Interview with Ted Meyers

August 2, 1974

Interviewer I: Alice Hoffman

Interviewer II: Greg Giebel

INTRODUCTION

Theodore Meyers was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and started working in the lithographic industry at the age of eighteen as a messenger boy. He soon joined the Amalgamated Lithographers as a junior member, became a feeder, and reflects in this interview on the nature, the meaning, the prejudices, and weaknesses of the Pittsburgh local at that time as it appeared to a nineteen-year-old feeder.

After three years in the Navy during the Second World War, Meyers returned to work as a feeder and became active in the union. In his efforts to get the feeders represented on the union executive board, he got himself elected to the board and participated in negotiations in 1947. Also in 1947 he became the financial secretary of his local and undertook to straighten out the financial records of the union. He began then to come in contact with union personalities from the International and other locals--Matthew Silverman, Marty Grayson, and others. By this time he was an apprentice pressman and attended his first International convention in 1949. Following his term as financial secretary, Meyers served as recording secretary of the local. Since January, 1951, Meyers has served successfully as president of Local 24-L, Pittsburgh.

In this interview Meyers discusses fully the development of the whole question of pensions in the Lithographers Union, especially in the strikes of 1949 and 1950. He recalls his own efforts as president of his local--efforts which were initially unsuccessful--to get his local's approval of the Inter Local Pension Fund and the unique way he finally succeeded.

Meyers also traces the course of the Chicago-New York conflict that developed in the union and the intricacies of the power struggle among individual union personalities. He evaluates the merger between the Amalgamated Lithographers and the Photoengravers Union, the problems it posed for his own Pittsburgh local and for New York Local One, and the whole issue of merging the pension funds of the two Internationals.

Meyers looks at the employment picture in Pittsburgh and how his local deals with the problem of unemployment. He concludes the interview with his assessment of the possibilities for merger between the Lithographers, the Photoengravers, and the Bookbinders on the local level in Pittsburgh.

Meyers: Ted Meyers. I was born in the city of Pittsburgh on August 7, 1922.

Interviewer I: Gee, you're about to celebrate your birthday!

Okay, Mr. Meyers, why don't you say something about your childhood, if you wish, and your schooling and your first experiences at working as a . . . . . what, an apprentice messenger boy? Is that what it was?

Meyers: Let me see what I told you. I don't know what the hell I told you! (Laughter)

A little background as to my childhood and what have you would be that I was born on the south side, subsequently moved into the Beltzhoover area.

Interviewer I: Which area?

Meyers: Beltzhoover. B-E-L-T-Z-H-O-O-V-E-R area of Pittsburgh.

Interviewer I: What sort of an area is that?

Meyers: Right now it's a predominately black area, I would presume. At that particular time, though, there was no particular one ethnic class of people. We had whites, blacks, Catholics, Protestants, Jews; and we sort of got along fairly good, having our battles periodically, not necessarily on a racial or any other type of an ethnic problem. It was a typical, common neighborhood where we all joined together. It was a good melting pot. Of course there were a hell of a lot of prejudices predominant at that time, but they were all controlled.

Interviewer: Was this a working-class neighborhood?

Meyers: It was really working class. I really say that because possibly it lends itself to what I've finally become.

Interviewer: I see.

Meyers: And then of course the depression hit back in '29, and it affected us in around '32.

I found myself back into the south side again in my mother's original home, where she was born. I continued my high school, after grade school,

at the same school--St. George's.

Interviewer I: Was that a parochial school?

Meyers: That was a parochial school. And then I went into the service. Prior to going into the service, though. . . Of course I, as I say, graduated in 1940 in the height of the depression. . .no jobs available. . . the war was coming on. And as a result of the war coming on, I think, a job opened up as a messenger boy. Now, that's a far cry from any type of job opportunity, but it was a job; it was opportunity. And that's not too long ago, only 1940.

I started working for this one particular printing company, A. H. Mathias, which is located at 319 Fifth Avenue. They're still in business, primarily as photostat people, blueprinters, but also lithographers. I met a few people, mostly German at that particular time, that were in the lithographic industry; but they were strange people. They were set aside, and they were aloof of everybody else because they were the elite so to speak. And here I was glad to get a job at eighteen years of age for twelve dollars and eighty cents a week. As I say, this was only in 1940 or '41.

From that particular job--after I graduated to become a blueprint operator, I was probably making about $18.50 or $18.00 a week--through our neighborhood people that we grew up with, I was able to get a job in Bankers Lithographing Corporation. If my memory serves me correctly, I probably started there about January 1, 1942. The Bankers Lithographing Corporation was primarily a bank stationery outfit, and they are still in business to this day.

It didn't take me too long to find out that I wasn't going any place there, and through the advice of people I got to know out there, through the efforts of this union, I got into the union at Bankers Lithographing.

Going back to that, by the way, we got into this union as junior members. We didn't have the right of full membership. Our dues were low. At that particular time it was two dollars a month. We got no benefits from the union. And basically we had no say, either. I mean you were told what to do and when to do it. Primarily, we learned a hell of a lot of discipline. We were starting to learn our trade the way it should have been, which it is not today, either, by the way.

Interviewer I: How did you feel about the labor movement at that time, when you joined?

Meyers: Well, you're talking about when I was eighteen to nineteen years old.

Interviewer I: Hm-hm.

Meyers: The only thing that I knew about the labor movement at that particular time was that it was good for all the common working people. Other than what I had read in school, other than what I had heard about from the autoworkers' strikes (because I was studying that in school), other than what I had heard about the criminal element in the various unions (and I won't mention who they are), I had a little feeling at that particular time for righteousness. I think I credit a lot of that to my parochial background because I think they were fighting for a particular cause at that time. But other than that, I had no strong movement or drive because I was still in a position to be happy to have a job, happy to start to learn a trade. And I did what I was told! If you didn't do what you were told at that particular time, you were gone! It was as simple as that! The union wasn't as strong; the union wasn't a union "per se" that it is today--that is, controlling the situation. The union at that particular time was groups of individuals that had casted together for their own particular purposes. I'm sorry to say, I think, more so for their own selfish individual purposes rather than for concerted action. And I've seen this as you'll see later on; I've made a study of this stuff.

So we had a group of individuals that actually made these unions. And the stronger the individual was, the stronger that particular union was for that particular person or that particular clique so to speak.

So I had nothing strong at that particular time other than that I had a burning desire to go to college which I wasn't able to do or couldn't do. . . . couldn't afford it. The pay check was needed at home. But nevertheless I continued to study in my own ways through the library books--math. And then finally I had another job opportunity of going from Bankers. I went into Republic Press. At that particular time it was called Republic Banknote Company. It was only about two miles down the road on Forbes Avenue.

Basically this is where I started to get into the lithographic industry, I think. And basically this is where I started getting a little bit of the feel of what the labor movement was all about. Because in my way of thinking, I got to know a more select group of artists and craftsmen that had national recognition; and these were the people who were also the keystones or the

cornerstones of the union at that particular time.

A lot of these individuals had a tremendous amount of history behind them, going back into the latter parts of the eighteen hundreds, eighteen ninety some. So this is where I started thinking and started listening and started prying and asking questions and was actually setting up a foundation for myself for what I think I am doing today.

I didn't stay there too long, though, because I went into the service. I enlisted; I went into the Navy. It served a two-fold purpose, I think: It gave me an opportunity to serve my country, which I wanted to do because I was nineteen or twenty years old when I signed up, and it gave me the education that I couldn't get. I was being paid for it to start.

Needless to say, you know what a Naval aviator, fighter pilot would get, the type of training. It was the finest that any military man could get, and it helped to frame my mind.

But there I saw the same type of restrictions and control that I saw in Bankers, that I saw as I was an eighteen year old boy as a messenger, trying to get a job, hundred percent dominated. "You either do it my way or you don't do it at all," you see? You're out! So I went through that for three years. I came out of it alive, and I came out of it with a half-decent education, I think.

I came back into this industry, which I didn't think I'd ever do because it was a sad industry when I left. When we left, I think we were making ninety-three cents an hour (which was the early part of 1943) which at that particular time wasn't bad for a forty-hour workweek. But we only got that ninety-three cents an hour by virtue of the fact that we found out one of the other feeder classification of workers, who happened to be the son of a friend of the bosses, was getting that kind of money. Everybody else in the plant, every feeder, every helper in the plant, was only getting about sixty-three to seventy-five cents an hour and here we were union members! Of course we weren't recognized as union members because we were junior members. This man was not a union member. Yet he came into the plant through a favor at ninety-three cents an hour.

So we found this out, and we collectively went to the boss and said, "Hey, this guy's not even a member of the union and he's getting this kinda money!? How come we're not getting it?" So eventually we got this.

But there again, the unions were very weak. They were individually

controlled and did not have too much power collectively or as a group.

As I say, when we come back from the service I didn't particularly want to go into this industry because I had this type of a bad taste in my mouth. But fortunately or unfortunately, trying to make up my mind as to what I was going to do--go back into the service or go to school--I did go back to work and found myself entrapped in this union again.

When we went back to work, I was making, in 1946--I took a three-month rest after the service--we were making a full dollar an hour, which was seven cents more an hour than what we were making when I went away two and a half to three years before.

Now, I recognized the problems of the war effort and so on and so forth, but what I couldn't recognize at that particular time was that I was now twenty-two years of age, going on twenty-three, just gotten married, had my family on the way, and I couldn't subject myself to the same type of restrictions and control that I was expected to be subjected to. In other words, you were still nothing but a dumb helper, low man on the totem pole. "You're my assistant, pressman assistant. Do what I tell you or get the hell out!"

I started getting to the union meetings again as soon as I came back in, and we found that we were in negotiations that particular year and that negotiations had been going on for six to eight months and nothing coming out of it. This goes back now to 1946, early.

So they finally had an acceptance of a contract, and the people got a full fifty cents a week increase that particular year, which was pretty tough to swallow--fifty cents a week. Now, they did get shorter hours and what have you. It was pretty tough at that particular time of keeping a family on a buck an hour when we were all growing up. And as I came back in. . . as I said before, we had no status at all as union people when we went away. Now, this may not be true in other parts of the country, with other unions, such as New York and so on and so forth. Well, it was true here.

So we started making some static on the union floor, three of us young kids so to speak, at that particular time. Number one, we wanted some type of recognition. Number two, we wanted some kind of control over our destiny. Number three, we wanted to be treated like human beings, not as slaves. Well, this didn't sit well with a lot of people in power at that particular time nor with a lot of the "cliques" that were predominant! As I said before, this was nothing but a fraternal order of "cliques." The stronger the person

was, the best craftsmanship, he was able to connive himself a quarter or half a dollar an hour over and above anybody else. And they did this by keeping the lower person down! They did this by not teaching the lower classification of worker what the trade's all about, but they failed to recognize that people learn to read. They failed to realize that the industry was getting on paper. They were starting to print lessons as to what lithography was all about so people started learning.

It was the end of 1946, and we were going into negotiations again. Being active in the union. . .I don't think I've ever missed a union meeting. I did last month while on vacation, the first time in thirty some years. But I requested, and subsequently was granted a right, to sit on the negotiating committee of the union. Now the first negotiating session was in '47, but this was the latter part of '46. I guess I better go back a little bit first of all.

Interviewer I: You requested the right as a representative of the feeders?

Meyers: Well, that's why I'm going to go back.

As I was saying, we never had representation on our executive board from that classification of worker. And as I say, some of us young punks--and I was called the "hot-head kid" at that particular time--asked for this type of representation. As a result of that, two of us that had been members of the union prior to the war, Clarence Kenney and myself, were nominated to be the feeder representative on council. Now, this was after many, many months of study of the hierarchy of the union as to whether "we should give these people, these young punks, representation." So we did finally get this representation. I was victorious in the election, and Clarence Kenney, who's a retired member of this organization and has been a friend of mine ever since. . . . . We both grew up at the same parallel of interest in the industry. As a matter of fact, every place that he was, I took his job! He's a little bit older than I, and he was always drafted before I was. I wasn't drafted, of course. I went away myself. But that was the start.

So when I got on this executive board, I started asking questions. And I saw the "cliques." And at this particular time I had been in three different shops. I saw the hazards of this one, the hazards of that one, the hazards and the good of all the shops, the good of all the particular areas. There were a lot of things I didn't agree with as to what was going on because

I still saw that suppression, the keeping down of certain classifications for the benefit of others.

Interviewer I: So you went into negotiations then in the latter part of 1947. . . . .?

Meyers: 1947, that's correct.

Interviewer I: . . . . . as a representative of the feeders.

Meyers: And after the first meeting the boss of the largest plant in the city of Pittsburgh, which at that particular time was Republic Banknote, where I had worked, wanted to know who the hell this young kid was on the committee and what right I had to be there? I had no rights to be there. The boss told the union this. So at that particular time a very good friend of mine, since deceased, Frank Rogers, who was the president of the union, defended my right to be there.

So this is where I started getting into negotiations. This is my background and some of the reasons why I have the feeling that I have. I saw depression; I saw suppression. Everything was wrong about the human race, and that's bad! That's a little bit of the background as to why I am where I am now.

