him off, right now." Well, we got by that, but there was a lot of friction going on. I got awful tired of Leo Cramer.

M: Was he just an assistant to Arnold?

C: He was in the same situation that I was. He was an assistant to Arnold and Arnold was very prone to let his duties follow onto somebody else to do it. Let's take the [\_\_\_ and run it.]--which I did--I did that.

M: At the same time Jerry Wurf was also on the International Staff working for Arnold?

C: I'm not sure that he was then. We may have changed the Special Arrangements by that time.

M: From I've read, he seems to be, up until the break, very close to Arnold.

C: He was. But his broke with him in Boston. He almost went burserk I guess as some people told me.

M: I've known Jerry Wurf from the time I was associated with AFSCME. I always noticed his very volatile behavior, temper and moodiness. Was that always characteristic of him?

C: Always, always. I had to put up with it too. I said, "No Jerry, I've been through enough battles." He said, "I'm a great \_\_\_ fighter." I said, "I happen to have done a little of that myself. I've been through a battle with Arnold and I don't want to go through another battle with another President. You are in and I helped you in and you're President. I'd like to be out."

M: In the 1958 Convention in Long Beach with the battles that took place there, was there an indication to you that things were changing? Not necessarily the tide was turning, but that ...

C: Yes there were things that were changing. We had gone through the merger with the GCOC. He had taken Milt Moran as Executive Vice-President which didn't mean anything. He gave him a title. Milt didn't have anything to say about running it. Part of it was Milt's own fault. He had agreed on the merger that \_\_\_\_\_ would be a part of our union. In '58 he decided against it. He was going to get rid of it. And he got rid of it.

M: By abolishing the position?

C: Yes.

M: There were other, I notice in re-reading the Convention Minutes, that this issue of paid international reps voting and participating with ...

C: They did. For a long time in our organization paid representatives could represent their own local union, and at one time four others. Then that was reduced down where they could only represent one union, but our staff members were very active.



M: Several people that I have interviewed who lived through this period, said they were always amazed at Arnold Zander's naiveté in dealing with some of the so-called underworld elements. Was it really naiveté?

C: I dealt with some of them, and I know a few of them out of Chicago and one in New Jersey because they were active in it. I knew that they were somewhere in \_\_\_\_\_ part of the underworld.

M: There were other unions, too, i.e., in Chicago. I know at least one that was a service employee who had close connections with the ...

C: I had one in a hotel in New Jersey. He came up to my room. He was a big huskey guy. The issue got too clear and I said, "Friend, there's the door and there's the window. Which way do you want to go out?" He looked my over--he could have whipped me, I'm sure. But he wasn't sure. I felt that he wasn't sure and he turned around and left and that's the last I saw of him.

M: What impact do you think that Arnold Zander's trip to Africa had in '58. I read about that and it must have right after the Convention. Did he just take off and leave for a few weeks?

C: No, he was on a regular assignment out there. Maybe it was through the ICFTU or maybe through the PSI, but it was on a union assignment.

M: While he was gone, he in effect turned over the reigns to you to run the union?

C: Yes.

M: How long was he gone?

C: I think maybe a month. It was a glorious trip for him. It was the kind of thing he liked to do.

M: What about the next two conventions. The '60 Convention and the '62 Convention. Was it getting pretty volatile within the union with the camps splitting or sides being taken?

C: It was in '62 particularly. Jerry ran and lost in '62.

M: There has been a lot written about ...

