ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

WITH

JOHN CONNOLLY

Interviewer: Alice M. Hoffman

Date: February 7, 1973

Introduction to John Connolly

This interview with John Connolly was conducted at the International headquarters of the G.A.I.U. in Washington, February 7, 1973.

Mr. Connolly had been President of the International Brotherhood of Bookbinders recently merged with the Lithographers and Photoengravers International Union to form the Graphic Arts International Union.

In the interview, he describes his early work experience as a Bookbinder. He began working at the trade in the Boston area about 1904. Mr. Connolly was active in the Boston Allied Printing Trades. He describes the strike of 1921 which affected the entire printing industry. He also describes the effect of changing technology upon the trade and the effect of mergers and conglomerates on attitudes toward bargaining and negotiations.

The latter part of the interview is devoted to a description of the development of the Bookbinders International and its relations with the A.F. of L., particularly during the Presidency of John B. Haggerty 1928-1954.

The interview concludes with a discussion of the events which led up to merger in 1972.

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HOFFMAN: Let's just check (the tape recorder). Say your name and where you were born, and when.

CONNOLLY: John Connolly, Canton, Massachusetts, September 14th, 1889.

HOFFMAN: Do you want to start off by telling me something about your family background, your first job experiences?

CONNOLLY: Well, the first job I had was in the Plimpton Press in Norwood, Massachusetts, where I served my apprenticeship.

HOFFMAN: As a bookbinder?

CONNOLLY: As a bookbinder.

HOFFMAN: How old were you?

CONNOLLY: Well, I'd say I started to work when I was fourteen, but pretty near fifteen.

HOFFMAN: Was your father in the printing trade?

CONNOLLY: No. Well, he worked in a printing plant at one time, but not as a craftsman. He was a shoemaker by trade, when they made them by hand. But he never followed it up. He was a real union man, though. He led a number of strikes where they were more or less disorganized. The background of my home was union--no question about it.

HOFFMAN: As a shoemaker?

CONNOLLY: No, in any type of union.

HOFFMAN: Any work?

CONNOLLY: Yes.

HOFFMAN: How many members of your immediate family?

CONNOLLY: Six children.

HOFFMAN: Did any of the other members of the family go into the printing trades?

CONNOLLY: One sister went into the bindery. Another one was a proofreader in a composing room.

HOFFMAN: What sort of plant was this? Was it a big plant?

CONNOLLY: It was a big edition plant, where they print and bind books for schoolbook publishers and others. Probably employed a thousand all told.

HOFFMAN: And it had all aspects? I mean, there was printing as well as binding?

CONNOLLY: Oh, yes, all types of printing and binding. The plant advertised printing in its entirety, which meant everything connected with it. In other words, they had it under the same roof.

HOFFMAN: How long did you work there?

CONNOLLY: Twenty years.

HOFFMAN: Twenty years?

CONNOLLY: Off and on.

HOFFMAN: Was it an organized plant?

CONNOLLY: It was organized in 1914. I went to work there in 1907, but I was out of there for a couple of years. So I'd say practically all the time it was organized.

HOFFMAN: You said that you left for a couple of years. What did you leave to do?

CONNOLLY: I worked for a railroad for about a year and a half--job clerk, freight clerk.

HOFFMAN: Why did you go back to the bindery?

CONNOLLY: Well, you worked shorter hours and had more leisure time. With the railroad you worked all day, every day in the week. And at that time I was interested in playing baseball, and things like that. You had to have the time off to do it. (laughs)

HOFFMAN: Well, when did you start to become active in the union?

CONNOLLY: Well, I've always been, more or less of an active member from the time I affiliated with it. But I would say about 1923 when I became president of the local union. Prior to that I served on committees, and things like that.

HOFFMAN: Could you describe the typical apprenticeship in the bookbinders?

CONNOLLY: Well, of course, bookbinding is quite a diversified setup. At one time it was all done by hand. In large plants at the present time it's practically all done by machinery, and it's impossible to train everybody on every machine. As a rule you get a certain amount of knowledge of handwork, primarily; then they may assign you to a machine and maybe that's the only machine you will learn, or you may have a couple. But other than that, your knowledge is general about the business as a whole and specialized on a couple of machines or so.

HOFFMAN: What was your own apprenticeship like? How long did it take at that time?

CONNOLLY: I'd say six or seven years.

HOFFMAN: How was the training carried out?

CONNOLLY: I don't think there was any set program. It was kind of a general program wherever you were assigned. This gave a general knowledge of the entire bindery work. A lot depended on how old you were and what experiences you had, and what they might need in the future. There was no regulation to it when I first went to work. Of course, that came later when the unions came in.

HOFFMAN: What sort of apprenticeship rules did the union establish at first?

CONNOLLY: Well, they established a setup whereby a boy would be properly trained under proper supervision. After a certain length of time--generally four years--he'd receive the scales. In the meantime

he'd be paid on a graded basis as he improved, and there'd be some instances, once in a while, where they felt that the particular individual wasn't making the progress that he should make and there might be some question as to why he couldn't get the next raise. But very little of that. As a rule, the fellows are more or less of average ability, and they make the grade. Or they quit themselves before that time comes.

HOFFMAN: They get discouraged themselves if they don't have the required capacity for the skill.

CONNOLLY: Or if they think they're not going forward fast enough.

HOFFMAN: Did the union develop training programs?

CONNOLLY: Oh, yes.

HOFFMAN: Over time?

CONNOLLY: Yes.

HOFFMAN: What sort of training programs did you have?

CONNOLLY: What they did in this particular shop, which was quite a shop eventually--and the state was tied in on it and I happened to have something to do with it--they took certain parts of the bindery and trained them in that particular part. In other words, one department would be the sheet department--sheet stock handling, cutting sheets, cutting machines, folding machines and gathering machines.

HOFFMAN: Sheet what?

CONNOLLY: Sheet--you know what a sheet is?

HOFFMAN: Folding sheets?

CONNOLLY: Yes. Folding the sheets, cutting the sheets--you might say inspecting them. Anything that led up to what we call "forming the signature." You know what a signature is?

HOFFMAN: No.

CONNOLLY: Well, a signature is the folded sheet. That's as simple as I can make it. And it varies in the number of pages. There might be sixteen; there might be thirty-two or sixty-four. That would be

about the largest. Well, they might put that fellow--I'm talking about sheets now--they might put him in the gathering department which would gather these signatures into book form. Then they'd go into another department, what they call a forwarding department; that would be cutting and backing and lining and casing-in, which are all machine operations. You know, casing-in is where they put the book and the cover together.

Now, while the forwarding was going on, they're also making the covers. In other words, they have to cut the stock for the covers, like a cloth cover, and then they have lining. They have cover-making machines where they put the board and the cloth together. Then they have stamping and inking machines that do the printing on the cover. When both departments finish what they have produced, they are put together and that becomes the finished book, although they have to, of course, inspect it and do things along those lines. But in the main that's about the extent of it.

HOFFMAN: Were the pages still being handsewn when you first went to work?

CONNOLLY: Hand what?

HOFFMAN: Handsewn.

CONNOLLY: No, machine. There were some that were handsewn, but those were special books. They had a few women that could do that type of work. The ordinary book was machine-sewn.

HOFFMAN: What would make it a special book?

CONNOLLY: Machine-sewn books would be ordinary books, while handsewn books as a rule would be special books. They are generally very thick books that cannot be sewn by machine. They are ledger books and various records. From a practical point of view handsewn books are generally produced in smaller quantities, whereas the ordinary books are produced in larger quantities.

I might say this, too, as far as bookbinding is concerned, we bind books by hand like they did three hundred years ago. And we're also binding with the latest modern equipment.

HOFFMAN: How do you retain the skill among the younger members to do it by hand?

CONNOLLY: Well, there's a certain amount of work that requires handwork, anyway. Those people, you know, get in on those jobs. Well, we also do book re-

pairing; that's all handwork. Which means that if something comes through the production line and isn't perfect . . . well, if the book is worth something, they just set it aside and repair the damaged part. And, by the way, these fellows get accustomed to working by hand because the work is practically the same as binding a book. They have certain departments where they still do handwork and they put these fellows wherever they are needed.