Interviewer I: Hm-hm. So do you think you were able to effect some changes in those negotiations in 1947 to the benefit of the. . . . /feeders/?

Meyers: I would say that we made some improvements in 1947. More so than the improvements that were made in 1947 for the worker, the classification of feeder representative, I got to know a man by the name of Matthew Silverman, who was a partner of Robinson, Silverman, and Pierce, the attorney for the International. Here I was, I guess I was twenty-four years old, twenty-five years old. He left a hell of an impression upon me! He left an impression so great. . . . . ! He was disappointed at this negotiation that I even signed a memorandum of agreement which was not satisfactory to the International and to myself. But through coercion. . . . .

(Mr. Meyers asks someone in the room to get him a contract: "That stuff from Bankers that I got the other day.")

. . . . . through coercion I was forced to sign it. But as a movement, yes, we did make some progress. More subsequent progress has been made since then, though. I can refer you to our contract where we now have rates of six, seven dollars an hour for feeder classification of workers, which means that they can make a darn decent way of life today.

All during this trial period, as representative of the union for the feeders, I was being told by the elite, the "cliques", to keep my mouth shut in the shops, to quit talking so loud, because soon I was going to get an opportunity to become an apprentice. Strange as this may seem, at this particular time, we got all the way up to about forty-two dollars a week in the next contract. And through the seniority system I had been given an opportunity to become a "first-color helper" on a two-color press, which means I was the second man on the run for a three-man crew: pressman, first helper, and second helper.

Through pressures in the shop I was demoted, and my hourly wage was cut a nickel or seven cents an hour. Now that doesn't sound like much, but to me that seven cents an hour was milk for my children. . .one child at that time. I was very, very bitter about it. The other fellows got a hold of me, some of my friends, and told me to keep my mouth shut; but I wouldn't keep my mouth shut. We fought the case all the way through. I got my job back, and I subsequently got promoted to an apprentice pressman.

Interviewer I: Now, you grieved this through some kind of grievance procedure that the union had?

Meyers: No, the union didn't do anything. You did it on your own at that particular time. I made my case known to the boss, and he was sympathetic. He knew that I was right!

Interviewer I: Does that mean that you didn't <u>have</u> a grievance procedure?

Meyers: No, they didn't have anything. There was no formality about stuff like that years ago.

Interviewer: Was that because these were small shops or was this characteristic of the industry at that time?

Meyers: Because the union wasn't strong! The union wasn't strong! There was no union other than, I told you, a group of people who were individually selfish! Now, you know I'll say this now, and they don't believe that they were, but they were!

But somewhere along the line you had a group or a core of good people. If you could convince them or talk to them, they'd do good for you.

Interviewer I: Hm-hm.

Meyers: As an example, this boss of mine, Art Moss, I think he's one of the finest pressmen in the country, one of the toughest foremen in the country whom I had ever worked for; but he was honest, he was strong, and he had a

good union background. He's the one that demoted me. He's the one that tried to break me. It was only in subsequent years later that he admitted this to me. And it was only because he couldn't break me that I finally became an apprentice. (He's about eighty-two years of age. I just visited him in Hollywood, Florida.) To this day he still recalls those early days. But there were good people like him in the business, so if you made yourself properly grieved, you know, he'd recognize it. He taught me a lot about the union.

Interviewer II: That's the only way you could get recognition.

Meyers: That's right! Individual effort! You had to! If you were not strong, you were dead, you were gone! And I can relate so many people that are gone from this industry because of that.

But you didn't have the formalities of a grievance procedure. . . . . nobody else fighting for you. . . . . only if you had a friend! And somewhere along that line you had to butter up, take a lot of abuses you shouldn't have had to. But I learned that in the Navy. You know, sometimes you have to take a step backwards to go three forward. So I learned that, and that's what the hell I've done!

During this process, then, I became the financial officer of the union, financial secretary. At that particular time I started to get my nose into more of what was happening, started reading the minutes.

Interviewer: You became the financial secretary after you were an apprentice or before?

Meyers: No, before. Yeah. I was still a feeder, and as I say, they said I had no right to be. They were objecting to this. But I did become the financial secretary in 1947 of this union, and I found out what the records were all about. I studied them, and everything was in chaos! I didn't like what was going on; there was no accounting; and I set up a whole new set of records in the union at that particular time. I found out that down through the years there had been some absconding of funds and things like that. We corrected a situation that was very, very bad. Keeping in mind now that you're talking about maybe a hundred and fifty people, a hundred and twenty-five people belonged to this union at that time.

It's interesting, I was in a shop the other day. I didn't know that this still existed.

(Mr. Meyers checks through some of his records.)

This is a record of a shop delegate, going back to about 1945, and I notice that my name is in here, my address. . . . .

Interviewer I: A shop delegate is what we would call a shop steward?

Meyers: A shop steward, that's right. And here this man. . . . . now, here's my name here. /_referring to the records/ It shows I paid my dues in April of 1942, and I left Bankers Lithographing on August 7, which is again my natal day that I talked about. I didn't work that day for Republic Banknote.

Now, depending upon the strength of the character, you either had a good shop or you didn't. Now, I mentioned before about. . . .you know, I keep getting your name confused and I'll tell you why. Here's Walter Goebel, and I want to call you Walt Goebel all the time. That's the only thing that's different--it's the I rather than the O. /_Mr. Meyers is speaking to Greg Giebel, Interviewer II_/ But here's a shop delegate that's kept a good record of his particular shop, but not every shop did this. To this day this shop delegate had done a hell of a job! He collected union dues for about twenty-five years without a penny ever going astray. But he doesn't know how. . . he can't process a grievance to the extent that he would be defending somebody because he hasn't had that experience, you know. He hasn't had the formal experience that's necessary.

Interviewer I: Incidentally, where did you acquire this experience to know how to set the financial records of the union in better shape and so forth?

Meyers: Number one, common sense. Number two, high school education. Number three, my Navy training. Number four, I started to go to Duquesne University at night. I took accounting (I was going to school at that time), accounting, labor law, and what have you, while I was working at the trade.

Interviewer II: Wasn't it exceptional that a feeder would be elected to office? You mentioned that it probably was. Can you explain a little bit politically how the local ran at that time and how did you happen to run for office?

Meyers: Well, as I said, as a feeder operator prior to me going away to the Service and even as we come back, we had no status. We were just tolerated. In fact, you only got into the union--or a few of us only got into the union--because we worked in some of the better shops. I recall when I first went to Bankers back in 1941, prior to that the people that I had grown up with and played in the playgrounds with were talking about the

shop being organized and it would be a good shop to get into. The union was coming into it. So I had the desire of getting progress; this meant progress to us. So I was into a shop that became organized, but it was only conditional for certain people. You know, the craftsmen, the pressmen, the cameramen, strippers, artists, they were full fledged; but the feeders, they only needed our vote. So we didn't know all these things.

There was a big hassle--and our minutes show it--as to whether they should even take Bankers Lithographing Company into the union because they had done the bit back in the thirties. There was a lot of scabs out there, and they didn't want them in. The records are very clear. This was considered a scab shop. It's one of the reasons I got out of that shop. After I got in, some of the scabs in there, who were pretty decent guys, although they were still scabs, told me to get out of that shop. And that's why I said, when I got the security at Republic Banknote, I started learning what the union was all about. I listened to these people who went back to the later eighteen hundreds. I knew their history. I knew the union, all about it.

We only were tolerated in 1947. Then they said, "Yes, we'll give them representation as feeders." Now, there was only two shops or three shops at the most that had feeder representation. I think at that particular time there was only three of us--Clarence Kenney, myself, and Eddie Unitowski--that were union members. We were union members before the war; when we came back, we were automatically still in. The other people that were working there, that were there conditionally during the war, subsequently in the latter part of 1947, they became union members. They took them in also, but they didn't take them in during the war. Which was good or bad; I don't know. But they objected when we had representation. As I say, they objected when I became a delegate for the financial secretary job.

Interviewer II: What motivated you there? You felt that this was an additional way that you could better your own position or represent the feeders?

Meyers: You'll find out, number one, that I haven't had too much concern about whether I'm going to benefit myself. What was concerning me more than anything was that I didn't like the way they were running the organization!

They were prejudiced as hell! You talk about being prejudice against the blacks! Hell, in this industry you were prejudiced if you were Catholic, you were prejudiced if you were a Jew, you were prejudiced if you were. . . . everything! Basically you were prejudiced because nobody else wanted you to go ahead. In this whole group of feeders, they weren't in the union. There were only a few of us. Like I said, in the biggest shop in the city of Pittsburgh in which they had about thirty people at that time, considered big, there were only three of us that belonged to the union. Other shops, like Allegheny Litho, Hurbick & Held, William G. Johnson, those people didn't belong to the union, they wouldn't take them in.

Interviewer: What about other locals in other places. Did you have to be a full-fledged apprentice in order to qualify for an elected position?

Meyers: I don't know what other locals. . . I know what the International Constitution would say about stuff like that; there was no restriction on that. Primarily they'd lend themselves to being a journeyman to be representative of any particular group.

Interviewer I: Hm-hm.

Meyers: But keep in mind that they didn't even recognize the feeders, so how could you be a journeyman?

Interviewer: Right.

Meyers: So this was a problem. Even to this day our constitution and our by-laws say that you have to be a journeyman to be a shop delegate. Now, we've stretched this point a little bit because I don't know if that's a prerequisite of being a journeyman. I think the prerequisite of representing people is number one, to have their interest, and number two, to be honest! Other than that, I don't give a damn what the guy is, see! So going back, I'm not doing this for my own particular interest. Yes, I have to survive, but I have to survive as a group.

Interviewer I: Hm-hm.

Meyers: This was my thrust.

Interviewer II: So, Ted, now, you get into office and immediately you start to meet people from outside of the local area. You meet Silverman, the attorney that comes in for negotiations, you're impressed with him. Who else did you meet in the International and other locals at that time?

(End of Side One, Tape One)

(Side Two, Tape One)

Meyers: (continuing in mid-sentence). . . . . He was also the president of Local 1. Now that was a full-time, paid. . . . but originally he was a feeder representative.

Interviewer I: Hm-hm.

Meyers: So there I saw that there was no restrictions as to why a feeder shouldn't have a voice in the organization. If a feeder could represent the largest group of people and the strongest group of people in the country, why can't we have it elsewhere in the country?

He became International president. I met Marty Grayson. I met people like Edward Swayduck, who at that particular time and still is a renegade--a dynamic, forceful person. I heard good and bad about all these people, so everybody that was bad, I knew why they were bad. I knew why they were bad because they were called "commies" or "pinkos". They were bad because they were a Jew. They were bad for all these particular reasons, and this was strange. This only goes back to '40 to '45! So I started finding out for myself. Yes, some of these people talked supposedly the commie line; some of these people were Jews: some of them were Catholics; so on and so forth. But that didn't make them, you know. And I found out that a lot of the things that I had heard about them, some of the bad things, were wrong!

Interviewer I: Hm-hm. Now this was the period of time in which the Amalgamated was affiliated with the CIO?

Meyers: Yes.

Interviewer I: And of course the CIO was in the process of purging some of the Communist unions and so forth. So what I hear you saying is that there was a lot of rank-and-file discussion here in the Pittsburgh area about some people being "pinkos" and this kind of thing as well.

Meyers: No, I wouldn't say rank-and-file discussions. I would say, in response to Greggset, who I met, I was being told by various people, either internationally and/or employers and through our top officers, but not the rank and file. The rank and file didn't have this whim. At this particular time, I was only getting in to know those that ran the organization on an international and local level.

And so locally here, yes, the employers were giving us a bunch of bullcrap that "we don't need this kind of money, we don't need this, we don't

need Robinson, Silverman, Pierce there." Keep in mind these people traveled by train, by plane, everything, to negotiate throughout the entire country--Robinson and Silverman did.

Interviewer I: Hm-hm.

Meyers: And they did it at their own personal expense, healthwise and everything. But they did a job, a hell of a job!

Then I found out that these people, you know, were only out to take care of the people's needs. So I don't care what you call me, you can call me anything, but this man was representing me to the best of my interest and that's what I wanted. So if this is wrong, then I want more wrong, you know; if it's right, I want more right. So this is when I started meeting these people, I started finding out what was right and what was wrong. I started to find out then what politics was all about, and this is the sad case of our organization--politics--at this stage of the game.

Interviewer I: Hm-hm. Well, I was interested in the fact that you apparently began to get active pretty quickly because, if my notes are right, the first International Convention that you attended or that you spoke at, in any case, was in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1949. That's the first place that I find mention of Ted Meyers.

Meyers: That's the first convention I was at. I'll tell you a little bit about that. Prior to that we had a vice president of this organization by the name of Ed Wicke, who had been a member of this organization back in the 1890's. In 1947 we had the convention. . . . I think the 1947 was in. . . .

Interviewer I: Biloxi, Mississippi.

Meyers: Biloxi, Mississippi. And I was nominated for that convention. I had become an apprentice pressman at that time. But in all due respect to age and the vice president of the organization, I bowed out to let him go because I knew this was going to be his last go-round; and I liked the old gent. He had given me an awful lot of history. He had given me an awful lot of education, so he went to it.