C: Yes, the sides were split alright. It was in '62 at the convention in Milwaukee. I had left the union and was with the State Department. Jerry came to me said, "Will you run against Arnold?" I said, "No." He said, "Why not?" I said, "Not until Arnold turns against me, I won't run." The old staff members, McCormick, Ed Daly and Don Burns said to me, "Gordon, you're going to have to run." I made one mistake. I should have gone to George and said, "George Meaney, I just got to do it." I thought that I'd to out to the conventions. By that time I'd been hit and I was on crutches. I went out to the convention at the Schroeder Hotel and I couldn't get a room. Arnold left orders not to let me have a room then. I said, "Well, I guess the split has come, hasn't it." \_\_\_\_\_ McCormick was from Milwaukee originally and he knew some people and got me a room. Not much of one but it was a room. Then I had to decide whether I would run or not. Of course, my old friends, board members and staff members, all said, "You have to. He's going to run George [Leland?] against you." And I had told Jerry that I wasn't going to run, and he took Tom Morgan. Well, Morgan was a nice guy but he just didn't have votes. Then the Colonel came to me and said,

"Gordon, you got to do it." This union was his as much as anyone else's, he had started it really. He said, "You have to do it." I said, "I'm in a pretty good position now." He said, "You owe too damn many people." I said, "Okay, I'll run."

They wouldn't let me on the convention floor. I had to sit up in the balcony. Arnold made it clear with the members to give him somebody that he could work with. I said, "Arnold, there's the break, I'm running." Well, we had a run off in the election. Three of us ran and the run off was between George [Schleman?] and me. I won out alright so I went back to work.

M: Did you run on a particular slate in '62?

C: No, I ran just on my own.

M: So it wasn't -Zander or pro... Was [Coor]? established by then?

C: [Coor] was established. I didn't run on the Coor slate. Tom Morgan ran on the Coor slate.

M: To go back a bit during a very important period of your time with the State Department, how did you happen to enter the State Department service?

C: Invocation from George Meaney.

M: What kind of assignment did you have there?

C: I was the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State on International Labor Affairs. The office is still there, I guess.

M: What did your assignments include?

C: Working with the labor advisors in the State Department for each district, like Africa, Europe and Latin America. Meeting with them and working with them on labor situations in those

areas. I held a lot of big meetings with all the labor advisors out in Rome during that time. The difficulty in getting the job done was if you started doing a job, you were treading on the toes of supervisors of the Assistant Secretary of State on those areas. I didn't run into any real disagreement with them. Men met with me. They were the employees under those regions.

M: Did you find it to be a bureaucratic situation?

C: Of course it was bureaucratic. There was difficulty in getting a job done.

M: During this time did you have any associations with President Kennedy or any of his advisors?

C: Yes, I attended meetings when the President would call the State Department together for meetings.

M: Who was the Secretary of State then?

C: Dean Rusk.

M: Had AFSCME moved to Washington at this time?

C: Yes.

M: Did you keep close contact with your friends in AFSCME during the time that you served in the Federal Government?

C: Not too much. I stopped in a few times to see them. Jerry came to see me. I said, "Jerry, can't this be worked out with you and Zander?" He said, "Yes, maybe it can be worked out." I said, "Will you meet with Arnold?" He said, "Yes." He was reasonable about that. He said, "Yes, I'll meet with him and go over the whole thing with him." He said, "Can you get a meeting with Zander?" I said, "I'll try." So I called Arnold and told him I wanted to see him. He said, "Come on over." I got over in

his office and there was Leo Cramer and Henry Wilson sitting there. He had to have his advisors there. I told him that Jerry was willing to meet with him to see if they could work out a solution to it so it wouldn't go into a convention.

M: Is this before the '64 Convention?

C: Yes, the '64 Convention.

M: By this time you back as Secretary-Treasurer.

C: No. I was still at the State Department.

M: I thought you were re-elected in '62.

C: In '61. That is when he refused to meet with Jerry. I was still in the State Department. He said to Henry, "What do you think?" Henry said, "I think it's alright." He said to Cramer, "What do you think?" He said, "I'll let you know tomorrow." I said, "I guess that takes care of this meeting, doesn't it?" I knew what the answer would be. Cramer would say don't do it. They never met, prior to the '62...they could have resolved it then.

M: Was it just bad advice that Arnold Zander was getting or didn't he realize how serious the opposition was?

C: Cramer wanted to be president.

M: What made you decide to leave the State Department? Was it pressure by your colleagues that wanted you to leave and re-enter AFSCME?

C: Yes.

M: So in '62 you did go back as Secretary-Treasurer.