HOFFMAN: So the training still goes on?

CONNOLLY: Yes. Not only that, but there has been a tendency in some plants, after a fellow has served a certain length of time as a machine operator, when he gets older, instead of trying to push him out, they place him on these jobs where he can still earn the scales that are in effect.

Then we have another setup that has some machine work to it, but not much, and that's gilding. That's putting the gold edge on the pages of the book and things like that. As a rule, there are some gilding machines, but not too many.

HOFFMAN: Usually that's done by hand?

CONNOLLY: Still done by hand, put them in a press and squeeze them. This could apply to color edges also.

HOFFMAN: Well, now you mentioned that you become local union president there. How far from Boston is this?

CONNOLLY: Fifteen miles.

HOFFMAN: How many members did you have then? When did you first become president?

CONNOLLY: 1923.

HOFFMAN: And about how many members did you have there?

CONNOLLY: We had a men's and a women's local at that time. I'd say we had about 125 members in the men's local. The women's local had a couple of hundred members. However, in 1930 the two locals merged.

HOFFMAN: What was your relationship with the other printing . . . .?

CONNOLLY: We all belonged to what they called the Allied Printing Trades Council.

HOFFMAN: Of Boston?

CONNOLLY: Of Boston. And we'd send delegates to its meetings. They had a business agent, and if you needed help, they were always glad to help. It all revolved--I'm talking about Boston now--around the Allied Printing Trades Council. Other cities do it differently, but as far as we were concerned, we were strong Allied Printing Trades men--and still are. I'm Chairman of the Board of Governors.

HOFFMAN: In Boston?

CONNOLLY: No. Of the International Allied Printing Trades Association of the United States and Canada.

HOFFMAN: You obviously began to attend conventions and so forth when you became local union president.

CONNOLLY: The first convention I attended was in 1926 in Des Moines, Iowa.

HOFFMAN: That was in 1926?

CONNOLLY: Yes.

HOFFMAN: Well, there had been this big fight to introduce the 44-hour week.

CONNOLLY: That was in 1921.

HOFFMAN: That was in 1921. Could you tell me how that manifested itself in Boston?

CONNOLLY: Well, I might say this to give you a little background: The employers and the unions had what they called "men-and-management" committees, and they had been working together fairly well. I think it started during World War I, or shortly before. They agreed upon a plan whereby the unions would go on a 44-hour week. I think it was in May, 1921. The so-called "open-shop" program was adopted by the Chamber of Commerce and the Manufacturers' Association. The Boston Typothetae went along with these programs of the Chamber of Commerce and the Manufacturer's Association, and they picked out Boston to inaugurate a campaign to renege on what they had agreed upon with the union, and the employers in Boston went along with them. That started a strike which lasted, oh, I'd say three months at least. That's the one in which we were not too fortunate. Eventually that spread all over the country. But the initial strike was in Boston because the employers deliberately picked it out; that was the United Typothetae of America

--I think that was its name--to serve, you might say, as a warning to the rest of the country that they were not going to live up to what they had agreed to relative to the 44-hour week.

Now, they didn't do this in every city. In a few of the cities they went along with plans they had agreed to, and in other cities we were strong enough to see that the 44-hour week was established. But in Boston, in particular, we'd only been recently organized. Say, from about 1917. We had unions before that, but we were really well-organized from 1917 to 1921, during World War I. For some reason or other, they picked Boston to do the job, so we got the brunt of it, right off the reel.

HOFFMAN: You had contractual agreements with them for the 44-hour week?

CONNOLLY: We had contractual agreements with all of them. The understanding was that in May, 1921, they would inaugurate the 44-hour week. We were working 48 hours then. Also there were voluntary increases that had been granted through the efforts of a conciliator and both sides agreed to his recommendation during the war, to compensate for the increased cost of living, and things along those lines. The way they precipated the strike was to take four dollars a week away that they had previously been paying. They claimed they had the right to do it. We, of course, did not agree.

HOFFMAN: You mean it was a wage cut rather than a . . .

CONNOLLY: That's what started it. It led into the 44-hour strike. Because they had agreed to put it into effect the following month, you might say.

HOFFMAN: Well, did they go back on their contract to do this or was it at the time the contract expired?

CONNOLLY: We claimed they broke their contract, and we wouldn't work, because they were breaking whatever they had agreed to.

HOFFMAN: Did the women's organization go out on strike, too?

CONNOLLY: Oh, yes. Everybody went out--men and women--not only the bookbinders, but all the printing trades. We didn't have the money to finance it, that was the trouble. We had a country-wide strike in a month. The money wasn't there, that's all. Of course, we learned a lot of things during those times. We haven't

tackled a country-wide strike since. We just take, you know, a city, and we try to work on that basis.

HOFFMAN; What kind of strike benefits did you pay in those days?

CONNOLLY: I think the men got ten dollars, and the others might have gotten five dollars. You know, I was out six months, and I got five bucks the whole six months. (laughter) What I'm trying to say is that the money wasn't there from the bookbinders union.

HOFFMAN: Yes, I see what you mean.

CONNOLLY: That's what they agreed to pay. In the first two weeks or so everything was all right. But when you strike the country, your source of income ceases. Now, the other printing trades, like the pressmen and compositors, had people working in newspapers that we didn't have. So it really hit us hardest first.

HOFFMAN: What kind of percentage of the potential membership did you have organized in Boston at that time?

CONNOLLY: Well, I'm not too familiar with the figures, but I would say that we were at least eighty percent organized, probably better. But we had all the large places and a number of the smaller places. There may have been a few smaller places that were not organized.

HOFFMAN: So, in other words, it really wasn't possible for people to go other ways to other businesses with their business?

CONNOLLY: Well, no. A lot of business moved out of the city that never came back. We had a couple of places like the place I worked in, that didn't go out. They made some adjustment with the union. There were two plants. The other one was owned by Ginn and Company, the publishers there.

HOFFMAN: Owned by who?

CONNOLLY: Ginn and Company. It's a well-known publisher--book publisher--but they owned a printing plant then. They don't own it now. But they're national publishers. They sell books all over the country. But they, and Plimpton Press, who were the largest, made settlements with the union. The result was there were no strikes in those two plants.

HOFFMAN: So that was your own particular home local?

CONNOLLY: Yes.

HOFFMAN: But the rest of Boston was out for six months?

CONNOLLY: That's right, and that included other plants in Cambridge and Norwood, other than the two mentioned above.

HOFFMAN: And was that typical of other places in the country as well?

CONNOLLY: I would say some places, yes. It all depended on the employers. You know what I mean? I think in New York City they had quite a set-up. A lot of those places went non-union and remained that way for twenty years or more. In St. Louis, they settled it up with the employers. In Chicago, I think they got along fairly well. You have to really check these places, you know, to see if what I say is accurate. That's as I remember it.

HOFFMAN: Did you have a very significant Canadian membership?

CONNOLLY: Then or now?

HOFFMAN: Then.

CONNOLLY: Oh, I'd say percentage-wise probably the same as we've got now.

HOFFMAN: What is it now?

CONNOLLY: Well, we have about seventy thousand members, and probably about five thousand of those are Canadians.

HOFFMAN: So that's a different situation than what's true of the Lithographers?

CONNOLLY: Oh, yes. There's a good relationship up there, too, with the Lithographers. I'm talking Bookbinders now.

HOFFMAN: Right.

CONNOLLY: Yes. Toronto and Montreal are the strongest cities we have insofar as membership is concerned. I might also add Vancouver. You know, in fact, I was talking with a fellow from Vancouver this morning.

He was at a meeting that I attended and we discussed the so-called "prairie cities"--we have unions in all those places. The plants as a rule are small ones. There are some places that need to be organized, no question about that.