I got chewed out at that particular time. I was told later that I shouldn't have done this because the International was looking for young people, and I should have gone. But I still had a little bit of respect and I liked him and I thought it was proper he went and I had my time to come years later. He enjoyed it; he was a strong union member; and I think I did the right thing.

But that's the first one that I should have gone to--in '47. I didn't. I subsequently went to the one in '49. I don't know if I said anything in '49. I don't think so, though. I probably sat there like a log although I may have said something in committees where I usually talk or battle.

Interviewer I: Well, it's my impression that in 1949. . . .and I wonder if you might talk about several things. . . . . But all over the country the steelworkers had their long strike in 1949 for 119 days for pensions. They had a big strike in the Canadian locals for pensions in 1949. So I wonder if you would talk about the development and your response here in the Lithographers to the whole question of pensions. That's one thing I would like you to talk about. I would also like you to talk about this what I read as a Chicago-New York conflict of some kind that's developing in the union. That's two. And three, something about how all these jurisdictional disputes were affecting you here in Pittsburgh. Now, those seem like three reasonable things to talk about at this particular period of time.

Meyers: All right, you want to talk about pensions in the strikes of 1949 and '50.

We as an International and/or on an International level were nothing more than a group of small locals with small companies being represented. Pensions were becoming a thrust at that time, but we didn't know how anybody could cover five people, ten people in a pension program. So the International, in their wisdom down through the years, had been studying this concept, and they came up with a way and means of establishing pensions. They said you could only do it on a national level or international level because that's where you have the size, the group, the numbers, the volume, and/or you could do it if you had a large enough unit such as New York or Chicago.

Fortunately or unfortunately as the situation progressed, New York was big enough and strong enough to be able to use their muscle to start the first pension program. And I'm not sure whether they started it with a three-percent concept or whether it was a five-percent concept immediately, but they were the first prerunners going back to 1949. I would assume that that was the original date of their pension--'47 to '49.

The Inter Local, the International Pension Program, or one of the programs to the International now, was founded in 1949. The thrust at that

particular time was to start negotiating language in your contracts to be able to get into a deduction process for the payment of funds. Now, two different concepts prevailed at that particular time: number one, employers control the funds and/or the unions control the funds. We at that particular time felt that no employer had the right to do or say anything that we had to do or want to do with our money, particularly pension programs and/or any other particular type of program, such as health and welfare, sickness and accident, and so on and so forth.

So we developed language through our attorneys that gave us the right for a deduction in our contract; a ways and means for people to pay into a particular fund to enjoy benefits in future years.

Interviewer: Now, let me understand. Were you negotiating with some kind of joint employer's group here in Pittsburgh at that time?

Meyers: Yes, we were negotiating with the Printing Industry of America, which was the master one. Their industry association is called the Printing Industry of Pittsburgh. Now, on a national level they never negotiated with the Lithographers. Basically you saw the National Association of Photolithographers and a few other organizations, but our International never faced the PIA. They were not the strongest union in the Graphic Arts at that particular time, that is, in the lithographic segment, anyway. Later they became the strongest, and they are the strongest employer association. But yes, we were negotiating with the Printing Industry of Pittsburgh, which was a part of the Printing Industry of America back in 1940.

Interviewer II: Could you just qualify that again? I'm not sure whether I understand that.

Meyers: The Printing Industry of America, which was the maternal organization internationally for the employers, was not as strong in other parts of the country in the lithographic industry. But you had your National Association of Photolithographers; you had the L.N.A., Lithographers National Association, people like that who New York, Chicago, and people like that negotiated with. But ours here in the city of Pittsburgh was part of the PIA, which was not the representative group of all the lithographers throughout the country at that time.

So there again, we got into negotiations back in the '49, '50 area with pensions being the keynote, and all we had was language and the hope

of getting a pension program.

So we struck in 1950 for the grand total of $2.50, which was to establish the pension program. Well, we got more than that that year, not much, though--I think $3.00 a week or something like that. Now these, as I look back, these figures seem silly or stupid at this particular time because of the raises we're negotiating; but it was big money at that time. So we struck for three weeks, going on four, the first city-wide strike we had ever had here. At that particular time I had become the secretary of the local; Frank Rogers was still the president of the organization. We struck; we got the money in our pocketbook, in our pockets, but there was still no pensions. In later years, I found correspondence in the files that showed ways and means of getting in the pension program that should have been taken but were never taken. The only thing we ever did was secure the language, secure the money; but we never got into the Inter Local Pension Program, which was set up by the International.

Interviewer I: Why not?

Meyers: Why not? Because I thought of incompetency and leadership and the fact that the employees, our members, were not being given the full story all the time. They were told we wanted to strike for a pension; we struck for it; but we were never brought up to date, to my knowledge, as to why that money stayed in our pocket too long. I think the reason it stayed in our pocket too long was that at that particular time we were a fairly young local. Nobody ever thought that they would be old enough and retire. And, well, the people went through a troubled time of three weeks, three and a half weeks of strikes, so they deserved that in their pockets. Let us keep it there, and we'll keep the pension under cover for awhile.

So then later on I guess the International put some pressure on the officers of the local here and found out what happened to our $2.50, which was supposed to be in the pension program. So then we set up a series of meetings. We had a meeting here in the city of Pittsburgh, and our membership turned it down. "It was their money after all," they said, you know.

Interviewer I: Who came in for the meetings?

Meyers: Nobody came in for the first meeting; it was turned down. So as a result of the International pressure, or pressure from some source, we finally called a "must" meeting for all the union local membership; and we had some International people come in, International representatives,

and discussed the program. It was voted down almost solidly by the membership. This was about 1951, '52. . .

Interviewer I: And you had become the president by this time?

Meyers: No, not yet, not the first one, I was the secretary in 1950. . . . . It was voted down. And later I found out one of the reasons it was voted down is that it wasn't properly presented; the people that were here to present it didn't believe in it; and there had been some internal conflict between some of the International officers and representatives and attorneys, needless to say. Ben Robinson is the one that set this pension program up, and he's being castigated today about it. But he did a hell of a job, a great job, I think. But I only found this out later that these people were not to sell the pension program. So there we were now not fully realizing what all the benefits were or were going to be. If my memory serves me correct, at that time we were getting about $1.36 per one unit of contribution which was at $2.50 per week, amounting to $130.00 a year.

The members didn't like it. They had nothing else, you know--no pension . . . . . I mean no insurance, no death benefit, no other benefit other than $1.36. The people couldn't buy this; it was like buying a pig-in-a-poke. They didn't have any faith in the union; they had no faith in the people that were selling it; and more so than nothing they didn't even know these people that were selling it, so why should they trust them, you know.

I think the leadership of this organization, as good as they were and as friendly as I became with them, didn't do the proper job for the membership.

Interviewer II: So the International had a very low profile in the city?

Meyers: Very low.

Interviewer II: . . . . There was very little awareness on the part of the rank and file of International officers and various programs that they were developing?

Meyers: That's right. That's right.

Then--to stay on the pension--we had a very, very strong Sunday meeting back in about 1955, maybe '53, I would say '52, where we brought in all the big-wigs from the Inter Local Pension Program. There was Harry Spohnholtz, who was the secretary of the Local 4 at that time out of Chicago; George Canary, who was then the president of the Chicago Local; and a couple of other people from the International. They came in to actually try and sell

a job because at that particular time I became the president, and I wanted to try and correct some of the evils that I had seen happening. After about a two or three-hour meeting down at Market Place here, where our office used to be,. . . . .

Interviewer I: Now, when did this meeting take place?

Meyers: Somewhere around 1952, right after I came into office. I came into office the first part of 1951 as president.

Interviewer I: Hm-hm.

Meyers: So it could have been the latter part of '51 or the early part of '52, but that meeting was stacked! Everybody was there. And they voted it down again. I had read letters from some of our older members who were begging that they adopt some pension program. But there again they had no concept, the younger people supposedly, that they were ever going to be old--"who needs pensions, anyway?" I think more so than anything they were just plain greedy and didn't want to take that money out of their pocket. They said they struck for it and it was their money and they didn't understand the concept of the union controlling their own pension program. They failed to realize and still to this day, some of them, fail to realize that negotiated wages, whether it's for health and welfare pensions, holidays, vacations, it's all the same dollar, you know; it's all the same dollar; it's all their own money. It just depends on how you want to divide it or subdivide that dollar, you know?

Interviewer I: And when you get it.

Meyers: That's right!

And as I say, we had an age group of about thirty. . . . I guess our age group at that particular time was about thirty, thirty-one, thirty-two, and they were never gonna get old!

So, much to my chagrin, we lost again. I gave up that battle until later on the pension program started to improve; they made amendments; and right now it's paying $3.75, plus a one hundred percent withdrawal, plus life insurance, plus co-insurance with your wife. She can go on the pension, so on and so forth. It's a tremendous program! You can't match it! And you can't buy it anywhere in the country! I serve as a trustee on that program right now.

But back in 1958, '57, '56, even though we took no concerted action, I started to plant seeds as to trying to bring this pension about. Keep in

mind that we had some internal strife in this organization (by the employers), who was the printing industry at that time, fighting against the commies out of New York, against the commies out of Chicago, that didn't want us to join with the union program. They wanted to set up a company program to keep us separated from the whole, so they fed this bullcrap to all their foremen and supervisors, who are our members, too, by the way, and some of the people in the plant, see. So they were against us. Besides the age group being young against us, the employers were against us because they thought that was too much control in the union's hands.

Interviewer I: And they were charging that Silverman and Robinson were communists? Is that what they were saying?

Meyers: Oh, a lot of this stuff came out. The whole International group was supposed to be commies. Of course I found out later, you know, the true stories.

So we were planting seeds down through these years. Finally after so many months of agitation by the membership, because I said I would never bring it to them again, I was forced to bring it to them. And by being forced to bring it to them, we went into a series of meetings, a series of meetings with the various shops, shop delegates, individual shops, which came to a conclusion or an apex in 1959. On April 9th, I believe the date was, somewhere thereabouts, we had a special meeting at the Teamsters Hall out on Butler Street. It was a must. It was a command meeting--discussions pro and con, pensions. Finally we had a secret ballot that we join a pension program, just join a pension program. And we started setting aside $2.50 a week.

Interviewer I: A pension program or the Inter Local?

Meyers: A pension program.

Keeping in mind that I'm bitter, that I thought the local never did a job for its members, I found out the International was not wholehearted in selling the pension program. I had the best powers and brains in from Chicago to try and sell it, and they couldn't sell it, three different times. So it wasn't going to happen again. I controlled it myself. We joined a pension program, and we took a secret ballot vote. The meeting was so strong that they wanted to go into a pension unanimously on a voice hand raise, and I wouldn't let them do it that way because I knew the problems that could develop. After ten years of living with this thing, I should have.

We, by force--and our records prove this, our minutes--I forced them to take a secret-ballot vote (I still have the ballots locked up), and we approved overwhelmingly, better than two to one, a pension program.

We started immediately collecting $2.50 a week from all of our employees. That was a tedious task because our employers were not cooperative at all. So what we did do was make them issue two checks, which was what our contract language called for, one for $2.50, and one for the balance of their pay.

So this got to be a hazard for some of these employers, you know. They didn't like to give these two checks, but we made them do it every week. We started collecting it. We had power of authorization, power of attorney, from our people. We could just rubber-stamp it and put it in the bank. Now, we did this for a whole year, and we did a whole-year study as to what we could buy for this $2.50 and what we were going to do.

So again in April of the next year after a series of discussions with our insurance consultant, who was Harry C. M. Young, after a series of discussions with other insurance companies--I had about three or four different insurance companies--I went to the membership; and I gave them chocolate, vanilla, strawberry and what have you. It was a very, very, well-attended meeting that we had in the ITU Hall right down on First Avenue, all the members being present again. I had the insurance consultant there outlining insurance programs, and I had A, B, C, and D, just like that. I still have all that paraphernalia, I believe, showing them what benefits they could get for this dollar, death benefits withdrawal, so on and so forth. They elected D or A or what ever it was. Fortunately or unfortunately, as it turned out to be, that was the Inter Local Pension Program. I knew from the start that it couldn't be matched, but they had to be convinced!

Interviewer II: So you didn't note or indicate that it was Inter Local; you just said A, B, C, or D and let. . . . .

Meyers: None whatsoever. That's right. Let them do the choosing. After they voted on it, then we told them what it was.

Interviewer I: (Laughter.)

Meyers: That's right. After they voted on it. And still some of them were very bitter because the employers, sitting over here holding the hands of some of these foremen and supervisors, didn't want us to be strong collectively through the International.

Interviewer I: Hm-hm.

Meyers: So that's what we went into.

I took people up prior to that meeting into Chicago (six of us went in during March) to see the facilities of Chicago's Inter Local Pension Program, to see all their accounting records, because I wanted these people to know what was happening.

We came back, and we hit a snow storm. We almost got killed. We finally got bedded down in Youngstown, Ohio, which is only sixty or seventy miles from here. But these people took their life and limb in their hands, you know, because they could have been killed. This was an impressive mark on these five people, other than myself, because one guy came down with pneumonia, and the other four were scared something awful. Subsequently, as you'll hear later, this was very, very, beneficial in a law case that we had coming out of this.