C: Yes, that was it. In \_\_\_\_\_ Milwaukee. I was Secretary-Treasurer up until the '64 Convention.

M: I have my dates wrong, Gordon. I thought that you were elected in one office before the '64 Convention.

C: In '62 I was elected.

M: Then you served two years with Arnold. What were those two years like, from '62 to '64?

C: We were quite distant. I had offices on the 6th floor, he had offices on the 7th floor. We went on the way we had before except that Cramer was running Arnold's office now. I just pretty much ignored him. I attended some meetings that Cramer was at out in the field, and I guess he had tried to convince Arnold to not allow me to travel any more. I knew that I was going to travel and I took Cramer on in these meetings. I finally told him one day, I said, "Bill, I'm going to beat you. I'll whip you at the '64 Convention. You're all finished." We loaded a big truck and had some of our men drive it out to Denver for the Convention. When the boys came back they said that there was a lot of stuff on that truck that you don't know about. So I went down and looked it over and it was Cramer's political equipment and Arnold's political equipment--all kinds of it. I went up to Arnold's office and he was sitting there, and I said, "Arnold, that equipment is being taken off the truck. If you want it in Denver, you'll have to ship it some other way. We're not shipping political material to Denver." He just shook his head. I said, "It's coming off the truck right now." So they shipped out there by Western Union.

M: Did you have any strong feelings prior to the Convention that Arnold Zander would be defeated?

C: It was going to be awfully close.

M: What was your association with the dissidents at this time-- people like Al Billick or Bob Baum or Bob Hastings?

C: I had a good association with them except they were mad that I wouldn't run on the \_\_\_\_\_ ticket. I wasn't running on any ticket, I was just running. So they told \_\_\_\_\_.

M: What about in '64?

C: That was '64. They were quite angry with me and Vick \_\_\_\_\_ was angry with me because I wouldn't run on the \_\_\_\_\_ ticket. I said, "I have to go back in and try to get this thing straightened out." Financially it was in bad shape. I said, "You go ahead and run your ticket and I'll run." So it wasn't really a close association but it wasn't really distant. I don't think I could have helped them at all by running on the [Coor?] ticket. I think I would have lost a lot of them--my friends.

M: You were able to attract voters from both camps.

C: I kept my old friends.

M: Some people have talked about the Young Turks leading a grass roots insurgency. That's a common term today--New Left. But as I look at the people opposed to Zander I see these of powerful interest representing big urban areas. They're not grass roots.

C: It was in Cincinnati and in New York and Milwaukee.

M: From your vantage point, how was Jerry Wurf able to become the candidate for them? Here was a man that had certainly supported Zander and was known to...

C: He tried it in '62 and lost. That's when he became the leadership...he was very outspoken \_\_\_\_\_ --a very able guy.

M: In looking at the background I would have thought that someone like Joe Ames would have been a more acceptable candidate. But Joe simply said that he was too lazy. [laughter] I'm trying to go back in history to figure out why. Unless it was just that District 37 had the money and the power to sustain it.

C: Yes, Joe was one of the activists--the Young Turks. I didn't call him that and just called him...having strong leadership in these areas.

M: Did you have anything to do about the ballot in the '64 Convention? Did that fall under the Secretary-Treasurer's jurisdiction on the fair ballot?

C: Arnold sent a young fellow out there to handle the convention. I had already had \_\_\_\_\_. I said, "Now what's going on?" He said, "Well we've got to have somebody in charge too." I said, "Okay." He \_\_\_\_\_ I said, "I don't care, I've got it all arranged out there." But he had a fellow sort of haunting me. He wasn't anything, he didn't know how to do anything. That was part of Leo's idea too. The battle came on the Convention floor. We had the AAA. [The American Arbitration Association] We had arranged with them to count the ballots. Arnold agreed with that. Then word came down that Arnold had won by about 15 or 20 votes, but they hadn't



completed it. I said that I would like a report from the AAA or what do you call it?

M: The Fair Ballot Association? I don't have the title but that's probably what it was called...