HOFFMAN: Well, tell me something about these early contracts. Did they include such things as what we call today "fringe benefits"? Or were they strictly kind of wage-and-hour contracts?

CONNOLLY: I'd say mostly wage-and-hour, and maybe working conditions; but there were no vacations, no paid vacations, no holidays. I'm talking generally now, not specifically. There may have been some locals that had them, but that didn't come until, oh, well, I think it would have come in probably within ten years after the 1921 strikes.

HOFFMAN: So in the depression you were able to get some of these fringe benefits?

CONNOLLY: Starting when Roosevelt came into office, we started to make quite a bit of progress, because business was starting to pick up then, getting fairly good, I mean.

HOFFMAN: What were your relationships in Boston with the Allied Printing Trades? Did you get involved in any of these jurisdictional disputes?

CONNOLLY: We had very little, very few jurisdictional disputes. The jurisdictional lines were there and recognized by all local unions and respected by all. And the jurisdictional questions have only come into the picture since the CIO got started. Before that, we had very little trouble. A bookbinder's job was a bookbinder's job. Then we started to organize plants that were not strictly printing. You know what I mean? They'd be finishing printing of some nature, but they were not, say, in a regular bindery as we understand it. We claim jurisdiction over anything that finishes printing. And that can cover quite a latitude.

HOFFMAN: Give me an example of something that's not binding that finishes printing.

CONNOLLY: Well, I'll give you an example of different types of, say, gumming and wax paper plants. They do some printing, and we finish it up. We have envelope plants and office forms plants. There's a lot of binding in the office form plants. But in those days we didn't worry too much about that. That came along later.

HOFFMAN: You mean the kind of binding that you would have on something like this? [indicating the calendar]

CONNOLLY: No. I mean the office forms that replaced the loose-leaf and blank books. You know what sort of forms I mean? For bookkeeping purposes and for records, along those lines. They're office forms, sheets and material that they use in the offices for information. That was done largely, I think, by bookkeeping at one time. They've done away with that and they use cards and other forms which they didn't in the old days.

HOFFMAN: Well, I notice from going through your journals that one of your big questions was the schoolbook question.

CONNOLLY: Yes.

HOFFMAN: That was the effort to get various governmental bodies, I suppose, to use union manufactured books. It looks to me as if that question began to come up about 1928.

CONNOLLY: Well, I think it was before that. These plants that I'm talking about, Ginn and Plimpton Press, were organized around 1912 to 1914. I know that they were organized partly due to the fact that we had what we called "schoolbook campaigns." We tried to get the various school boards around the country and the states to purchase books produced under union conditions. When it became a question that union manufactured books that were needed for the children were not available, we always took the position that education of the children came first.

I knew the purchasing agent of the Boston school committee pretty well, and he told me there's very little difference in the books. There's a special book once in a while that covers a particular subject, but as far as schoolbooks are concerned, any publisher can give you the same quality. We found these school boards very favorable.

At that time we were able to line up a lot of these shops, too. I'm talking about big ones now, because the other ones do printing for local people and things like that; that wouldn't affect them. We were able to line up practically all of them through this campaign, and it was through the efforts of the Boston Allied Printing Trades Council that this was accomplished.

Then later we tried it through out International Union. And it was quite helpful, too. That would come after 1921. The others were before 1921. Even then, after we decided to reorganize the area around Boston after the 1921 strike, around 1940, we used part of that in our campaign. I know, because I helped to direct it.

HOFFMAN: Well, I notice that originally the bookbinders were part of the International Typographical Union.

CONNOLLY: Well, that might be true in printing plants, but I now, at least from what they tell me, we had a number of unions that were independent bookbinders' unions.

HOFFMAN: Even before the International was formed?

CONNOLLY: Even before that, yes. In fact, I think some of them were in on the formation of the International Union. Our trade in those days was practically all hand and highly skilled. They even organized by branches. We had a finishers' branch and a forwarders' branch. Well, the finisher would take care of the cover part of the binding, and the forwarder would be the binding of the book itself. Then, after machine stamping came in, we had the stampers' union. We also had paper rulers; that was the ruling of the lines on the sheets. Over the years, they finally decided they'd better get together to form one bookbinders' union. That also applies to the women.

In the beginning there was a question about organizing the women. Naturally, the employers were opposed to it and also some of the men. I think it was partly due to the fact the men figured if the women were not organized, they could get more money for themselves. But gradually they changed their minds on that. In the beginning there were women's unions. If you look through our list, you'll find some double letters and double numbers. That means the chances are they were men and women that got together. In my particular union, itself, when the charter was granted in 1907, it was granted to both.

Then when they started to reorganize the plant in 1914, which was after the 1907 strike, the women for some reason or other wanted to go by themselves, so they granted them a charter. That lasted until 1930 and then they could see that one was being played against the other, so they decided that they'd come in with us. So that's where we are now, and that's true in many instances. In recent years, of course, we don't split on sex lines. They've got to come into one union. And I think the National Labor Relations Board is partly responsible for that. They won't grant you certification although in the beginning they did. I know one time when it was used against us.

HOFFMAN: What time was that?

CONNOLLY: Well, that would be around 1938, right after the Wagner Act was enacted.

HOFFMAN: 1938 or so.

CONNOLLY: Yes. This was a case that came up in 1942 or 1943 in which we argued that they should be in one unit and the board decided that we had organized separate units before--which was true--so they decided in favor of this particular women's union. Now they have changed their minds again. It all depends on who's rendering the decision.

HOFFMAN: Right. Well, describe for me the progress you went through in moving from local union president and your activity in the Boston Allied Printing Trades Council to a more national role in the Bookbinders Union.

CONNOLLY: Well, it's a funny set-up. Of course, after 1921 we were a more or less disorganized set-up as far as our section was concerned. That's when [John] Haggerty became president of our International Union. He became president in 1926 and new programs were inaugurated, and one of them was organization. He came into our section of the country, and wanted to have organizational campaigns put on. Well, in the main, at that time, we had these two big plants, plus a few members in Boston, and we decided to put on a campaign. We had a Joint Conference Board in addition to the Allied Printing Trades Council. This board was composed of bookbinders' locals affiliated with the Conference. They used to meet every month.

HOFFMAN: This was several locals?

CONNOLLY: We had bookbinders unions in Boston, Cambridge and Norwood; bindery women's unions in Boston, Cambridge and Norwood; and paper rulers in Boston. They were affiliated with what they called the Joint Conference Board. This was separate from the Allied Printing Trades Council. We had a meeting with our international president who said he would appoint as an international representative anyone that the board would select, and I was the fellow they selected.

HOFFMAN: So you became an international representative?

CONNOLLY: Yes. I was an international representative from 1927 to 1954, when I was elected first vice president. Bob Haskins was president at that time. Haggerty had died in 1953.

HOFFMAN: Where was Haggerty from?

CONNOLLY: St. Louis. He was the best administrator we had. He was international president for twenty-six years. He appointed me as international representative, so he must have been good. (laughter)

HOFFMAN: Well, that made him good!! How did you go about organizing?

CONNOLLY: The first thing you do is try to work with the other unions to a certain extent. But shortly after that the Wagner Act was enacted and that helped some. Prior to that, the going was really tough. But what I first did, you might say, was to reorganize the unions and the union shops, because some of them really needed it. Everything had been let slide.

Then after we got to Boston, we put on a campaign in 1941 in which all the unions were involved. That was an Allied Printing Trades Council effort. I happened to be secretary of the Allied Printing Trades Council then and we organized Greater Boston very well. Then we started on the outside, like Lowell, Nashua, Concord and other cities, and we were able to line them up pretty well. Prior to this time, because of the 1921 strikes, you could have talked to them until hell froze over and they still wouldn't listen to you because they were thinking of the 1921 strikes. But after awhile, their attitude changed. We were able to convince them that they were living ten years after the 1921 strikes and talking about it did no good. I knew a lot of them and could talk to them just like I talk to anybody.

HOFFMAN: Looking back at it, it seems such a foolish thing to have done, to have tried to strike the whole country that way in 1921. Do you think this was a mistake on the part of the International Union?