So these people were sold on the Inter Local. They knew what it was all about, they knew nobody was going to steal our money; they knew that we were just as good managers of our money as any employer could have been and that we were not going to be running off with their money. You know, we weren't going to use it for strikes and stuff like that. They were thoroughly convinced, this is how we got into the Inter Local. I had years of money there. I made my case before the Inter Local. They gave me a whole year's back credit; we gave them a whole year's money; and we got into the Inter Local of 1960 back to. . . retroactive back to '59. So that's a little bit of our pension there. That's only <u>part</u> of the pension story, though.

Interviewer II: Without wishing to digress too much, several times you mentioned that the people who came in originally to sell it (the pension) were not completely convinced of the merits of the Inter Local Pension Program. Can you describe that kind of dichotomy between Robinson, who drew it up and was instrumental with Grayson and Canary in coming in and trying to sell it here? Who were these other people that were in the International that. . . . . ?

Meyers: Some of the International representatives at that time, who are no longer there, were finally fired. But at this particular time there was some internal politics brewing, and I think this had more to do with it than anything.

Interviewer I: Now, do you think this had to do with what I said was

kind of a New York versus Chicago. . . . . ?

Meyers: It's all part of it. It's all part of it, yes. As it unfolds--and you've picked it up very well--this was it.

Interviewer I: Do you want to say something about that? I mean, what did you think the issues were?

Meyers: Well, that has nothing to do with the pension.

Interviewer II: You're a young man. You're in between.

Meyers: That has nothing to do with the pensions. This all came out of policy. Pensions is only part of it. Pensions was the effective part of this other harassment that followed, and political stuff, so there's a lot more to it than that.

Interviewer I: Hm-hm.

Meyers: That didn't lead to this stuff. But that type of diversified action caused some hardship on our members because we have nine years of no coverage for our membership. They've lost $15.00 of back credits which they wouldn't have had to pay for. I'm still fighting to get the records as the records aren't correct anymore, but you'll find that I've been fighting for that back credit. And we were kept out of the program.

Interviewer I: Now, you mention that there was some kind of a lawsuit that grew out of this. What was this?

Meyers: Yes. As a result of us going into this pension program and as a result of us going into the Inter Local Pension Program, we had a delegate in one of our shops who refused to disseminate the information, the necessary papers, what have you, to get his people into the pension program. And you had this type of reaction in some of the small shops. We had to eventually remove him as a delegate, and he eventually went to court against us and sued me for a million dollars, I think he was after. He subsequently lost his job in that plant, so he was suing us for that, too. We ended up in Federal Court two years later over this pension program.

This member is <u>not</u> a member of the organization to this day. He's still in the trade. He's worked in nonunion shops. He's been a hazard, but he did more harm than he did good to the people in the plant. His "bitch" was (excuse the expression) that he had been in a pension program at Westinghouse. This was a company-funded program, and he had lost all of his benefits whenever he left Westinghouse. So no pension program was any good to him, and he was going to do everything in his power to keep his members out.

Well, it just didn't work that way because we needed all the members in, and we were not about to deprive any one of our members the right to have a fringe benefit or a pension program that was going to benefit them in their future years. So we took him on, and we did things that we hadn't had to. We expelled him. He lost his job, not through us, of course, but he was incompetent to start with. When he didn't have the following that he thought he had in the plant, he was through, period!

Interviewer I: And he lost the suit as well.

Meyers: He lost the suit as well. We compromised on that situation. We were supposed to take him back in the union. We offered him that right. He's refused to accept it, and I still have all the correspondence. We have it word for word. I've got a plaque on my wall back there from the judge, who was the president of the court at that particular time. They castigated me as the villain in the play. I was no good! This judge for three days went on in tirades, saying how could anybody be so fearful of me and that I was a monster, until they started hearing our side of the case, until they started reading our minutes that we have (and we keep very complete minutes), and until he heard the minutes from the International. He directed us to fly in immediately, the next day, our recording secretary of the International, Donald Stone, with the records of the meetings that transpired on the International level, where this man was expelled.

After he got all the facts, he did an about-face. One of the resolves of that court case was that he had to apologize to my membership and to me personally, and he did this. He did this by telling us what a great union we have and one of the reasons we have this great union is because of the leadership that's been demonstrated. So for three days I went through hell. Half an hour he apologized, and it's a matter of record.

See, they didn't want that thing to go to the Court of Appeals because from what my attorneys tell me, he would have been castigated because he used ways and means and methods that were not permitted by the Bar. He was terrible! He ran me through the wringer! I've got some scars on that, but they're scars of enjoyment today because I see the people retiring, you see; and I know what's happening, so I don't regret it at all.

Interviewer I: Hm-hm. What was his name? How was the case decided? Was it so-and-so versus the union?

Meyers: /speaking to someone in the room/ Get the records. It's up

on the top. The Rinker case. It's up on the top, I think. Judge Corley was the judge.

Interviewer I: What was he, kind of an anti-union judge?

Meyers: Supposedly he told us how great of a union guy he was. He was a Republican to start with, but that should have been no reason why he should have been good or bad. (chuckle) But no, he had represented unions, and he brought out all the bad. He talked about sitting on his window there and watching how the construction unions were feather-bedding and all that kind of stuff. I've got the whole case here. But he told us all bad stuff. No, he said he had worked with Phillip Murray during the early days and all the rest of the guys. No, he built himself up as a son of a hard-working. . . . . .

(End of Tape I, side II)

Interviewer I: You made some comments off the tape about this Floyd Rinker case. I think one of the things that would be interesting to put in the records is that the second time he initiated legal proceedings he had an attorney, Floyd Ashton?

Meyers: No, James Ashton.

Interviewer I: James Ashton. Who was the attorney for the Dues. . . .

Meyers: . . . . . Dues Rebels of the United Steelworkers.

Interviewer I: And you said he was subsequently cited for fraud!?

Meyers: Just within the last few months he's been cited for collecting insurance things, you know, for signing fraudulent claims for insurance claims and getting the money from that, putting other people's names on it. But anyway, at that particular time he thought he had somebody rich going for him, you know. He thought he was going to make the International co-conspirators and was going to hit our treasury and what have you. This is the whole thing. The judge was more of an attorney for him than he was a judge, and the whole record proves that. It's fantastic!

Interviewer II: But you had very good notes at the International level during this period, and that helped. . . . .

Meyers: We didn't have very good notes; we had the entire thing documented perfectly! I mean, we have done everything proper and legal ever since I came into this union. As I said, I fought for that right to start with. I don't care who opposes me or anything like that, and I don't care

how many. I'll give him the right to oppose me, and I'll protect him; but I have everything documented!

Interviewer I: Not only that but you became a believer in Don Stone. (chuckle)

Meyers: No, I don't believe. . . . . I didn't become a believer. . . . .

Interviewer I: He came in here with the records. . . . .

Meyers: Don Stone happened to. . . .I made the acquaintance of Don Stone down through the years, and we became friends. So we had that type of camaraderie throughout the entire International. As I say, we got to know each other. We worked for each other, and we helped each other, which was good, on an International and local basis. But the records proved what was happening and. . . .

Interviewer I: Don Stone was a member of Local 1, right?

Meyers: Don Stone was a member of the Wisconsin local first. Then he went into Local 1.

Interviewer I: Local 1.

Meyers: Yes, hm-hm. He was a dot etcher by trade, I understand.

This is interesting, by the way. On this court case, through all the preliminary steps of the various courts, you know, it got so bad between the judge and our representative, our legal counsel, that he didn't even represent me at the trial. His partner represented me who was Arnold Wolner, the reason being for that is that there was such bad friction between their debating the law on the case that he thought he would prejudice my case if he would handle it for me. Then Arnold Wolner did know. . .this is politics, of course! Arnold Wolner knew this judge better, and he had quite a reputation. So he only sat in, with the exception of all their notes that they coordinated before, he only sat in and maybe talked with us about an hour or two hours prior to the original court cases. So we were really under stress.

Interviewer II: Did you get much help from the International during this case? I mean, the International was. . . . . .

Meyers: Well, the International sustained our position all the way through. We went through the very immediate and initial steps of expelling a man and the reasons for it. It's all down here, see, even to the extent that why he was expelled from this organization. He was fired! We grieved his case as a union. Even though he was no longer a member, we properly

did that. All that's documented. We went through the International. That's all documented.

I was on the International (Council) at that particular time. I was an International councillor. The records will even show that I stepped out of these discussions and the debates on this. Whenever the judge saw that, what the hell could he do? He could see there was no conspiracy. The guy had a very fair trial.

In fact, he worked with Floyd twenty years ago, I guess, huh? Come out of an industrial plant, Westinghouse, which was an IUE plant. Formerly to that, UE, prior to the IUE, you know. And I had walked the picket lines out there, even helping the IUE to get in to defeat the UE who at that time too was talked about being as communistic and all this stuff, you know, the whole shebang about that.

Interviewer I: Right.

Voice: What Ted previously said about the pension was true too because, once we left their company pension plan, we lost everything. There was nothing.

Interviewer I: Well, I was going to say why don't we back up a little bit here.

Meyers: /Engages in somewhat incoherent and unrelated discussion with another gentleman in the room/

Meyers: . . . . .Then you want to talk about the. . . . .

Interviewer I: But I think we need to back up a little bit and talk about how you became president of the Local. When did you become president?

Meyers: 1950, which is only a short four or five years after the war. At that particular time I had five years of experience as a representative on Council, two years as financial secretary, and two years as recording secretary of the Local. And as such I thought I knew a little bit that was going on, but I was only about twenty-seven years of age at that time, which to a lot of people was young, twenty-six years of age.

The president of the union, Frank Rogers, who I talked about before, was tired. We went through a strike of three or four weeks. We had no pension program to show for it, which we had struck for. There was a lot of discontent in the local. Frank, of course, was a cameraman. He had to work at the bench as we all did. We operated the union from our homes. He didn't feel like running any more, and he wanted to get out. But during that

particular two-year period as secretary I worked a lot with Frank and did a lot of his work, and some of the static and some of the flak we were getting from some of the people emanated from the employers. And that's why I say Frank didn't want to fight the situation any more.

I showed and told you how the employers fought us on the pension, continued to fight us, so he announced that he was going to bow out. As a result of that, a group of the foremen in the area got together. A few of the leaders of the would-be local at that time thought that they would form a nominating committee, and they did. So we saw what they were doing and who they were. These were the tools of management! And a few of us said, "Well, we'll be damned if we're going to let management take this union over!" I didn't think I was ready for it, but I said, "I'll fight them, Frank, if you don't." So he went along with me. He ran as vice president, and I ran as his job. We had opposition at that particular stage, but we went.

Interviewer I: Incidentally, how do you feel about foremen being members of the union? In a lot of unions that would be considered the world's most horrible sin!

/ Mr. Meyers speaks to someone in the room / "Is that the right one, Floyd?"

Meyers: This is a heated difference of opinion in this particular local itself. I knew at one time that the foremen or a lot of foremen were some of the best union members that there were, and they held the union together. To this day some of the foremen that we have are still strong union members, but they've got a problem of trying to carry water on both shoulders; and this is the tough part about it. A good portion of our membership--and I would maybe dare say that the majority of our members--would say that foremen shouldn't belong. When you say foremen shouldn't belong, you put everybody in the same mold. We have some foremen who are nothing but bums as far as we're concerned and good union people are concerned. But we have other ones that still control the work for us, still do the bidding of the union, and these are the people that we want to keep in. This is the source of our power in a lot of our shops. Some of our foremen are better union members than some of the members in the shop. Now, I shouldn't say that, but it's the truth.

My position I'm taking is that I want them in. The ones that we don't

want in, we'll expel them!

Interviewer II: Another industry condition that's somewhat strange is that often older employers have been former union members. Is that the case in Pittsburgh? Do you find that the case? And does that make them significantly different than newer types of managers that are in the industry now?

Meyers: That made them significantly different years ago because basically they were the leaders, too, and they retained their cards. It only got to be where the money interest came into the business, to the extent that people were not craftsmen previously but they were only becoming investors and they started running the business, did they not retain their cards. That's when they started to try and buy away, buy away, now, mind you, the membership cards of some of our former superintendents. This is another reason why we leave them in at this time.

I mentioned a fellow by the name of Art Moss before. He came into this union by way of Denver by way of Texas back in 1915. He came in this local in 1920. They couldn't buy his card for love nor money! He was that strong! He was a strong man!

My position at this time is that I want the foremen in that belong in. If I don't think or if our membership don't think they should be in, I think we get rid of those people; and we can. There's ways and means of doing it.

The photoengraving industry, now, all their foremen, most of their owners, have been formerly members. Where they got into problems is that some of them they expelled; some of them became renegade union members and formed their own companies, and they fought the union. The thing they had going for them is the Allied Trade Council "bug" which meant that they had to have union to be able to sell their product.

Interviewer I: Right.

Meyers: So that saved them in the long run, but with new technology, with the new nonunion shops springing up, "bug" didn't mean that much to them. So we have all of our foremen, all of our shops in the union at the present time. Now, give or take, the can industry you don't have it because they have their own particular, select people, but any other shop that's worth its salt, all the foremen are members. All working foremen have to be members.