C: The American Arbitration Association. I said, "Let us get a report from the American Arbitration Association." Arnold said, "No, we got a report from the Chairman from the Committee." Then I had to figure out a way to get him on the floor. I had to figure some way to get this guy on the floor. I knew that Cramer was taking was taking the floor for Arnold. It got awfully hot and I finally said to Arnold, "I'm going to insist that the AAA be given the privilege of making a statement." So I got a statement from them. And they hadn't quite completed or determined which way it was going. Arnold \_\_\_---Terry won by 22 votes wasn't it?

M: Yes. Where there any voters' ballots challenged at the time?

C: I don't know. All I know is that I locked up the ballot box--it was a box from Denver City. I had it locked up and shipped, box and all.

M: Was it finally announced by the American Arbitration Association what the result was?

C: Yes.

M: What was happening at the time that it was announced? Was it during the Convention?

C: Yes, during the Convention.

M: Who had the floor?

C: We got the floor for them to make a statement.

M: Was Arnold speaking at the time or chairing ...?

C: He was chairing at the time. I just went up to him and said, "We're going to get a statement."

M: What was his reaction as you saw him when it was announced?

C: I guess I didn't watch him.

M: Was he gracious in his statements after that?

C: Yes.

M: Then he became--not Emeritus--but did he have a retirement plan, and a car? Did he take an active plan in the union after that at all?

C: I think he did up until the sessions were over.

M: Following the sessions, he no longer had any assignments as former President.

C: No.

M: What were some of the changes that you and Jerry Wurf and others put through after '64. Was there a change in direction of the union in any way?

C: Jerry did most of that. Yes, there was a change in direction, but it was a decision that the union was badly under financed, and that we hold a special convention \_\_\_\_\_. It was held in Minnesota, just on one issue--raising the tax. We did a good job. Then we started to have some finances within the union to work with.

M: Were Special Arrangements discontinued?

C: Yes.

M: So that was one of the changes. At this '64 Convention, were there a lot of new Executive Board members elected which represented more of the ...

C: One of the old ones, Steve Clark, \_\_\_\_\_ re-elected. You see our Board Meeting went through two years of a one vote difference. Arnold had one more vote than I had. When we came to an issue and Arnold said, "Let's vote the same way." I said, "The vote is the same."

M: In the election, you received more votes than anyone else.

C: In '64. Yes, Bill McAdoo was running against me and Bill didn't intend to be Secretary-Treasurer. He would hold the office but somebody else would do the job.

M: Two years later you decided to step down in '66?

C: I sure did, in '66.

M: You became Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus at that stage? Did you continue after '66 to take an interest in...

C: I continued for some months. Roy Kobista asked me to come out and work in Wisconsin and Jerry agreed to it, so I worked out there. There wasn't anything that I could do in the office. He had Bob Hastings and he had Joe Anderson, and all of his staff around him. They were operating just about by themselves, not with me around.

M: This was like going home.

C: Yes.

M: But you've continued, at least in attending conventions. I'm not sure if you attended all of them. The ones that I have been to, you were there.

C: Yes, I attend all conventions.

M: Had the turn of events in the last ten years surprise you--the internal turmoil that has taken place?

C: No. I knew it would happen with Joe. Joe was his best friend. He got rid of Joe.

M: Al Billick?

C: Yes, he got rid of Al Billick and [Gotbaum?]. I knew before that--it was just a matter of time. I met with the doctor--just happened to have the same doctor up at West \_\_\_\_\_ Clinic who had been Jerry's doctor when he was at George Washington. He said that Jerry died from--he gave some name for it. I said, "That's not what he died from." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "He killed himself and he was doing that for a long time." Jerry just killed himself. He couldn't control himself. He could control other people, but he couldn't control himself. There was no surprise at all when Jerry died.

M: I had a very difficult time with him myself.