CONNOLLY: I've read articles that President Haggerty spoke against it.

HOFFMAN: Did he?

CONNOLLY: Yes. He said, "We're not ready." We had a convention in Baltimore--I think it was in 1920--and they raised the per capita tax to increase the strike benefits. But before any money could come in these strikes came along and ate up what money we had. Haggerty advocated then that we have no country-wide strikes. You see that was the common procedure. In other words, if we were going for an 8-hour day, everybody went for an 8-hour day. If you had to take it on the chin, you took it on the chin. The other unions, as I said previously, had more money than we did because they worked in newspapers and very seldom had strikes and things like that. But as far as we were concerned, when we had a nationwide strike, our source of income practically stopped. Unless we won it in a particular place. So his idea was to pick out certain spots, but the employers picked it out ahead of us. That's about it.

HOFFMAN: You were really forced into it?

CONNOLLY: Yes, because we had no intention of striking Boston until they took the money away. Hindsight is always better than foresight, you know.

HOFFMAN: Were the bookbinders' employers organized into a trade association?

CONNOLLY: I think they all belonged to what we called the Boston Typoehetae--which included bookbinders, pressmen--in fact, all branches of the printing trades. That was the one conducting the programs. We were not picked out alone. All the printing trades were in it.

HOFFMAN: So it was a concerted action on their part? A conspiracy, you might say.

CONNOLLY: Well, you could call it that if you wanted to.

HOFFMAN: Well, they used to call it that when it was the unions doing it!!

CONNOLLY: That's right! They used to put them in jail. If two or three people got together and discussed their grievances, it was a conspiracy.

HOFFMAN: That was a conspiracy, right.

CONNOLLY: We've come quite a distance from that time.

HOFFMAN: Why don't we talk a little bit about the growth of bargaining over other kinds of benefits, other than wages and hours and conditions. When did this begin to become common procedure?

CONNOLLY: I'm trying to guess now. I don't want to give the CIO too much credit, but I think they kind of led the way, you know, in benefits. We were always interested in hours; they didn't lead the way in hours, we led the way in hours and wages. But as far as vacations and things like that were concerned, we never worried too much about them. We'd say, "Let's get the money; we'll take care of our own vacations." But that became, you might say, more or less prevalent in industry and, of course, we adopted it and tried to put it into effect. And I think I might say very successfully, because we have about everything covered now. In fact, we were having a meeting this morning where they were discussing the welfare plans--not the vacations. We have anywhere from two to four weeks vacation in practically all the contracts. We have pension plans, welfare plans, hospitalization and all that. It varies with the cities, but practically all the unions have some kind of plan. That all came in, I'd say, since World War II.

HOFFMAN: Well, what about negotiations about work rules with respect to time-study and safety?

CONNOLLY: As far as time-study is concerned, we're against it. We don't believe in it. We think it's the old bag of oats out in front of the horse. He's chasing it all the time and never catches up. We have a few plants that operate under such plans, but wherever we can, we eliminate it. At one time we had quite a bit of piece work; at least when you worked piece work, you got paid for what you made, but in some of these systems you make it in one hand and they take it away in the other. We've always been opposed to that. We're even opposed to it where we have it. I'd say we have not too many, you know, where that exists. But internationally, we are against that type of incentive, if that's what you call it. We believe in a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, and we're willing to give it. But we don't think we should be asked to give more than we can give. And as long as there's a reward there, there are some people who will try to make it anyway.

The funny part of it was that when I was a kid I worked under the Taylor system, which was the original incentive system, as far as I can find out. When somebody talks incentive systems to me, I've got a fairly good background. I think that was about the fairest system there was, because if you made the money, you kept it. They gave you a certain amount of time to do the job and if you made it in that time, you got what they called "time." They might give you twenty-five minutes, you know what I mean? I remember I was making about twenty dollars a week then. That was the scale, and I'd make twenty-four or twenty-five dollars, but you were on the treadmill all the time. We gradually eliminated that wherever we could. A number of places, I remember a few, where the employers themselves had become convinced that it cost them more to maintain this system than they made in production.

HOFFMAN: They did productivity studies to show that the elimination of these incentives did not work to the detriment of productivity?

CONNOLLY: I would assume they did. I am not saying that I'm taking everything into consideration--the cost of maintaining this system and the production they got out of it. This place that I'm talking about, they did away with that years ago. Nobody seemed to worry about it too much, but this other place that I had in mind was the Gum and Wax Paper place. They had incentive systems in there, a little different, but the same thing. They came to the conclusion that it was costing them more to maintain the system than the production that they got was worth.

HOFFMAN: Just the bookkeeping and so forth?

CONNOLLY: Yes. And the result was. . . well, we got top wages for everybody, and no incentives. Well, that was about seven or eight years ago and they seem to be doing all right.

I've been through it; I know what it means. They tell you how much more money you're going to make and all that stuff, but they don't tell you what you've got to do to make it.

HOFFMAN: Right. What about job safety? I really don't know, is a bindery a dangerous place to work?

CONNOLLY: Well, we have cutting machines, and all kinds of machines you can get caught in. But, as a rule, I don't think we have too much of a problem. I think the employers reocgnize that and they take the necessary means. We would take it up with them if we had too much of a problem -- I'm talking union shops now--to have adjustments made when we felt that the safety was hazardous.

HOFFMAN: What about the glue? Is that a pollution hazard?

CONNOLLY: Well, I've swallowed a lot of it! (laughter)

HOFFMAN: It hasn't done you any harm, I don't think!

CONNOLLY: The type of glue has changed a lot from what they used to have. They used to put in a certain amount of glue, mix it with water so you could use it. Then you'd go home at night--it was heated by electricity, you know, and you'd turn it off--and it would all freeze up. In the morning you'd put in the water again to loosen it up. I often wondered how much was water and how much was glue. That's a joke, but the types of glue they used now are different. I haven't had any complaints, but I imagine it does affect some. I don't see how it can do anything else, you know, inhaling those fumes.

HOFFMAN: Inhaling it all the time, and getting it on your skin?

CONNOLLY: Well, I'll tell you a funny one. This is my own personal experience. The first day I went to work I got sick from the glue pot. It made my stomach, you know, but then it never bothered me after that. But it evidently had some effect.

HOFFMAN: So that maybe these new occupational safety and health standards, when they look them over, they'll find they are more of a hazard than anybody thought.

CONNOLLY: Could be.

HOFFMAN: Well, there are a lot of things developing that way that nobody ever . . . .

CONNOLLY: Yes. Well, we just figured that's part of the industry, part of the job. If you didn't like the smell of the glue, you got out of there. (laughter)

HOFFMAN: That would have been me!! I would have been the first to leave!

CONNOLLY: But the funny part of it is that after a day or so, you don't even smell it.

HOFFMAN: Well, what kind of efforts did the Allied Printing Trades in Boston make to engage in coordinated bargaining?

CONNOLLY: Before the strikes they used to bargain through the Allied Printing Trades Council. In other words, the base of the contract was the Allied Printing Trades. The parts pertaining to a particular union they did themselves, but always with the assistance of the Allied Printing Trades secretary if they wanted him. After that, it was more or less everybody on their own. And that's the way it's been practically ever since. Some of the smaller cities up through Canada still negotiate jointly.

HOFFMAN: So, in other words, the 1921 strikes were so traumatic that they sort of gave up on the whole business?

CONNOLLY: Well, the decided they could do better on their own, that's about what it meant. In other words, when the strikes came along everybody had to take care of themselves as best they could, and they developed a scheme of taking care of themselves. Now understand, you've got to go back to the background where these shops were practically all organized through the efforts of the Allied Printing Trades Council. I'm talking about the big ones and naturally they depended on the Allied Printing Trades Council. They negotiated the contracts which was partly due to the fact that the council was in on the settlements with the employers to forget the publicity part of it.