Interviewer I: Okay. Well, now, we were going to just lay out this

wide, general area of internal politics in the union which I had characterized, rightly or wrongly, as kind of a New York versus Chicago problem. And I was wondering how you saw this kind of thing developing, that is, the business of Blackburn's leaving the presidency and George Canary taking over. What do you think was really going on here?

Meyers: That would be a hard one for me to give you a true definition, so I can just give you my impression of it. Because you'll hear different stories on this thing. . . .

Interviewer I: Of course.

Meyers: . . . . .and this is where we vary. But going back to the collusion or disassociation or call it what you may between Chicago and New York, I would think that this is just natural. It's always been there. It didn't start with just Blackburn or anybody else. This has been historic in our organization. There's always been jurisdictional confrontations. Our regional setup that we used to have--the Mountain, Pacific, Atlantic region, Central region--that made for that particular type of political situation.

But the two big boys, which were Chicago and New York, of course, always had a little bit of competition between themselves and felt a little bit of friction.

Interviewer I: Competition for. . . . jobs?

Meyers: Jobs! Jobs! Jobs! Sure! Because you got to remember that New York was the focal point of all your industry, you know, for advertising and what have you. Then it started to shift into the Midwest, and Chicago now, of course, is a big one. New York is continuously losing jobs. So this was the root of it. But there was a good feeling there that, even though they debated each other and fought each other, it did a service for the membership because it was just like leapfrogging--I'd outdo you or you'd outdo me, see. So the membership was a benefactor of it.

Somewhere along the line we used this strategy. Our negotiations are set up right now this way--percentage of our membership out this year, percentage next year, percentage out the year before. I forget who they are, whether it's New York, Chicago, or whatever. So you've always had that friction, and it got very, very personal.

Then we had John Blackburn coming into the International. Then of course change started to come about. The union started to get bigger. A

lot of people in New York didn't particularly care for the way John Blackburn was running the organization, and maybe somebody else was aspiring for his job. They knew that they couldn't defeat John Blackburn because he was a personable fellow. He made the trips; he went everywhere by hand, by foot, and everything else; and he was able to keep the New York-Chicago enemies apart so they couldn't team up on him. He had enough votes all the way through to win any election there could have been.

So certain things happened in the International that I was not a party to at that time. They finally decided to talk George Canary, who was then the president of Local Four, Chicago, into running against John Blackburn. I believe that was in the Boston convention. I'm not positive.

Interviewer I: Now who were "they"? Who talked. . . . . .

Meyers: Well, this would have been the New York group, New York plus other people on the outside. They were able to team up with some of the West Coast people, maybe some of the Canadian people, so on and so forth. That's why I say you'll hear different versions of that, but that's actually what happened. They were able to form a group, bring the Inter Local in, talk George Canary into running against him, who was a popular, very popular fellow. Keep in mind George Canary at that time was the head of the Inter Local Pension Program besides being the head of the Chicago Local. The Inter Local, you know, was a group of locals. . . . voting power!

Interviewer I: Right.

Meyers: So New York and them went against him. Whatever they did, the honeymoon didn't last too long. They were at each other tooth and nail. They called George Canary a banker. All he wanted to do was sit in the Chicago bank building and run the organization from there. Then of course there was a lot of discontent. Then we had the blowup with Canary.

Interviewer I: He refused to move to New York, you mean?

Meyers: Well, that was just part of it! He refused to move to New York. He was guaranteed that refuge. He could have stayed in there, so that was just a gimmick to use against him. He could have run the organization--well, maybe he couldn't have--just as well from Chicago as he could from New York. I don't know about that, though. You know, they were talking about centralizing the whole organization at that particular time, which they have done now in Chicago. . . I mean in Washington, D. C.

But that honeymoon didn't last too long. I've got on tapes even George

Canary's resignation speech, and then they talked him back into staying. A lot of politics went on then up to and including the fact that they finally got rid of Robinson as General Counsel to the Inter Local Pension Program, which caused a very, very, deep split between our legal counsel, because Gene Cotton, who is now the legal counsel for the Inter Local Pension Program, had been very, very friendly with Matty Silverman and Robinson; and he took the job. Blackburn didn't think he should have taken the job.

Interviewer I: Why not?

Meyers: A matter of ethics to start with, you know, and it was politics. They were in the fight! New York was also represented by Robinson, too. Robinson was also the International Counsel. So this friction was brewing, you know. It finally blew apart in 1963 in Canada, very, very, very heated, at this time of the year, heated discussion where the die was actually cast. That's where the whole new chain of politics entered into the picture again.

Interviewer I: You mean the fight culminated in the fight over merger?

Meyers: Well, merger came after that, but merger was in the process of being talked about at that time, yes. See, they had to get rid of Robinson first before they could have an effective merger. They had to get rid of Swayduck before they could have an effective merger. The merger, by the way, was just a dilution of the powers of Local 1. See, they were getting more members and more masses that could outvote Number One, Local 1.

Interviewer I: So you think that this was a part of the motive for merger?

Meyers: Oh, yeah! This was the fruit, for those people, of the merger.

No, the merger "per se" would have been or should have been good for the organization if there were certain strings tied to it. But what New York and a lot of us objected to was giving away the key to the front door without anything in return. As an example, you picked up thousands of members . . . . . maybe I shouldn't say it, but it's a fact. You picked up thousands of members that were in a dying industry. (They) had no finances. Their union was practically broke. Their pension program was nineteen million dollars in the red! So, you brought them in as co-equals with a right of veto on anything you did. We had two-to-one membership possibly than they had, you know, and we were sound. They were broke!

So they went about this thing wrongly. I was in on a lot of the dis-

cussions that talked about how they were going to absorb the Photoengravers. You know, they were just going to take them over and run away with it, give them no credits. But this was the way to do it, see?

But after New York seceded, now, mind you, our strength as Lithographers also went down because the numbers were more balanced. So they couldn't do what they thought they were going to do, and we got into arguments on this! Let's be honest about it. If you're going to merge for the benefit of the people and benefit of the organization, let's do it this way! But don't merge and say you're going to submerge them later! This is what their intent was! Of course it didn't come across that way, you know, because of the numbers change in balance. But that was what was going to happen.

So a lot of the Photoengravers came to the fore and to bear, and there are some good leaders in there. I got to respect quite a few of them, and they didn't run away.

Now, as I say, what happened? New York seceded; a lot of our jobs went down the drains; the only way the locals were able to make any progress was by merging. Sure, it was a good thing for the Photoengravers. It was good for their membership. Merger should have been good, but it hasn't done what they said it was going to do. It hasn't created jobs, and it hasn't stopped jurisdictional conflicts, and it hasn't decreased the cost of running the organizations. It's more costly now to run our organization. We're getting less benefits out of it, International-wise. So everything that they promised us didn't come through. Sure, high wages and what have you. . . . . because they had a little bit more control of it. This is the fruit of it. But also what has happened by these high wages, we've run into a lot of non-union areas, you know?

Interviewer I: You mean a result of having the high wages has created situations like this situation you have at Westinghouse where the I.U.E. has the membership and it's hard for you. . . . .

Meyers: No, that has nothing to do with that. No, this is just a plain. . . . .this is another odd part of our business. This is what they call in-plant or captive-plant operations. That's been going on way before the mergers.

Interviewer I: Right. Okay.

Meyers: This is another problem that we've got to encounter because this is a problem not only to us as members; it's a problem to the employers, too. . .

Interviewer I: Right.

Meyers: . . . . and to their associations. And they can't cope with it. The problem is there that they hired some of our people away. Some of our good union members, supposedly, they leave the union; they go up there for an extra couple bucks; and they last a couple years. They teach the people, and then they want to come back in the union because they're through with them, see? We don't take them back too often.

Interviewer I: Right. Well, I notice that in this special council proceedings that took place in 1963, where you were there at that, that you seemed to have been a voice for conciliation, that you were concerned about what was developing there. Am I right that you did not? You wanted to keep Local 1 in the organization, right?

Meyers: Definitely!

Interviewer I: And did you think that there was any way they could have kept Local 1 in the organization?

Meyers: Yes.

Interviewer I: How could they have done that?

Meyers: They could have done it many, many ways. They could have tried the marriage without an effect of law, so to speak. They could have tried it for awhile, you know, worked together, associated together. They could have not been as strong. . . .

Interviewer I: Now, who was to associate together? LPIU. . . . . ?

Meyers: . . . . .and the engravers.

Interviewer I: And the engravers?

Meyers: Yes. They could have maybe merged the particular facilities, physical plant, found out more truly what they did or did not represent, found out more truly what they did or did not have in the way of assets because all this came out after the fact, see? There was a lot of distortions and misrepresentations going on. They could have watered down the constitution where compulsion or merger was not the compulsion. Now, some of us know, and even New York possibly could have known, that there was no way for them to force us into a merger. As it finally came out, they couldn't and they haven't, although the words are there that they possibly could have gone to court and taken over our locals. And they could have taken over the locals if you didn't have strong leadership in some of the locals.

Interviewer I: You mean like kind of taking them into receivership or

something?

Meyers: Oh, certainly, certainly. The language is still in there and it's possible that they could do it. The problem is they didn't realize, and didn't figure that the membership knew what was going on. Now, there was an awful lot of lies being told to the International people, to the various local people, and I know it as a fact because I was a part of it. This is why I was trying to be as conciliatory as hell! Ken Brown was made, I feel, by Eddie Swayduck in Local 1. They had a tremendous amount of respect for Ken Brown. So do I. He's a very good friend of mine, had been a real good friend.

But we got to the position when we got this split that you either had to go down and take a blood oath and you had to go down with the machine or you weren't in. I was not about to sell myself. This is why I was on the outside looking in. Other people such as you've met with or will meet with--Milt Williams, Kenny Brown, the Chicago group--they all. . . . no matter what was right or wrong, it had to be their way. Period. No deviation. I wasn't about to buy it!

So they could have kept New York in if there was no threat on the lives of the. . . . or on the jobs of the members of New York. Keep in mind New York had a pension program at that time worth about seventy million dollars. They had a fairly active local. They've got, you'll see it, school health programs and what have you.

You had a Photoengravers in New York that was an old group of people that wouldn't migrate or transfer any place in the country because they have unemployment benefits, and they were an old membership. What would have happened if they had tried to merge pension programs? What would have happened if they had merged the Photoengravers International Pension Program with ours? That's another story, which they didn't do but they tried to do. It would have eroded the benefits, the money, that was going to come to our people in the future! Yes, they could have kept New York in.

Interviewer I: Now, were people talking about a merger of the pension and mortuary funds?

Meyers: Certainly they were! Not only that, but you'll find, as a matter of fact, they tried to merge the Photoengravers' Pension Program with the Inter Local!

Interviewer I: Hm-hm.

Meyers: Guys like myself, Gene Macellari, and Eddie Swayduck, we stopped it. Now, Eddie Swayduck of course was out. Now why do I say that? It's because Local 1 had some members of theirs in the Inter Local Pension Program so their interest was to protect those funds, too.

Interviewer II: How did that work now in terms of a fund? I guess a court settlement has just come down in which Local 1 is being awarded some of its monies for the. . .for disputed monies at the time that they broke away. But was that a factor? Will you open that whole question up? Was that a factor in your decision not to break away? I mean, had you seriously thought about breaking away? What was the situation with Local 1's ability to break away?

Meyers: Well, you're talking about two things: Number one, we always had autonomy in the organization which the Constitution, as they drew it up, threatened to take away from us. Now, New York had all of their assets tied within the realm of their own control. I'm talking about health-and-welfare programs, pension programs. The settlement you just alluded to is in reference to their mortuary feature, which is only a small part of the thing, and the dues structure, you know, the per capita and so on and so forth. That's where they got deceived.

Now, one of the differences between Pittsburgh and New York was the fact that Pittsburgh at that time was small. I guess we only had a few hundred members. We had a couple hundred thousand dollars tied up in the Inter Local Pension Program. I wasn't about to and I couldn't run from that and leave it sit. The members would have thrown me in jail, rightly so, if, if we would have lost that money. You know, it took me ten years to get in this Inter Local. It's taken me another five years to get up to three percent. I guess it's longer than that now. I wasn't about to give that up, so we had to stay in and fight. New York didn't have to fight that rot! I sat on that International Council as a party of one against the whole for every meeting and took a beating because I dared to go to court to stop a merger of the pension programs in Chicago. And we stopped it.

/Mr. Meyers speaks to someone in the room: "Try and get that 1963 book or something like that."/

But the other court case. . . .New York just got part of their mortuary thing, which was their just due.

/Mr. Meyers again speaks to someone in the room: "No, not that one. The magazine I showed you last week." Voice: "Oh, I see."/

Interviewer II: So that was worked out on paper, the merger of the two funds--at least there was strong movement--and you had threatened to go to court?

Meyers: Well, I did go to court! Oh, we did, we took them on in court! We hired attorneys out of Chicago, out of the old Willard Wirtz, Goldberg Law Office. Best in the country, you know. What the hell, we knew what we were doing. We beat them! We stopped them from merging the two funds.