C: I bet you did! If you wanted to do something he didn't like, you had a difficult time. M: Well what he did was he wanted to see all the Oral History Transcripts--to make sure that they were correct. I said, "No, you cannot see them." He said, "What do you mean I can't see them. I'm President of the Union. You're telling ME, you--an Archivist, telling me!" He just chewed me out. Bill Hamilton was there and I let him finish. He said, "I want them within a week." I said, "You're not going to get them." I made an agreement with each person that I took an interview from, that it was confidential and ONLY after they

approved of it,---then it would be only be available to researchers. Not for internal union purposes." It was a year later, before he allowed me back into the building. I couldn't get in the front door nor beyond the receptionist.

C: You have an idea what the rest of us went through.

M: I do. I had access to the records too. I had access after they were two years old, so I could see what was going on just by reading them. I kept it in confidence, obviously, but---there were few surprises at the time. I used to visit Joe Ames every time I would go in there. One time I went in and there was just two chairs and a coffee pot between them, plugged in, and every bit of furniture had been taken out of Joe's office. Joe said, "You know you're jeopardizing yourself by being seen with me". I said, "I'm an Archivist! I'm doing my job, working for the University, collecting and preserving the historic record." I always maintain that position too---that I had to be apart from what was going on, even though from a historical point of view I had to document it. I noticed, though Jerry Wurf was always irascible, a change in the last year that he was alive, that he was just impossible to deal with.

C: Some of the older people told me that in his last year, he was just impossible to deal with.

M: You retired in 1966. What did you do?

C: I worked through November out in Wisconsin. Then I worked on the Humphrey Campaign. Jerry was supporting Muskie and I knew \_\_\_\_\_ for a long time when he was Mayor of Minneapolis. Arnold knew him real well. I called him and said, "Arnold, I'm free."

He said, Did you get tied up with Jerry?" I said, "I'm on my own ."  
He said, ["I could find some work for you."?]  
Unfortunately, he didn't have the kind of staff to get that done.  
I went out and worked in Wisconsin \_\_\_\_\_  
from O'Clair--President of the Wisconsin Council, supporting  
Muskie. \_\_\_\_\_ Humphrey. Well he said, "We've  
got a big meeting up North, come on up. You can see your old  
friends." I said, "I'm not going to make any speeches. I'll be  
glad to talk to you fellows and have a good time. But no  
speeches." We did that. We couldn't \_\_\_\_\_ win. I had  
a beautiful meeting set up. \_\_\_\_\_ in spite of  
George Meaney. We got the labor \_\_\_\_\_ for a big meeting for  
Humphrey. Then some vote came up and he said, "I'll send Mrs.  
Humphrey in." He used to be Mayor of Madison and a good friend.  
He called up and cancelled the whole meeting on us. We had it  
going pretty well for awhile, but he did not have good  
organization out there in the recorder's office. There didn't  
seem to be solid organization.

M: When did you move to this area?

C: '72. Fern and Sherry had been shopping around and one of the  
girls in the office had some property down here and she brought  
them down here and showed it to them. We came down and looked at  
it and looked around at different properties. We wanted  
something on the water, but this lady--a real estate friend of  
ours--said that there was some [property] over by the golf  
course. Fern said, "We've been over there." She said, "Let's go  
over and take a look." It turns out that she liked it and so we

bought it. We started then to get a builder and moved in in July or August of 1972.

M: Did you build it yourself?

C: Yes. Fern designed it. She laid out all the plans on it.

M: You owned certain property that is down to the \_\_\_\_\_ Golf Course?

C: We own 300 feet from the road, down. There is a stream down there. The water runs over to the Lake, over there.

M: Were you apprehensive last week during the hurricane with all these trees around you?

C: Well, our neighbors were. I told them, "Come over and sit in our basement." I wasn't. Fern said, "I'm going down and sleep in the basement tonight." I was down there and had my clothes down there. One thing we didn't notice was that there wasn't enough closet space for these days. This is beyond the days when my father had one suit and a pair of overalls. I didn't mind it. I was up two or three times a night watching the trees blowing. But I wasn't concerned about it.