Then, when they got to doing business on their own, I think the Typographical Union got out before the strikes, but that's the way it was set up. There were some places where we negotiated jointly, but on the whole we negotiated separately. Now we've merged again and we're going to have to go back to a certain extent to that, as far as our union is concerned. I think there's merger in the air for all of them, but that will take a little while.

HOFFMAN: I know in your discussion at the merger convention in 1971 you made reference to the fact that at one time four printing trades talked of merger or amalgamation. When was that and what were the four?

CONNOLLY: Well, that would have been the AFL Convention in Atlantic City.

HOFFMAN: In 1971?

CONNOLLY: No. Oh, no. This was about five or six years ago.

HOFFMAN: Oh, I see.

CONNOLLY: At that time President [Boyd] DeAndrade of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union was living. Incidentally, he and I came from Boston and both worked together before becoming international presidents. We had a meeting with the Board of Governors of the International Allied Printing Trades Association to discuss cooperating with each other and see what could be done. We were all talking merger, but when it comes time to merge they are not so fast in moving, let's put it that way. So, at that time, it looked as if the four of us could get together and maybe the Typos would come along later. But then DeAndrade died and they had certain procedures they had to go through to elect officers, and we came to the conclusion that we were not going to wait that long and decided to see what we could do with the Lithographers and Photoengravers International Union.

But we're still interested. In fact, we talked about it the other day with President [Alexander] Rohan of the Printing Pressmen, and we hope eventually to get them all together. They all talk about it. We will have to make this merger work, there's no question about that, I mean make it successful. The Lithographers and Photoengravers did a good job. They gave themselves ten years to work it out, and they've practically done it in six. We've given ourselves nine years, but we expect to do it faster than that. We know if we can prove to the other unions that it's the best thing that happened, their members will make them get together, if the officers don't. But the officers, from what I can find out from talking with them, are in favor of it. There's a certain amount of personal interest that comes into all of these things.

HOFFMAN: What do you mean you've given yourself nine years? I notice that nine years was referred to a number of times. What does that mean exactly?

CONNOLLY: Well, that means we're going to try and iron out different problems, you know, with different branches.

HOFFMAN: With different locals, you mean?

CONNOLLY: Well, to a certain extent, yes. But I'm talking about general administration. Our problems are bookbinding problems; the Photoengraver, his problems are photoengraving. And the Lithographers, their problems are lithography. Now what we could do is make the problems of one the problems of all. But we figured the International Union first. That's what it's go to be, instead of different branches. We figure it will take nine years before we can, you might say, get it together. As I said, the Lithographers and Photoengravers gave themselves ten years and they did it in six. So that's not saying it has to take nine, but what we made the set-up was that certain officers would have to be LPIU members and Bookbinders for nine years, so they would be sure of retaining, you might say, their proper balance of power.

HOFFMAN: I notice in the discussion at the convention that one of the concerns that some of your members had was that merged locals, even after merger, if they had fewer than 150 members would be entitled to only one delegate at the convention, and that might therefore disenfranchise a member of the LPIU in that they would only be able to send one individual.

CONNOLLY: Well, you know, there has to be some line drawn some place. This particular set-up the International pays, I think, the hotel bill and the transportation whereas in the other set-up, everybody paid their own.

HOFFMAN: The Bookbinders?

CONNOLLY: Yes. Then we figured everybody would send delegates. If you had twenty-five members, you would send a delegate. We also took in mind the fact that when a convention gets too big, it gets unwieldy and we want a good efficient set-up. But I think the cost entered into it as much as anything. In other words, if the International is going to pay, they should at least have something to say about the size and type of the union. They also have provisions that if a couple local unions could get together, they could send a delegate if they had the required number. Remember, this was all approved by referendum vote.

HOFFMAN: And maybe an alternate from the other. . . .

CONNOLLY: I don't think the International pays for alternates. That would be something you'd have to pay yourself. That doesn't mean you can't send people. But as far as the International paying, they would only pay for the delegate to which you are entitled. Alternates are only to take the place of a delegate if he cannot make it.

HOFFMAN: Are there very many places where this will be a problem?

CONNOLLY: I don't think so.

HOFFMAN: Most of your merged locals will have more than 250 members anyway?

CONNOLLY: I would say so. The funny part of it is that a number of the locals have merged already. I think we've got about ten or twelve that have merged already, with absolutely no pressure to do so.

HOFFMAN: Out of what, eighty-one locals?

CONNOLLY: Oh, we've got more than eighty-one.

HOFFMAN: You have more than eighty-one?

CONNOLLY: Sure, we must have about 190.

HOFFMAN: 190 locals?

CONNOLLY: Around that. You know, I've forgotten just the exact number. I know it's close to 200. I am speaking of the Bookbinders. I don't know how many the LPIU have. Must be up there, too. In Cincinnati they have already merged, and they are talking seriously about merger in St. Louis. They are talking about it in a number of places, and it's voluntary on the local people's part. They think they would be better off insofar as the membership is concerned.

HOFFMAN: When will you have your first merged convention?

CONNOLLY: Next September.

HOFFMAN: This coming September?

CONNOLLY: Yes. You see we asked that they accept the merged document "as is." You know what I mean? As a whole. We weren't going to go over it and pick out sections, but the understanding was that within a year we'd hold a convention and then any problems that might show up, there would be the chance to iron them out.

HOFFMAN: One thing I wanted to ask you. I noticed in your convention procedures that you had slides that you used at the convention to illustrate the merger. Would you tell me something about that?

CONNOLLY: Instead of talking to them, we would first show slides and then discuss the various important subjects. You would put the slide on relative to a particular subject, then you would explain it. In fact, we had a slide for every subject, so that it would be in their minds what we were talking about.

HOFFMAN: What kind of pressures did you have in your International for merger? Where were the big centers?

CONNOLLY: Well, it goes back. Of course, we had been talking merger for five, six years and, I think it was the Philadelphia Convention, which would probably be about five years ago, the committee. . . .

HOFFMAN: Your own [Bookbinders] Philadelphia convention?

CONNOLLY: Yes. The committee made a report on the merger discussions and the committee recommended that they continue to negotiate like they had been, but that didn't satisfy the delegates. They said something must be done; they must have more definite action.

HOFFMAN: Why did they feel that way?

CONNOLLY: Well, that was their personal feelings, you know. They thought we ought to get together with the LPIU. I suppose there were those who felt it would be to their best interests to do that. Chicago was one, and, well, there were some cities against it and some for it. It all depended on their relationship locally. That had a lot to do with it, I think.

HOFFMAN: Did you have any kind of history of jurisdictional disputes with the Lithographers?

CONNOLLY: No, not at all. They're pressmen and we're bookbinders. They had a jurisdictional dispute with the Printing Pressmen, but we didn't. We're friendly with both groups. You're going to get into a mix-up no matter what happens, because we're friendly with both, and we were going to select one over the other, although we had hopes--in fact we still do--that the Printing Pressmen will get into the picture.

HOFFMAN: Did you talk at one time to the Printing Pressmen about [merger]?

CONNOLLY: Oh, yes. I went to every International convention personally and talked merger to them all. Not once, but a couple of times. And we had committee meetings with each of the unions off and on. So we were fairly well familiar with their attitude.

HOFFMAN: What were the factors that moved you toward merger with the LPIU and away from merger with the Printing Pressmen?

CONNOLLY: Just that it looked like we were getting nowhere with the four, because of the activities of the Pressmen. In other words, DeAndrade had died and they had to elect an officer to replace him, and then they had to elect another officer to take his place. By the time that would be done, we'd have another convention. And we were instructed to bring back something definite to our conventions.

So we were meeting off and on. We met with the Executive Boards of all the unions, I think, with the exception of the Typographical Union. I attended a couple of Typographical Union conventions and spoke personally on the merger. And we had this other meeting that I told you about. They were quite familiar with what was going on; there were no secrets. In fact, they all met with each other sometime or other. The Pressmen and the Compositors met and it looks as though the Stereotypers and Electrotypers will merge with the Pressmen.