Now the Photoengravers are being taken in local by local but not to the extent that they were nineteen million dollars in the red! It would have killed our fund! Now a lot of them were saying, trying to say, that this was the union thing to do, this was the brotherly. . . . . this was like fun! I had to worry about umpteen thousand peoples' money that was in that particular fund, more so than my membership here in the local, but every other local belonged to that. They had to have representation. They didn't have it on that International trustee.

Conciliation period? I knew what was going on on both sides, so it was a tough thing to do not to tell this group some of the inside stuff. And of course I know that they probably were trying to use me, too; but I could care less as long as I tried to do what I thought was right, but it didn't happen.

Interviewer I: What do you think was the. . . Do you think that the motivation of Local 1 in leaving was simply their fears about what the merger at the local level in New York would do? Do you think that there was also a feeling that they would have less control over the organization?

Meyers: Oh, definitely! Without a doubt! Sure! As I say, the bringing in of sixteen thousand or ten thousand or whatever it actually was at that particular time diluted their voting strength. Certainly, it was a power struggle. Keep this in mind that--you may not see this too evident now--New York always wanted something for their per capita dollar. They wanted people to work for them because they're paying these International people, and they wanted to know what they were doing in organizing, what they were doing in negotiating. Why? Because what was happening to their membership jobs? They were leaving the New York area and going West. So

they had this right. This was a matter of what was the way to run the organization! Definitely! Their power was going to be eroded! And they were not going to run the organization like they wanted to and as they had done down through the years. You know, the control of the International always shifted from Chicago to New York.

Interviewer I: Why do you think that Swayduck was not able to become president of the organization himself?

Meyers: Well, this, I think, is what he wanted whenever they were moving Blackburn out. Canary was only going to be there for an interim period anyway, see?

Interviewer I: Yeah. But why Canary and not Swayduck at that point?

Meyers: Because Swayduck didn't have the conciliation forces that Canary had. Keep this in mind.

Interviewer I: In other words, there were too many small locals that were kind of anti-New York.

Meyers: Oh, yes. Not only small locals but big locals. Take Number Four in Chicago. They were anti-New York.

Interviewer II: What were some of the issues now? I think that some of them could involve manning of new machines. What were some of the issues, if you can remember any of them, that would separate smaller locals that are geographically dispersed from New York, Local 1?

Meyers: Well, number one, they don't like the fact that a big brother is looking down on them. That's what they've talked about and looked at as far as New York is concerned. You know, they were the big, bad brother up there in New York. This was the venom that was spewed down through the years, you know, about these guys being "pinkos", these guys being. . .all this stuff, you know.

Interviewer I: Now, why didn't you feel that way? Because after all you were one of these smaller locals. . . . .

Meyers: I was told this. But then I started associating and fraternizing and going to the bar with them and started getting their true feelings.

I had a big run-in with one of the people in Dallas, Texas, in 1951, who at that particular time I was told he was a big "commie" and what have you. And I had taken this stuff. . . But then I started finding what their true feelings were, and these people were no different than me. They had no different feelings about. . .

(End of Side III, Tape II)

I've had my differences now with them. I've had my differences with Swayduck and the rest of them over union matters. As far as political gain for myself or for my membership, I could care less for that. But evidently those people needed that kind of control.

Interviewer I: Hm-hm. How much do you think that the personal factor was involved? Because I noticed, for example, Ted, when I was reading these special council proceedings, that Ken Brown and Don Stone seemed to have been really very kind of personally incensed by some of the things that they had heard that Robinson and Swayduck had said about them--kind of a name-calling business.

Meyers: Oh, very vicious! Yes, a lot of name calling. Very rugged, crucifying battles went on. Very, very bad! If I was on either end of the thing, I would have been across the table many, many times at the other guy. That's how bad it was. Very, very bad!

Interviewer I: What do you mean by that?

Meyers: Oh, they were very, very insulting. . . . .

Interviewer I: Both sides, you think?

Meyers: More so. . . .no, they'd have to go a long way to catch up to Swayduck. The other side did all their digging underneath, innuendos and what have you. No, they undermined Swayduck that way. Swayduck is not feeling too good right now, but at one time he was a very dynamic, very personable guy and very vicious guy, very vicious. He can be vicious as hell! But I guess you have to be that way at times; I don't know. It got very, very personal, so personal I couldn't even tell you. Very, very rough meetings.

Interviewer I: Well, now, why do you think that. . . .there are two questions that I wanted to ask you. One is that Swayduck obviously had almost the unanimous backing of Local 1. What do you think was the cause of that? Their faith in his leadership or the job situation or some kind of combination of those factors?

Meyers: I'll answer that this way. You asked the question before, "could they have gone in?" Yes, they could have gone in. But there was another faction, not another faction, but there were some of Swayduck's close officers that had known the history of the Photoengravers in New York and internationally. And they saw the good and the bad and what could come out of it. They convinced Swayduck that merger was not the right thing. Once they did that, Swayduck had to make a decision whether he was going to go

political and merge or whether his first duty was to protect his membership. He was convinced that his first duty was to protect his membership.

Now, how was he able to have that kind of control? I've got tapes in my safe here. . . . /Get all those tapes out Floyd, huh?/. . . . . tapes in my safe here of their membership meetings, of their shop delegate meetings. You'll see what I'm talking about when you go up there. They had a very, very informed membership by way of their shop delegates' meeting which they have all the time, by way of their membership, which is compulsory. They had thousands of people there. They had all types of questions and answers, all types of lawyers, and everybody else, showing them or telling them the effects of merger on their jobs and on their funds, so on and so forth. And their membership knew this.

The International set up a barrage that this was a politically-motivated deal and all the membership knew was a bunch of lies and the local was stuffing the ballot boxes and stuff like this. I knew that to be a lie because I was at those meetings. I was at all those meetings. I was at the shop delegates' meetings, and I saw how democratically they ran their meetings. I saw the information that they gave their membership, and I've got it, as a matter of record, on tape, all their meetings.

Interviewer I: Of Local 1?

Meyers: Of Local 1. . . . and all the discussions on the merger from the various attorneys, Ben Robinson, and what have you.

My membership knew this. My membership virtually went down the line with me on the merger--anti-merger. They did a hell of a job, and their membership was well informed. So he didn't have the membership following him basically. He followed the membership's desires. Theoretically this is what he's done, you know.

Interviewer II: Was he aware of this well before the Montreal meeting? And was the behavior at the Montreal meeting kind of a . . . . Did he wait to play his hand as to when to indicate that he was not going to be part of the merger? Or was his participation in that kind of spontaneous?

Meyers: This is a matter of knowing a guy's mind. This is something that I wouldn't even judge, wouldn't even try to speculate on. Who knows? He could have, he couldn't have. He could have gone either way at that meeting, I think.

But when they castigated the hell out of Robinson and the rest of

them. . . . .this is what they tried to do. They tried to separate Robinson from him, and they did a hell of a job! It didn't happen that way. Robinson helped to make Swayduck. He's (Swayduck) got that kind of a devotion. He loves Robinson. They must have a mutual respect, you know. This is what they don't like about Ken Brown. They breast fed Ken Brown, so to speak, they thought, you know. They thought he was wonderful.

I was with Kenny Brown the night before he met Munson for the first interview on his book. We slept in the same bed together, as a matter of fact. Robinson had set that meeting up. All that writings was torn apart--this is very much edited, that book, now, you know--to show that Robinson and Silverman and the rest of them didn't have too much to do with the running of the organization. But they did run it, and that was the problem. They wanted to know, if that Jew attorney was going to run the organization, then let him run for president, you know. Very, very bitter! These were the things that went on, you know?

Interviewer II: It seems to me that we might be looking at something that is not a question of personalities or ethnic. . . that's just how the issue was cloaked or how it gets presented. Maybe it's just a question of industrial change where the industry's moving from New York. There are pressures to geographically regionalize the industry, and New York has a vested interest to protect its jobs and other locals regionally distributed have an interest in increasing jobs also. Because it's a recurring pattern. You see a president that has the backing of Local 1. He comes into power, and before you know it we run into the same conflict again--he becomes a traitor. Maybe the conflict is simply a question of New York Local 1's protecting its traditional interests through its local autonomy and political control in the International. Is that what's underneath all this? It's just simply the question of jobs?

Meyers: No, I think I said that before! That's basically what it's all about, I think.

Interviewer I: Hm-hm. Because you see it happening with Blackburn and Canary and then with Brown.

Meyers: Yeah, yeah, that's right. And he didn't think the International was doing a job. And this was where they were wrong because they were not about to stop that type of change, you know. So they should have had and should have known--and they did know--that these things were going

to happen. They formulated new programs and plans to take care of their membership. I think they tried to stop that type of erosion from New York. Yes, this was the underlying feature. It has to be!

And as I say, New York. . . . . when Blackburn left, he consolidated with Chicago. He's gotten a power group there and St. Louis and various other people. Yeah, this was under it!

Interviewer II: What were some of the factors that would cause. . . .

Meyers: . . . . then this led into the personalities, you see. This was the problem.

Interviewer II: What were some of the factors that would cause an employer to consider relocating out of New York? Now, of course the wages were higher and they had more benefits and so forth, but were they so significantly different that it would pay them to geographically move out of the traditional center of printing?

Meyers: Yeah, wages and control. Definitely! In other words, New York controlled the number of people that you had in the plants; they had high fringes, you know, and their hourly rates could have run as much as $2.00 or $3.00 an hour over and above scale at certain times. Yeah. Money was of consideration, but control I think, too.

Interviewer I: Then you think they really did sort of price themselves out of the market?

Meyers: No, I'd say the other ones didn't keep up with them. The other ones weren't strong enough to represent their membership properly. We had a very weak organization, I think. Very weak!

Interviewer I: Right, right, okay.

Interviewer II: Was it in their interest to keep slightly below? To make it more attractive? Would they sit across from a table and say to someone. . .

Interviewer I: Well, the garment industry did that to a certain extent.

Meyers: Yes, they sell this stuff. They sell it to us every negotiation session. A lot of people buy it!

You know, you asked for a contract and I have one here. I also have the memorandum of extension here.

We have been a fairly good local down through the years. We've got a lot of benefits and programs and what have you. Our primary interest is to take care of our people here, at the same time not to scab on our brothers

and sisters throughout the country. There comes a time, though, when you have it running rampant where you have high unemployment. As to what's happening, why do you have that unemployment? You have to survey whether it's because of national competition, local competition, or just no competition at all, no jobs!

This past year we advertised that we took a bye for a year extension. It's the furthest thing from the truth. We didn't take a bye. We took an extension on a contract that was damn good, which had all the necessary features in it, such as the cost of living, to keep us constant or above board, which other locals didn't have. My International knew this. When we coordinated, I had previously told them, "I'm thinking about taking a bye this year because I've got a good contract and my jobs are. . . my people are unemployed. I've got to do something to get these people back to work because I'm getting unfair competition from various sources." So I play the low profile this year.

Other people had unemployment. They've got a lot of unemployment. Maybe they have better programs than we have to take care of them when they're unemployed. But I have a strong feeling in not wanting to see anybody out of work, and that feeling goes back to my boyhood. So if I have one man unemployed, I feel damn bad about it. I know virtually six hundred, six hundred and fifty, seven hundred of my people by first name, and I don't want to see any of them unemployed.

As a result of my bye, I don't have <u>anybody</u> unemployed now. I've got all my unemployed people back working, where you still have high unemployment in New York, high unemployment in Chicago, and as you said yourself, high unemployment period! Now, I had to eat a lot of crow and fight like hell for this contract, but I'm proud of it and pleased with it because I've got everybody working.

I may have run myself out of competition, but firstly I don't think. . . . it's just a way of promoting it. We have been promoting with the Chamber of Commerce and the industry now about this contract. People actually believe, now, that they're going to get a better deal in Pittsburgh, but they haven't. I just got a thirty-two-cents-an-hour raise May 1 with cost of living. Thirty-two cents times thirty-five is a lot of raise, you know. It's fourteen bucks or something like that. That's not taking a bye. The employers are matching and keeping all my fringe benefits whole. I

don't lose any benefits. If the cost goes up on my benefits, they pay for them.

Interviewer II: One of the advantages of merger was supposed to be able to organize the unorganized. There was a big campaign developed, a quarter million dollar funded. You've been active in the organizing area and gave a report at the last convention about that. What has the result of this new organizing drive in the International mergers been for increasing membership?

Meyers: I think it's a farce, to be honest with you. I think it was a gimmick to raise money to cover our tail because we're into trouble right now. They have put on some organizers in Chicago, Philadelphia, maybe a couple of other places, out of this subsidy fund, which these locals, I feel, could have put on themselves. Statistics, which I don't have and which they don't furnish us with any more, will prove that we haven't organized to that extent. I think it was a farce played on the membership and just one of the costly items that we are faced with or strapped with by virtue of mergers down through the years. The records might prove me wrong, but I doubt it.

As an example, we put on a second man two years ago. The International subsidized me. I knew what the potential was here in this particular area. I had to go out and do the job without the help of the International, which I've never had anyway--organizing--and I had to make sure that I had enough people to carry an extra man before I even put the second man on.