M: What I'll do, Gordon, is have the whole three interviews re-typed. I'll have it on a word processor so that it is easy to make corrections and then we don't have to re-type the whole thing. There may be parts of it that you want to expand upon. There may be sections, maybe during a particular early period, where you want to tell me a little more about Wisconsin, or there may be things you want deleted. You have the option of taking

anything out of this thing, rephrasing if you want, or putting in new words in it, or just eliminating it.

C: One closing comment--Arnold was a good leader--a good honest man. I say Arnold went astray rather easily on other things than union work. He was a good leader to get a union started. We didn't defeat Arnold Zander. We defeated Leo Cramer. That was the problem. If it hadn't been Leo Cramer in there working with him, I would have been working with him.

M: Did you continue to maintain an association with Arnold Zander after '64 or was that not possible?

C: Not after he moved out of here.

M: He went back to Wisconsin?

C: Yes. He went back.

M: Was he bitter?

C: Not to me. I saw him at the State Convention in Green Bay after that. He asked me a couple of silly questions about jurisdiction. It seemed awful silly to me, but he wasn't bitter.

M: Arnold's wife outlived him, did she not?

C: Yes, she outlived him. I'm not sure whether she's still alive or not. I don't think she is.

M: I tried contacting her several years ago to see whether he might have had some papers that she wanted preserved. I think that Roy Kobista said that they were in Wisconsin.

C: I think that they are at the University of Wisconsin.

M: What about Cramer. Did he go out immediately after '64?



C: He sure did. Last contact I had with him was when the boys loaded up the truck in Denver to bring the stuff back. They said that there was one file cabinet here that Cramer claimed, and they took it. I said, "How did he send it, American Express?" I guess that it was American Express. So I called American Express and told them that the cabinet should be delivered to 615 Oregon, \_\_\_\_\_ Massachusetts. They said, "We were told to ship it to..." I said, "I don't care where you were told to ship it. If you don't ship that here, we'll have a gang out in front of that house and we'll take it over from you. That is not Leo Cramer's cabinet."

M: Was it shipped to the union office?

C: Yes, to the union office. Bob Hastings had a great time with that. I never paid attention to it. It was just loaded with political stuff.

M: Who took Cramer's place? Was that a position or was it just an assistant?

C: Just an assistant. I don't know who Jerry has now as his top assistant.

M: There has been several since. Hamilton, and Jim S \_\_\_\_\_ was there and then Howard.

C: Has Hamilton gone?

M: Yes, he's gone. He broke with Jerry over the election.

.....

C: I want to talk about the Collective Bargaining Union Contracts and the right of public employees or contracts. I think Jerry Wurf sort of gave the idea that he was the one that

started it. He didn't start it. I'll tell you where it started--in a meeting in Lansing Michigan--Michigan State Employees Council 7. Tom Caldwell was with me at that meeting, along with Bob \_\_\_\_\_ who was Director of Council 7, and the officers of the Executive Board. We got to discussing the rights of public employees. Caldwell emphasized the necessity of establishing collective bargaining for public employees. I talked on it and Bob \_\_\_\_\_ talked on it. Finally, I said, "That will be our major issue in the next international convention--collective bargaining for public employees and union contracts." We had some, but it wasn't a theme. It was in the 58th convention at Long Beach, CA that we started the campaign on that. One thing that started it--there was a little fellow who was a employee of one of the institutions drawing pictures. He drew that picture of rights of public employees and collective bargaining and that was the theme of it. It started in Michigan. It didn't start in New York. He picked it up and used it. Good, he used it well! But he picked it up from our Convention and Tom Caldwell's speech at that convention. It carried the idea of collective bargaining for public employees.

The other thing that was extremely important to Arnold and me was the rights of recognizing public employees. Not for collective bargaining, but recognizing unions of public employees. We put a resolution at the AFL Convention in 1947--I think it was in San Francisco--on the rights of public employees. We had a \_\_\_\_\_. The fire-fighters had nothing to do with it. They were \_\_\_\_\_. The AFT didn't know which way they wanted to

go, and the teachers didn't know which way they wanted to go. Frank Martel, from the Central Body in Detroit, picked up the ball on the convention floor. He salvaged to some extent. I don't know whether you would recognize the resolution now. You'd have to look in the AFL \_\_\_\_\_. But Frank Martel carried the ball for us on the rights of public employees, back in '47.