HOFFMAN: So bringing the Bookbinders into the LPIU may serve as a kind of bridge, making the merger with the Pressmen more possible, do you think?

CONNOLLY: Could be. I talked to Al Rohan, president of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union, and I told him what we were going to do, and he said, "Well, that's good. That will place you fellows in a better bargaining position with us." In other words, our strength could be about equal. I mean, when you're bargaining, there's a tendency, naturally, if you're stronger than the other fellow, to run it to a certain extent. If you're used to being independent for years, you're not going to give that up for nothing. You want to be sure that you are, at least, part of the set-up.

HOFFMAN: Right. Sure. What was your membership strength compared with the LPIU?

CONNOLLY: I think we had five or six thousand more members.

HOFFMAN: Five or six thousand more members?

CONNOLLY: Yes. But they have more skilled people than we do. We have about ten ot twelve thousand of what we call "Auxiliary Workers"--I think along those lines. The LPIU have some, but not what we have. Of course, we have the women, many of them highly skilled and some whose jobs require less skill.

HOFFMAN: What percentage of your membership is female?

CONNOLLY: My thought would be about 45 percent. It varies.

HOFFMAN: Close to half. Well, I noticed from looking at your convention procedures that women's liberation has been a topic in Bookbinders for a long time.

CONNOLLY: Well, the funny part of it is, I think, that the Bookbinders gave the women more representation than any other organization that I know of, because we always specified that certain jobs on the Executive Council had to be women. We had an Executive Council of nine, and three of them had to be women. As you know, we didn't need any federal laws to do that; that's been in effect since I can remember.

HOFFMAN: Those vice presidencies were reserved for women? And you had one reserved for a Canadian as well?

CONNOLLY: Yes. That was so they'd be sure to have representation. The Graphic Arts International Union's constitution and bylaws provide that there shall be no discrimination between men and women relative to being a candidate to any elected position.

HOFFMAN: Are these regional vice presidents? Or are they International vice presidents?

CONNOLLY: International. In the present set-up we have councillors, whereas the Bookbinders never had them. But they are regional.

HOFFMAN: Now, how will that translate into the merger? Will you have regional councillors as well?

CONNOLLY: We've already elected them. I think the votes were counted last September.

HOFFMAN: This was when you put in these fifteen councillors from the I.B. of B.?

CONNOLLY: Yes. We're gradually going to reduce the number because there are too many. There are fifty people and you don't need fifty people on an executive council for our type of organization.

HOFFMAN: So it ends up with <u>fifty</u> people?

CONNOLLY: I would say that. We've also got the officers, too.

HOFFMAN: You have nine officers.

CONNOLLY: We've got thirty councillors and, how many officers have we got? We've got ten each. Nine--no, ten, I think. That's twenty more. There's fifty right there.

HOFFMAN: That's a pretty unwieldy executive board.

CONNOLLY: That's right. And there's a provision in it, if you read it, whereby as time goes on, we reduce it. so we're trying to get it down to about fourteen. But when you're merging you can't say, "Well, you're going to lose your job." Because if you do, they're going to vote against it [the merger]. (laughter)

HOFFMAN: Not only that but "I'll campaign against it."

CONNOLLY: I think a lot of them wouldn't. We've got a lot of good people, you know, when you come right down to it. They are interested in the membership.

HOFFMAN: I noticed that you had considerable discussion about the nominations and elections, and it was mentioned that the new procedures were a radical departure from the Bookbinders' old procedures. How so? What was the essence of the change for the nominations and elections?

CONNOLLY: As far as the Bookbinders were concerned, anybody could announce that they wanted to be a candidate, provided they had been members for a certain number of years and things along those lines; then you had to get what we called "endorsements." Each candidate had to receive a certain number of endorsements.

HOFFMAN: A certain number of locals endorsing them?

CONNOLLY: That's right. And those were never too high. I think ten for the top officers and seven for the others. Those endorsements took place, I think, in May and then the elections took place in October--the first Monday in October.

The ballots were counted locally and then sent to what we called "the locked box" in the Post Office in Washington, D.C. After about ten days, the local unions in Washington picked a committee to go down and get the ballots and go over the returns at headquarters. If the committee found everything to be in order, they would give them the O.K. Now the Lithographers, as well as the Photoengravers, as I get it, would nominate at the convention--whether or not they had to get endorsements, I'm not sure.

HOFFMAN: Yes, I think they did.

CONNOLLY: They did?

HOFFMAN: Yes.

CONNOLLY: They had to get endorsements, and then they had the elections. Of course, they had a referendum board that took charge of the elections. Personally, I don't see any degree of differences between the election set-up for both organizations. The only difference is they keep the ballots locally while the Bookbinders kept them internationally. We elected every four years, but not at the convention.

HOFFMAN: In other words, that favored an area where there might be a number of small locals that wouldn't necessarily get to the convention, but they might have been able to get the required number of local endorsements to run.

CONNOLLY: Yes, but all of this has changed and the nomination of candidates for any office or other elective position of the International in regular elections shall be made at the triennial convention of the International. A member may be a candidate for only one (1) elective position in the International.

HOFFMAN: Oh, you still don't have to be present at the convention?

CONNOLLY: No. It's just a combination of both.

HOFFMAN: Did you have a provision that an International representative could not be a delegate to the convention?

CONNOLLY: We had a provision that an International man could be elected by his local union to the convention, but they had to pay his expenses. The International Union didn't contribute anything. I, myself, was a delegate for some conventions sent by my local union.

HOFFMAN: Although you were an International representative?

CONNOLLY: Yes.

HOFFMAN: What did you think of that?

CONNOLLY: I don't think it amounts to a whole lot. Others think differently. They figured it's giving more representation to the local union, but unless you're elected by the local union, how are you going to go? You know, you must have done something for your local union. The funny part of it was that half the time I was International representative, I was also president of the local union. Of course, I did a lot of work for them, naturally, for nothing, because I was getting paid by the International.

Right now we have about three of four International representatives who are working for their local union because the arrangement was that none of that would be changed. But if they quit, they couldn't be International representative and work for the local unions, too. I can see a certain amount of sense there. They figure that "Well, the International Union is paying them, why shouldn't they work for them all the time?" There's a tendency, no matter how you figure it, that you are going to do something for your local union if you're a representative.

HOFFMAN: Right. Well, I think one thing we haven't covered too much is your assessment and analysis of President Haggerty. He had a longer term in office than any of your other International presidents, and I think it might be useful if you said something about his leadership.

CONNOLLY: Well, I would say I think he was the best president we ever had.

HOFFMAN: What made him the best?

CONNOLLY: Because when he came into the picture, the International Union was getting over the strikes in 1921. The International Union was in very bad shape. Then, of course, after he was in office four or five years, the laws changed and made it more favorable to us and we made a lot of progress under his leadership. That's self-evident in the gains and wages and working conditions, and things along those lines.

In addition to that, he was chairman of the Board of Governors of the International Allied Printing Trades Association. As such he had a lot to do with getting the publishers and the buyers of printing to put it into union shops. He was quite a fellow personally and he made a very good impression, and a lot of these people just went along with him because there was no pressure put on them except through his personal efforts. I was reading an article where Berry [George] was praising him--he was president of the Pressmen--for the work that he did. And, of course, all the Printing Trades unions benefited from getting them to put their work in union shops.

He represented the AF of L in Great Britain as a fraternal delegate, and things along those lines. They don't pick out those fellows because they haven't done anything. He was constantly working for the best interests of all and he was able to get the other unions to work together with us. A lot of the programs, organization, and so forth, and progress being made, was due to his programs.

HOFFMAN: Well, what was the background then? I noticed in this list of presidents that you became acting president, I guess at the time of his death?

CONNOLLY: No. Haskins succeeded him, finished out his term and was elected in his own right for a couple of years. [Robert Haskins] He became sick and I filled in for him until he returned to office. He then became sick again and I took over during his illness and finished out his term after his death. Joe Denny was elected president and served for four years and did not run for re-election.

HOFFMAN: Where was he from?