Supposedly they're doing a job. I don't think so. Where they may be doing a job and accounting for numbers is in the nonproductive or the non-skilled area. We've gone whole hog now into the P & M concept of organizing. Possibly we have to. You know, it was good. . . .

Interviewer I; What do you mean by the P & M concept?

Meyers: Getting away from just representing the skilled people, that is, what we always did do. You know, you wanted to talk about jurisdiction before.

We only represented the lithographers. The Photoengravers only represented the photoengravers. But now we'll represent floor sweepers, machinists, electricians, and what have you. The good of that is, though, that we've been able to do more good for more people, which is one thing I like, but it has also eroded some of our power and strength in some of our

areas. But I feel that it's still not the wrong way to go. It has to be controlled. This, I think, is the area of their increase in volume if they have it, but I don't think they have increased their volumes.

They've taken on a dying photoengraving industry. They've lost members there. They're taking on a bookbinding industry segment which is dying; they're losing jobs. It's a farce. It's done some good for some people, but I haven't seen it anywhere.

Interviewer II: On a local level you have three separate locals here. You have originally Bookbinders, Photoengravers, and Lithographers. Can you talk a little bit about the potential for merger and some of the advantages that merger would bring on a local level and discuss your relationship with it?

Meyers: Well, number one, we're not merged, as you know, but prior to the merger of the International we had been virtually merged common law-like because it gave the Photoengravers access to our whole facilities up on Forbes Street. We gave them our meeting home, our offices, secretarial help, our equipment, machinery, use of any of our stuff for no cost whatsoever because we thought possibly. . . . .in our heart we thought the merger was proper and correct, but we thought it had to be controlled. This was what New York's concept was--it had to be controlled, to see where we were going before we go because this was a big classic thing, particularly when you are taking in or merging with one of your deadliest enemies. You know, you had to be cautious.

So we did this. We started meeting with these people, and we saw some different concepts. They had concepts that were different than mine, number one. I was going back into the throes that they didn't leave any apprentices have a voting right. Christ, I fought against that back when I was a kid, eighteen, twenty years old! I had to buy this concept now? They wouldn't let them in their pension programs. They had a nineteen-million-dollar deficit. They had all these controls where they would or would not let people go to work, would or would not let people vote or exercise or voice their opinion. I saw them as a small group of people that were highly politically motivated, far more than I am or ever was or ever will be, I think. And they were always jockeying for social positions.

Interviewer I: And they had no industrial concepts? In other words, there were no sweepers or anything of that kind?

Meyers: Oh, no. They wouldn't take anybody that was allied. As a matter of fact, down at Pittsburgh Press they've got people down there that are artists, that--Jesus!--are directly allied to them, that should have been. . . .and they worked even with them! They wouldn't even take them in. Service Engraving up here, they had people that were artists, but they were only making a couple bucks. Why should they take them in? They'd have to raise their pay two or three or four bucks an hour. The boss wouldn't like that! They had a whole bunch of bosses. Every one of their bosses were a member of the union. They controlled it. I fought this in 1950; I fought it in 1949; I fought it back in '43. This was a throwback! And they believed in this stuff! They actually believed in control as to who was going to get what!

Interviewer I: Kind of the gentlemen trade unionists.

Meyers: Yeah, that's right. They worked six and seven days. They had funny concepts. I tried to get into it. I was getting into it because I, you know, after all they say the older you get the mellower you get. So I thought, well, I'll start getting my feet wet again and see what we can do about bringing in merger as long as we can control it because you know there should be some advantages to it.

But there's still too much of it. We go to dinner dances with them. They're party people, you know. They have an awful lot of dinner dances. . .

Interviewer II: It's really a fraternity. It's a strong, individual . . .

Meyers: So was ours, too. So was ours! We liked partying and that stuff too, you know, but they seemed to think that's all their dues was for, for partying and things like that. So that's where they got with their wives and interchanged and interlocked. I saw so much of that pettiness going on, you know, I was nauseated!

Interviewer I: What is the size of their membership here in Pittsburgh?

Meyers: Oh, less than a hundred. I would say about seventy active members working at the most. Of course they would like to say a hundred and twenty-five or so. But I don't think they have seventy people working.

Interviewer II: Their local president or formerly secretary was a good deal weaker with the rights and privileges than the president of the Lithographers. Is that true? Weaker in the sense of being able to make independent decisions or as management people talk about being initiators or

decision makers. . . ?

Meyers: Well, keep this in mind that you're talking about a man that's working on a bench and this is not his first job. It might be his first love, but it's not his first job, you know. So he has to keep his feet wet into a job where he is now. Number two, he's running a social organization, a fraternal organization, so he wants to be popular, too. So let's take this secretary who did most of the work for the organization. He did all the brunt of the labor relations, grievances, if they had any, everything that was bad, all the work, he had to do it. So what happens when they have an executive board meeting? Their vice president ran that meeting. What happens when they have their membership meeting? The president ran the meeting. So the guy that was doing all the work had no say or power, and he was no leader. They had all the responsibilities bunged up within about three classifications. So one guy got twenty-five bucks a month for this job; the other one got thirty bucks a month for this job; another got a hundred bucks a month for doing this job. Their executive board got five or eight bucks or ten bucks whatever. . .So they were getting paid for doing these little things, so they just did it to the best of their ability and called the International when they needed help for negotiations. So why should they? Why should they risk their neck? They've got a family to take care of. You know, they have to work the press or one of the other things. They didn't have the wherewithal. They didn't have the strength. They didn't have no basis of strength either.

Interviewer I: In other words, you're saying that they didn't have any independence that would come if they had been able to have full-time paid officers.

Meyers: Well, I've seen other non full-time officers that are very militant, though, and they don't care about it. I mean, I was when I worked on the bench. This is why they didn't like me.

Interviewer II: Are you saying that it was more characteristic to find a dominant figure at the head of an ALA local than it would be at the head of a Photoengraver local?

Meyers: Oh, yes, yes.

Interviewer II: . . . .that they intended to have stronger local presidents?

Meyers: Sure, the Photoengravers you had three heads on that body.

You had a president, a vice president, and a secretary. Our concept is that the president is responsible and he does the job or he doesn't do the job, whether he's elected full time or he's not. So they were bandying around the job of vice president, the president, for years, you know, for political purposes and/or for social or fraternal benefits, you know, because this guy's wife likes that guy's wife or something like that; they talk at the dances; so let's change jobs this year or something like that, you know. Go out for a year, come back. That's not unionism, you know.

Interviewer II: Would the Photoengravers locally be interested in merger with your local?

Meyers: They're begging for it. They need it. That's the only reason we'll merge because they do need it.

Interviewer II: What about the Bookbinders? Are they a very different concept and hard for you to understand at this point?

Meyers: No, they're not hard for me to understand other than the fact that the. . . .see, I've worked in the shops for many years with the Bookbinders. In fact, I've worked with the present business manager of the Bookbinders.

They have been strongly aligned locally here with the ITU. In fact, they're in their building. The concern there, I believe, is that the fellow thinks that he may be losing his job if he comes in with us. But his pay may or may not be the fairest, we would take care of him, you know, but they need a merger more so than anybody else. The Photoengravers need a merger bad, financially and otherwise. If there's going to be a merger, it will be on that basis rather than forced merger. But then the problem that we have is to what extent I can. . . . .I have to say this personally because it is personal. To what extent am I prepared to limit what I have done, the energies that I have left, to service these people that. . . . You know, my membership have been paying their dues for a long time, and they're entitled to the best representation possible. And I'm diluting myself now because we're doing too much. . . that's why we had to put a second man on. We need a <u>third</u> man.

Interviewer II: To what extent is management sensitive to the problems of the Photoengravers and the Bookbinders? Do you find that they are capable of taking advantage of this?

Meyers: Yes, they take advantage of them because they don't have

that overall strength, and I have a feeling from management that they don't have any respect for their strength or power. They don't have it! They've been hangers-on, so to speak. They've been followers, me too-ers. I just came out of negotiations with Bankers Lithographic Corporation. One of the things that I face up there, one of the problems that I have, is that whatever I give to these people they have to go back and renegotiate with the binders, the bindery people. Of course, I know it's not true, but they try to sell us this.

As an example, I just got a ten-percent wage increase out at this shop. This will vary from my unskilled helper, unskilled person of about five bucks an hour up to about seven something an hour out there because it's all bank stationery. So this will go from seventy cents to fifty cents an hour. But the Bookbinders only got maybe about ten, twenty cents; the Printing Pressmen got a little bit. You know, stuff like that. So they say "me too", and they've been that way.

Interviewer II: Has there been any suggestion on the part of employers that local merger makes sense?

Meyers: Oh, yes, in the Photoengravers. They like it! They've liked this merger because it gave them entree to everyone of our shops, which they never had before.

Interviewer II: I meant the employers.

Meyers: Employers, certainly, employers. Sure, that opened up every one of our shops, or every one of the Photoengravers' shops, the right to change, to start making lithographic plates rather than photoengraving, because they couldn't make any more because the business wasn't there. And they gave them a right of our International to go right into our shops, sidetracking my cameraman, my artist, my platemaker, because that's the way our contracts are written up. You start getting into other particular technicalities and laws, you know, when you start. . . .

Interviewer II: Well, what about local merger? That's International merger. What about local merger?

Meyers: Same thing, local mergers.

Interviewer II: Would they be happy for local merger?

Meyers: Oh, definitely, yeah! They could interchange their people. They've already got the entrée to our shops which they never had before. But by virtue of the fact that they're still using the same "bug" , we

have to control very closely as to where our work comes from. And so what? If it comes from a photoengraver's shop, how can you fight the argument from an employer. . ".what the hell, he's your co-worker, he's your brother member, you know. It says in your contract you only accept this type of work from your co-workers or a member that has this kind of thing," you know. But then the other big plus that they want is that they want to be able to interchange people, period!

Now this is good for the Photoengravers because it's rehabilitation. I'm not against that, you know.

Interviewer II: Have they done anything directly to encourage merger?

Meyers: Yeah, yeah. They've fought us tooth and nail on wage increases. They've done some interchanging over and above what they're allowed to, over and above what the Constitution ever told them they were allowed to do. And there again, this is one of the places where maybe we're a little soft and a little compassionate; we haven't pulled a string like we could or should have done. As long as our people weren't being hurt too much, I wasn't too much against it. And this may be one other reason why we have to merge, if you want to call it that, or get together--is to protect those people more so and give them the opportunity of our educational program which, they don't have. But I'm not going to do it to the detriment of any one of my members, not any <u>one</u> of my members. That's the problem.

Interviewer I: Hm-hm.

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Theodore Meyers

Interview with Theodore Meyers #2

May 2, 1975

Interviewer: May 2, 1975, in his new office at 1825 Boulevard of the Allies. Ted, I think I had mentioned that we did not say quite as much about the dispute at the Cleveland convention in 1955, or '56 was it?

MEYERS: About 1955, I believe it was, somewhere around there.

INTERVIEWER: Right. I understand that there was quite a fracas at that convention, and I know you said that you taped part of it. But, not referring to the tapes particularly but to your memory of it, what in your judgement was going on there?

MEYERS: If my memory serves me correctly, that was the beginning of the fall or maybe the fall of the George Canary regime. There had been bitter personality conflicts between the New York and Chicago groups again, and Canary had been stationed in Chicago.. Supposedly he had been promised that by the New York group many years ago, whenever they used him to defeat Blackburn, but they wanted him back into New York now where they knew the pressure was going to be too great and he wouldn't move in and resign or what have you. But eventually he did resign at that convention.

There was a tremendous upheavy by the delegation after a bloodbath on the floor and in the halls, and they would not leave Canary resign.

INTERVIEWER: How did you feel about that personally? Did you think he should resign, or were you. . ?

MEYERS: No, at that particular time George Canary, even though I was against him fighting the Blackburn situation, had been a friend of mine, I got to know him and like him, personally, that is, although there

were a lot of things I didn't agree with as to how they were handling the International, but I was a small voice in the wilderness.

INTERVIEWER: What kinds of things did you feel critical about what he was doing?

MEYERS: It was the fact that he wasn't doing too much of anything, possibly. But case in point, we had a press installation in the city of Pittsburgh that International-wise they were supposed to have a certain number of people manning/this press; it was new in the industry.

INTERVIEWER: What was this, the web-press?

MEYERS: No, this was a two-color miller. MAN, they called it, M.A.N., an import from Germany, being hustled through the Miller Printing Company on the Miller sign. What was new to the industry was the structure and what have you. So they also had one in Chicago . And where we were trying to coordinate on an International level of three men and proper wages, they in Chicago set up as a two-man press, which of course was precedent setting throughout the country, or would have been. And I went into Chicago to see George Canary, unannounced. He was quite concerned that I was there. Of course, he saw me, very polite, but he let them know through one of the vice-presidents at that time: "What the hell is Ted Meyers coming into Chicago for, unannounced? Just this kind of a situation. But I believe this was just a conflict that may have been started on the International Council level between the warring factions.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Now, some people have eluded to dissatisfaction with Canary on non-union--I suppose, in the strictest sense of the word--issues in that they felt that he was very conservative, politically conservative. Did you feel critical of him for that reason?