M: Francis X. Martel?

C: Francis X. Martel. He's a great guy.

M: Were there any other unions that you, or AFSCME too, had a close association with or a good relationship with?

C: Well, we had a good enough relationship with the AFTA and the teachers. They wouldn't go out and do the organizing job.

M: Were you in competition with the service employees then?

C: Yes. \_\_\_\_\_ McKetridge and Arnold Zander did not get along well together at all. We were in competition. In fact I took one of their local unions from Madison away from them. They asked to come with us and I said, "No, not as long as you're with the Building Services." They came back a couple of months later and said that they weren't with them anymore.

M: Zander's opposition would be more than just a competitor. Instinctively he and McKetridge wouldn't have got along, would they--personality wise?

C: No.

M: I gather that the UAW was close to you from the beginning days?

C: Yes, Arnold's association with Walter--they were close.

M: Roy Kobista was telling me, when I interviewed him, that in the founding AFSCME Convention, they took the UAW, and he, Roy, made the changes in it so that it would fit AFSCME. They continued an association. What were some of the other people that you had to deal with as Secretary-Treasurer? Was there, during your reign, a Secretary-Treasurer's Conference with AFL?

C: After the AFL and the CIO merged, then there was a Secretary-Treasurer's Conference.

M: I know there is one now.

C: That came about through the CIO

M: Was George Meaney Secretary-Treasurer?

C: No, George was President then. Bill Sch\_\_\_\_\_ was--he died.

M: Lane Kirkland, of course, ...

C: Lane was in the Social Security Office originally. He worked in the Social Security Office.

M: He has gone up there quickly, didn't he.

C: Yes, and Lane is doing a pretty good job. A better job than I anticipated he would.

M: Donahue is a very impressive guy. I work now a lot with him on the George Meaney Archives Project. Donahue is taking on too much and he can't absorb everything. He into so many projects.

C: He far out of the Secretary-Treasurer's job and the work that he's doing. He's doing a lot of everything.

M: Did you every now Wesley Reedy?

C: Yes, real well.

M: Wesley mentioned you before.

C: What's happened to Wes?

M: He's living in Washington and is very active in the D.C. Friends of Ireland. He's gone to Ireland a couple of times with a tour group, and there is a big golf tournament every summer. I worked very closely with Wesley, and I every time I come into town he's talked about you often.

C: Give him my regards.

M: I mentioned that I had to get down here to see you and he said, "Remind him of the olden days." He was with the Bakers'. Wes was a great labor leader-- loyal and high principled.

C: What's happened to Pete McGavin?

M: I don't know. I lose track of some of these.

C: So Wes lives out in Washington and is retired.

M: Well, he was well into his 70's when he retired, and he was an assistant to Lane and stayed a year after Tom took over. Then we was on Special Projects for them. He still attends their conventions and the Bakers' invite him to Florida. His wife is still with him and he has a son nearby here and a daughter in Wisconsin. Even though he had a heart operation, I find it difficult to keep up with him walking on the street. He just whips along.

C: He was a good guy. I wonder what happened to Pete McGavin.

M: I'll check. I've wondered too. Did you every have any dealings with Emil Mazy.

C: Yes, I've had some.

M: I noticed the picture in the public employee journal you just showed me. You and he were together in a picture. Well it's a different school of people in there now--in the labor movement.

.....

M: ....This was in '47?

C: This was in the '48 Convention. We're talking about how Arnold was getting rid of Milt Murray. That was '48.

M: I'll put that in proper sequence. You're going to have to help me with the spelling of names. Actually those early Wisconsin days--I've got a couple of volumes on the Wisconsin AFL-CIO and I try to get the spellings right. If I miss some and you notice it, just correct it.

C: I knew the officers well, of the Wisconsin Federation of Labor when we started. Henry \_\_\_\_\_ and John Hanley. Those were great days. We had a lot of battles.