CONNOLLY: He was from New York. He died about a month ago.

HOFFMAN: Why did he decide not to run again?

CONNOLLY: Well, I think he had always advocated that when he was sixty-five it was time to quit with his own people. Then when it came, I think he decided that "I better do what I promised to do." But I think his health was not too good. Although he lived at least ten or twelve years after that.

HOFFMAN: I am old enough to remember that George Meany said a man ought to quit when he was sixty-five, too.

CONNOLLY: Yes, well, we had a guy up around Boston--I think his name was Doctor Aossler. He said they ought to chloroform them when they hit forty. (laughter) I come from a funny family. My father was fifty years old for twenty years! (more laughter). I'm not kidding you eighter!!

HOFFMAN: Well, then you decided to run when President Denny did not seek reelection?

CONNOLLY: Yes.

HOFFMAN: Did you have any opposition?

CONNOLLY: Yes.

HOFFMAN: Where did your opposition come from?

CONNOLLY: It came from New York by a fellow named Neumeyer. In fact, I was talking to him this morning. He's a good fellow, too. There were a lot of people who wanted me to run because I was well-known and I had the experience of being the president before. That's the way they felt about it, and I don't think I paid fifty bucks to get elected for anything. (laughter) Just lucky, I guess.

HOFFMAN: Well, is all of this activity from New York a part of the whole New York picture? For example, in my beginning to do research on the LPIU, I discovered that Swayduck and Local #1 in New York have always been kind of independent-minded. Was that true in your organization as well?

CONNOLLY: Well, we've got a fellow by the name of Joe Hellman up in New York, and he's quite a fellow. In fact I was talking to him this morning also. He's been able to get New York together, and we have very little trouble in New York. At one time there was a constant turmoil in New York City because they were battling among themselves. It would always affect the International Union because they wanted the International to settle it. You couldn't settle it without taking sides.

At any rate, Joe came into the picture and, of course, Joe Denny was ahead of him, so Joe [Hellman] did a pretty good job, too. That feeling has all died out.

HOFFMAN: Well now your locals in New York have nobody to merge with because of the independence of the Lithographers in New York?

CONNOLLY: They can merge among themselves. And the Photoengravers are still in New York.

HOFFMAN: And you can merge with the . . . .

CONNOLLY: . . . [with] the Photoengravers in New York. And, you know, we're working to see if we can get all of the unions together. I think the fact that New York has played such a prominent part in the merger might have some effect on the other unions up there.

HOFFMAN: Well, Mr. Connolly, is there something that we haven't covered that you feel we should put into the record?

CONNOLLY: You know, I was thinking about that. I was wondering what I was going to say. (laughing). Well, I was thinking you might look this brief history over and if you find something in there that you might want to use--you've got a copy anyway. These are the first officers and, of course, these are the presiding officers. The though that I had is that we were an organization for eighty years and we shouldn't go by the boards as if we never existed. We ought to have something in the record to show that we had been a union for eighty years, and that we had made considerable progress and had helped the men and women who were members of our union over the years. We should have something in the record that somebody could look at once in a while if they wanted to find out what had been going on.

But, of course, we haven't touched at all on any of the progress we've made, but I think that's self-evident. You could go back to what we got in the early days and what we get now. In addition to that, in fact, all labor has progressed and we've progressed along with it. I wouldn't want to say we were the only ones who did it because I know we went along with the others. But we have made tremendous progress over the years and we expect to make more progress affiliated with the so-called GAIU [Graphic Arts International Union]. We ought to get together with all the printing trades unions, and the primary reason--and there can be no other reason for a real union--but to improve the welfare of the membership.

HOFFMAN: One question I wanted to ask you is: How would you assess the trade feeling of your people now? Do you think there is a considerable amount of rank-and-file interest in being identified, [that is] retaining the identity as a bookbinder?

CONNOLLY: Well, I don't know. We were meeting this morning, just the Bookbinders group. They had what they called "workshops" and they discussed the problems pertaining to the different branches, because as I said, they are different. No question about it. And they don't seem to be thinking too much about name. What they're thinking about is how we can improve the welfare of the set-up. Shorten the hours, get better wages and conditions and fringe benefits. There's a certain amount of sentiment attached to the name. There's no question about that. But the bigger goal, as I said a minute ago, is the welfare of the membership. We have come to the conclusion that this is the way to improve upon it.

HOFFMAN: Now this pride of craft, was it stronger in years past than it is now?

CONNOLLY: I think it's something that grows on you. You've been a bookbinder and you think the Bookbinders are O.K., and naturally you retain that identification. But personally, I'-e been an Allied Printing Trades man, although I'm a bookbinder, there's no question about this. I've always believed, and still do, that the sooner we get together, the better off everybody will be. In fact, I sometimes wonder if we wouldn't all be better off if we belonged to the AF of L and see what can happen that way. (laughter) Well, you know, when you're fighting the Manufacturers' Association, the Chamber of Commerce and the conglomerates, how are you going to hold your own against them separately? Or just get a square deal from them.

HOFFMAN: Has there been quite a growth of bookbinding establishments being owned by some kind of congromerate that has nothing to do with printing?

CONNOLLY: Yes. It has been coming into the industry during the last six or seven years. It is quite a growth and a number of plants have been closed because of it. They're not at all interested, like the owner of the ordinary place would be, of keeping it going. As I say, I think it is not making the money they expected it to and they closed it up. They have no real concern for the people who work for them. That's my opinion of the conglomerates. We have plenty of information that many of the printing plants are financially controlled by people who are not directly connected with the printing trades.

HOFFMAN: Were the Bookbinders always affiliated with the AF of L?

CONNOLLY: We didn't join the AF of L as such until 1898. The charter is right out there on the wall. We became affiliated with the American Federation of Labor in 1898. We were organized in 1892, so evidently for six years they went along as independent.

HOFFMAN: But there was never any break in affiliation?

CONNOLLY: No.

HOFFMAN: As there was with the Lithographers, who broke with the AF of L and went with the CIO.

CONNOLLY: No, no. We had an office in the AF of L Building from 1921 until about four years ago. They needed the space we had so we moved to 1612 K Street, N.W., and then we moved here when we merged with the LPIU. But we have always been on friendly terms, most friendly terms, with the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations.

HOFFMAN: You had an office in the old building at Ninth and Massachusetts Avenue, North West?

CONNOLLY: That's right. We went in there in 1921. Then when they moved to their new building at 815 16th Street, North West, we went with them. Our relationship with the AF of L, I'd say, has been very good.

HOFFMAN: Did this cause anybody any problems in terms of thinking of merger? That is, in harboring any CIO. . . .

CONNOLLY: The Lithographers affiliated with the AF of L before the merger came about. The old Photoengravers were strongly AF of L. Matt Woll was at one time their president, and naturally the Photoengravers were always AF of L. They had a lot to do with organizing the Union Life Insurance Company. The Photoengravers were strongly AF of L; I don't think there would have been any merger if the others were not in, but they--when they're out, they want to get in. Let's be frank about it. I don't care who they are--even the Teamsters, which will soon be in. The Lithographers as such had a jurisdictional dispute with the Pressmen and I think that was part of the reason they were out.

HOFFMAN: I notice that one of your members, Wesley Taylor, secretary-treasurer, was also active.

CONNOLLY: Before commenting, may I say that Secretary-Treasurer Taylor has been very active in the labor movement, as well as being quite active in civic affairs. He was secretary-treasurer of the Bookbinders International Union for a number of years, and while in New Jersey he was appointed by the Governor to serve on a committee to revise the constitution for the State of New Jersey. He also received assignments from the United States Government on numerous occasions relative to certain programs and projects. He is also a vice president of the Union Label and Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO, and was a member of the Board of Trustees for the Union Labor Life Insurance Company.

HOFFMAN: Could you tell me about the agreement you had with respect to your retirement provisions for your officers? That is, the merged union has provision in its constitution that no officer will serve after the term in which he becomes sixty-five?

CONNOLLY: Yes. He can be elected before he's sixty-five, but after he reaches sixty-five, he can't run for office again.

HOFFMAN: But the merger agreement specified that that rule would not apply to the current officers of the Bookbinders?

CONNOLLY: That's right.

HOFFMAN: So that's when Wes Taylor comes into the merged organization as secretary-treasurer?

CONNOLLY: He's already in! That's been in existence since September 4, 1972.

HOFFMAN: So that his tenure as secretary-treasurer of the merged organization is not affected by his age?

CONNOLLY: No. We'd have had to have all new officers if we did that. (laughter) To be frank about it, that's one of the reasons I ran, it being understood that I would not be a candidate for president of the merged organization. Some other fellow might come along and he might want to be the president, and this would end up as an issue. There's no question about it.

HOFFMAN: Right. If the president of the Bookbinders had been a young man, it could have made a difference.

CONNOLLY: Yes, because that was one of the questions that had to be settled right off the reel. Everybody knew how I felt about it because I put it up before the Bookbinders before I ran this last time.

HOFFMAN: Well, if I may say so, it wasn't necessary that you felt that way about it, because the labor movement is full of people who have hung onto office.

CONNOLLY: That's right.

HOFFMAN: Regardless of how old they were? What about activity in support of local political candidates. For example, in Boston?

CONNOLLY: Well, that would be a local set-up. I don't think we ever mixed into it too much. Now the Allied Printing Trades Council, at one time the secretary was the political leader in and around Boston. Even he took the position that the Council shouldn't get involved in anything political, other than some labor laws that might affect us. As far as I know, the Bookbinders never bothered. That was left up to the individual.

HOFFMAN: You didn't support candidates for Governor or anything of this sort?

CONNOLLY: Not as organizations. Once in a while we might endorse somebody, but the members were free to vote for whomever they wanted. Of course, they'd be free anyway, because you can't tell them how to vote. You can tell them who to vote against, but you can't tell them who to vote for. If you tell them who to vote against, you've got to have a reason. Just because you like somebody, they don't give a hoorah whether you like them or not.

HOFFMAN: What was your position with respect to trade? Now I know that one of the problems that printers had from very early was printing done in Hong Kong and runaway kinds of things which existed long before the Amalgamated got concerned about Hong Kong raincoats.

CONNOLLY: Well, you know, we've been fortunate as far as the printing trades are concerned. We had what we called a "Copyright Law" back in 1893, I think it was. Somebody was farsighted enough to have this Copyright Law enacted and it provides, even now, that you can't have over 2,500 copies printed in a foreign country if you are going to retain your copyright. For years it was only 1,500. They've tried for many years to change it. Now we're tied in with a lot of other things besides printing. The tariff, as far as we're concerned, might just as well not be written, because it doesn't mean a thing. But the Copyright Law has protected us over the years, and we're not affected as much as some of the other trades, because if they want to retain their copyright--and most of the jobs are copyrighted--it's got to be done in this country.

So we were just lucky, that's all I can say, and we are even talking about it now, because we are constantly up against it. We have a legislative expert, O. R. Strackbein, and he works for other unions, also. His job is to watch out for our interests as far as those things are concerned from a legislative point of view. I am not talking directly about the AF of L; I'm talking about the International Allied Printing Trades Association.

HOFFMAN: Yes. And they hired a lobbyist or a legislative representative?

CONNOLLY: Yes. We used to have a fellow by the name of Mike Flynn, who came from Boston. I knew him well. And because of my association with him, I learned a lot about the Copyright Law and things like that, which I probably ordinarily wouldn't have known.

Efforts are being continuously made to change the Copyright Law, but we have a committee working to see to it that laws are not enacted that would be disadvantageous to the printing trades worker. All the parties involved--printers, publishers

and printing trades unions--are more or less cooperating with each other to protect their mutual interests.

HOFFMAN: I imagine you must have known Frank Fenton quite well.

CONNOLLY: Oh, I knew him very well. Frank came from Boston. I was with him when he was up in Boston at the State Federation Convention, and he was complaining about pains in his arms and things like that; we were trying to get him to go and see a doctor. But he wouldn't do it and he went back to the office in Washington.

Previous to the meeting in Boston, I had been sick. I had a throat operation and for seventeen weeks I didn't speak. Frank said that Haggerty, who was then the president, was interested in hearing from me. I had not talked to him, so I called him up. He said, "Hell, I'm not worried about you. Frank Fenton is upstairs at the AF of L Headquarters and I think he is dying." And sure enough, he died.

HOFFMAN: My son, Frank, is named after him.

CONNOLLY: Yes? Fair enough. Well, Frank was really quite a fellow if you knew him.

HOFFMAN: I knew him very, very well.

CONNOLLY: He'd go any place he could to help you. We had strikes up in Clinton, along those times, and he used to come up and address the strikers, and he really could talk.

HOFFMAN: He and Bob Watt.

CONNOLLY: I knew Bob very well, too. They were grand fellows and it didn't make any difference who you were if you wanted some help and you asked for it, that was all that was necessary. If they had to go 100 miles, what of it, 100 miles was 100 miles. Those who came later were good fellows, too, but they had excuses sometimes. You know what I mean? But the old gang never had them. If you wanted some help, you got it. That's all there was to do. Everybody was that way; it wasn't just one.

HOFFMAN: Were you active in the Boston Central Labor Body?

CONNOLLY: No. See I came from Norwood, and therefore would not be eligible to be a delegate. But I knew a lot of them because 90 percent of the work I did was around Greater Boston at that time. Harry Granges was secretary. Remember him?

HOFFMAN: Yes.

CONNOLLY: See, we'd have dealings with the administration in the City of Boston and we'd always have the Central Labor Union make the appointments, and Harry used to be in on that.

HOFFMAN: I guess one question that occurs to me is: Did you feel that your activities in the Allied Printing Trades Council were kind of the extent of your participation in the labor movement as such, or did you also feel it was necessary to be involved in federations?

CONNOLLY: Well, what happened around Boston when I first came around, everybody was interested in everybody else. The Allied Printing Trades Council was one, but if the Building Trades or the Teamsters or somebody else had something, we all went to the meetings; we all were one gang. John English was the secretary of the Teamsters Union for years. He used to hang around with the same gang I did. And he didn't drink and I didn't drink, so we used to be kind of, you know, although the others never drank to excess. I'd say they might have a few drinks when they'd go out together. But I knew John English before he ever came to Washington. They're all great fellows, that's all I can say. I'm talking from the union point of view.

HOFFMAN: There was a real fraternity of New England labor.

CONNOLLY: That's right. If you didn't stick together, you died. So you stayed together. We had some great fellows that came from up that way. It's a funny thing, Boyd DeAndrade, Bill Connell, and I were the delegates to the Boston Allied Printing Trades Council at the same time, and later we became International presidents at the same time. We were International presidents, not elected at the same time, but we were. . . .

HOFFMAN: At the same time, yes.

CONNOLLY: It doesn't happen very often. I used to say, "Let's get together. We should be able to settle our problems among ourselves." But it's different when you become International president. You have to think of a lot of things you didn't think about when you were just acting more or less on your own. Now, DeAndrade and I, if we had a jurisdictional problem when he was International representative, we'd settle it in fifteen minutes. I'm talking about borderline cases. A Bookbinder was a Bookbinder and a Pressman was a Pressman. But where there was some borderline case, we'd

decide what was best for the fellow involved and let it go at that. When we became International presidents, we couldn't do that or we'd get arrested. (laughter) But we used to laugh about it too, and talk about it, you know.

HOFFMAN: Right.

CONNOLLY: You had to satisfy a lot of other people.

HOFFMAN: That's the business of becoming prisoner of the job.

CONNOLLY: That's right. In conclusion I might add that we are looking toward working together in the Graphic Arts International Union with the hope that, at least sometime in the future, we will form one big Printing Trades Union. We believe this is a necessity if we are to be in a position to take care of ourselves insofar as the future is concerned.

END OF INTERVIEW

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