MEYERS: No, I didn't know him that well personally, but I knew that he was very conservative. He took no actions politically. I think he may have been a Republican from my information. And, yes, he liked to sit in the bank building in Chicago. That's what they accused him of, of being a conservative, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: He had no drive whatsoever, politically, that is, in national politics.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. But your basic criticism of him was on a trade-union issue in respect to this press?

MEYERS: Oh, definitely, definitely.

INTERVIEWER: But nevertheless, at this Cleveland convention you supported him, or voted for him?

MEYERS: Yes, I most certainly did!

INTERVIEWER. Hm-hm. Was this because you didn't really see another candidate or you thought it would be . . . .

MEYERS: It would be possibly because of my sympathies for the underdog more so than anything.

INTERVIEWER: (chuckle) Hm-hm.

MEYERS: And I felt very, very sorry; I saw a power machine working, the same power machine that worked to get him in. And then I saw his friends attack him or would-be friends attack him. I saw the support leave him and I saw the uprising from the rank-and-file delegations of supporting him, more so on that basis because it was a matter of personalities rather than point-blank lack of activities on the union level. I would have to check my records and minutes of that convention even to see if there was any type of a bill of particulars put out against him other than personalities.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: The personalities were dubbed into the political activities of the country, and so on and so forth.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Well, now, I understand that there were some feeling, or some charges were hurled around on the floor, that he had not conducted this meeting that was held up in the Poconos, with the Executive Board of the AFL-CIO, correctly, that he had allowed George Meany to get the upper hand. Now, you were a councilor at that time, and I wonder if you were at that meeting at the Poconos?

MEYERS: No, I was not a councilor at that time. But, yes, this is what they said. They said that. . . In fact, there was a fight there, I believe, prior to them making the presentation as to who would be making the defense for the local. And it was the opinion of some people . . .not the local, the International. . .the opinion of some of them that it should have been Ben Robinson, who knew all the litigation, all the jurisdictional problems. And they say Canary never got off the ground up there.

Yes, they held that against him. That was his first blunder, I guess, but I guess he figured if he was the president of the organization he was going to do the job. But they killed him on that issue, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. How did you feel about withdrawal from the Federation?

MEYERS: Well, none of us feel, or like, withdrawing from the ranks of organized labor. But we were very, very strong in our jurisdictional position and our rights, and I still am, contrary to what we've been doing lately as far as P and M unit people, and so on and so forth.

We did not and we don't subscribe to the theory that the ITU was the mother of all of us and that they've got carte blanche jurisdiction. We're

studied the history of lithography; we know from whence it came; we know how we amalgamated. And we even know to the bad points of what's happening today. So we're very, very strong in our position, and come hell or high water we were going to go our way, and that's what we did.

And later on we'll show you what we've done even locally here and what we've done on the International level in reference to organizing and going our own way.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Well, the vote for George Canary was obviously a temporary expedient because by the next convention George Canary has resigned and Patrick Slater as vice president has assumed the temporary role of president with Ken Brown, at least in some eyes, being groomed to take his place. Did you understand that this was to be the line of succession at the time? Or did it come as a surprise to you that Ken Brown was going to move into that role?

MEYERS: No, it came as no surprise to us or to me. I had known Ken Brown for many, many years, having first served with him on the Officer's Report Committee, I believe, back about 1949 or '50 at one of the conventions. He became the president of the Toronto local, subsequently an International councilor, and I was with him many, many times, whenever he was the assistant to Pat Slater, and it was a learning process. We knew what we were doing; we were backing him at that particular time, grooming him for the next election.

INTERVIEWER: Now when you say "we", who do you mean by we?

MEYERS: The people in power, and those people in the International level, New York particularly. He had a strong backing of New York.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: Not necessarily Chicago, because he was accused of doing a job on Canary, too. And he was part of the New York regime the same as

some of the other councilors, you know, from the Midwest--Minneapolis, and so on and so forth.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. So you were a supporter of Ken Brown?

MEYERS: Well, I was a friend of Ken Brown's, and I subsequently supported him, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Right. Very, very quickly after Ken Brown assumes the presidency in his own right, friction begins to develop between him and Ben Robinson and I suppose Eddie Swayduck, too. How did this manifest itself in the council meeting?

MEYERS: I don't know if it quickly came about, but I would say that by the time that we had our first educational conference, which was in Delavan, Wisconsin, the seeds had been set and the confrontations were beginning to take shape. And at that time even Ken Brown offered to resign; Eddie Swayduck was on him unmercifully. I think what happened there was that Ken Brown was the stronger man and a smarter man than some of them believed that he was. And of course being young like he was, he was in a position to not want to be told what to do but wanted to form his own opinions. So this trend prevailed and frictions were developing and new political lines were being set up and he was smart enough--he was an astute politician--to do a job that had to be done. He was able to get Chicago's support, two other people other than Canary because Canary was out of the way at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Right. This would be Spohnholtz and. . .

MEYERS: Spohnholtz and Gundersen [George] and what have you, particularly Gundersen, because Swayduck had made personal enemies of them.

And then by the time we hit Montreal, everything hit the fan; and the "dump Robinson move" was already in full force. In fact, council meetings had been stalled and cancelled.

INTERVIEWER: Now how did you feel about this issue that came up in the council that Ben Robinson could not represent both the International and Local 1?

MEYERS: I think that that was the biggest farce in the world. The only reason that he couldn't represent the International and Local 1 was because of the imaginary line that they drew down there, saying, "Now that we are not." . . . They were out to kill Local 1 is what they were doing. They were out to try and kill Eddie Swayduck, he and Robinson! They didn't realize that the bond was too great between Robinson and Swayduck. They were friends, and they would never cut each other down. But they didn't bank on that. It was an imaginary line. It was just the shaping up and the finalization of the division, that's all it was. They were serving and were serving for years and years and years. In fact,. . . .

INTERVIEWER: Were you relying on him here in Pittsburgh for legal advice?

MEYERS: I think Robinson and Silverman are the greatest labor lawyers going, legal-wise. They were the ones that formed--Robinson was--the jurisdictional package for our International.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

MEYERS: I've never been led down the primrose path even when they were in disagreement with the Canary, Spohnholtz', out of Chicago. They led me down the right way to the Inter-Local Pension Program, which I'm still in.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: They could have had me go another direction, but they thought that was the best thing for the International and for our membership, and I took it. And they were feuding at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Right. There was never any suggestion that you should come into their pension plan or. . ?

MEYERS: Yes, I explored that. Definitely I explored that. I explored it with New York; I explored it with the Inter-Local. Of course, I was fighting this pension kick for ten years!

INTERVIEWER: Right.

MEYERS: I had my teeth kicked in on it three times. Yes, I was exploring everything. I was exploring an independent.

INTERVIEWER: But their advice to you was that it would be better for you to be in the Inter-Local Pension Fund.

MEYERS: It would be better for me, and it would be better for the International and better for our membership.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

MEYERS: And they were feuding at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Right. An interesting point. How did things line up on the council, as you remember it, over this issue of Ben Robinson continuing as the chief counsel for the International?

MEYERS: Well, by the time they got to the council meetings, which they had postponed a couple times, the lines were pretty well drawn against three or four regions. I think we had four regions at that time. Let's see, we had the Atlantic, we had the Central, we had the Mountain, and we had the Pacific, and we had the Canadian. The lines were drawn; everything was against the Atlantic Region, which I was in.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: And strangely enough, a lot of the people, such as in Philadelphia, Rochester--in the Atlantic Region--were wooed away into their camp. There was an awful lot of very, very vicious and malicious propaganda going on,

lies, people being set up, during this whole campaign, myself in particular. They would try and get the minutes out as to what transpired and put you in a bad light and never put in the things that you talked constructively about, only where they wanted to deal with you, you know. So they were in control of the whole operation at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Now, when you say "they," you mean the councilors and Ken Brown and Leon Wickersham.

MEYERS: Yes. Oh, yeah, that whole crew.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: I still consider them my friends now. But at that time it was political thing, and I thought they were doing what was wrong. They were busting up the organization is what they were doing.

The fact of the matter is, it's proven what's come about now, you know, the high unemployment we have, the loss of our jurisdiction, so to speak, the loss of our jobs with the Photoengravers, and so on and so forth. We're weaker now than we ever were.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. So you feel that subsequent events have justified your position on merger?

MEYERS: Oh, yes, without a doubt!

INTERVIEWER: How so? How so, Ted?

MEYERS: How so? Number one, the high degree of unemployment in the industry. Number two, the engravers now are not in the engraving business; they are in the lithographic business. And they've got so many loose connections that they are not strong, and they're not the craftsmen that we are. Case in point, there are three trade houses here in the city of Pittsburgh, what I call anything in trade, it's in litho or supposed to be in litho. Art Craft is under Photoengravers.

INTERVIEWER: Pardon me. What's that?

MEYERS: Art Craft. . . is under Photoengravers. Pittsburgh Atlas is under Photoengravers. Andus Photo Service is under Photoengravers--Andus, okay?

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: Art Craft snuck into and they are in the production area now of lithography, but basically they do all lithography, very little photoengraving. They're working anywhere from ten to fifteen dollars a week under our scales. I understand they've got all kinds of other inter-related family deals going there; whether they do or they don't get paid for their overtime hours and things like this, I have no way of doing it.

But as a result of that [Art Craft] being underpaid, I have had to negotiate in two of my shops lesser amount of monies to try and keep competitive with them.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: Now, in those three shops they're fifteen to twenty dollars less competitive than my preparatory workers in the combination shop, and it's unfair competition! Unfair competition!

I had a platemaker, as an example, that had a written article--and I had to remind him a couple of years later--that was out of work for two whole years because other people were doing his job. He had written in during our conflict in 1963 of what a great deal this merger was going to be for the benefit of the whole. It was the benefit of numbers at that particular time. It was numbers to defeat New York, and nobody can convince me otherwise. And we got into a very, very poor position jurisdiction-wise. We were losing jurisdiction in some of our areas with the photoengravers coming in there with the newspapers, particularly, and at the tail of the pension program that they had to resurrect, but hopefully that's. . .

INTERVIEWER: Straightened out now.

MEYERS: Well, I mean, there's no more discussion on our International level with them. That's dead because there'll never be a way that they can come into our pension program unless they come in with the. . . like we're doing now. We're taking them in as new members. Now that was a sacrifice, but. . . true, those participants were throwing things away because there were lots of other benefits that they could have gotten. But on a trade-union basis we thought that was good because--or I did, anyway--because we tried to take care of some people that ordinarily wouldn't be covered.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. So that the decision has been made that the people who have been under the Photoengraver's plan can start over, so to speak, as new members.

MEYERS: Into our program up to a limit, a maximum, up to a maximum of about two percent, I believe.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

MEYERS: See, the reason being, or the rationality behind it, is they already have their $2.50 program and that $2.50 plus the two percent would roughly give them around the three percent that we're paying in, that is, the tops paying in.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. What is employment in the printing trade like here in Pittsburgh? I know in Philadelphia it's very bad right now.

MEYERS: Right now I do not have one craftsman out of work in the trade. I have a couple of people on part-time jobs, that is, they're two, three and four weeks, but they were my marginal people which I've had trouble with downt- through the years.

INTERVIEWER: What do you attribute that to, TEd, the difference between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh in that regard?

MEYERS: Let me just qualify that to one extent. Except in my metal trades, which has gone to pot, I just came through a two month strike at the can company. . .

INTERVIEWER: Which can company is this?

MEYERS: Continental Can Company, out in West Miflin. . . . and we came out of that smelling like a rose, but we have about four people that are not back at work yet but they're on sacrifice benefits, and they're doing fairly well.

The other thing is that I just came out of the contract negotiations down in Weirton, which is the same plant or same hookup, and their business went to heck, and I have about a third of them off. So I've got about thirty-five people off down there, but they're on sub-benefits, so they're getting 80 percent of their pay.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: Now prior to us going in there, what would have happened down there if this would have happened is that they would have laid their younger people off with less than two years' seniority, and which would have gotten no sub-pay, and would have bumped everybody back from a pressman to a feeder operator to coater and then would have been working full-time but lesser amounts of monies.

With their 80 percent in layoff and classifications, I have people down there with seniority laid off. You know, they call it juniority.

INTERVIEWER: They call what?

MEYERS: Juniority. In other words, the senior guy will take the layoff rather than the lower guy. But rather than going back to the next classification as a pressman to a feeder, as an example, his 80 percent subsidy is more money than he would get working five days as a feeder, so he's better off.

INTERVIEWER: Are you in any danger of running out of sub?

MEYERS: Not at this particular time, no.

So that's the only place where I have any weakness; that's because the industry is depressed. But I consider them full-time workers because they're getting more money now than what they would get with taxes and everything else taken out of their pay.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: Other than that, I have no craftsmen out at all. Then you asked the question, "Why is that different here in Pittsburgh than Philadelphia?"

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

MEYERS: I don't know why it would be different here other than they may have been marginal operations in Philadelphia . In the last year I took what was called an extension agreement. I signed up an extension of the former contract for another year rather than going in for the increases on benefits that they did. Now, that extension, of course, gave me an increase of $2.00 a week in health and welfare program and it gave me sixty-four cents an hour in wages, and that's a hell of a lot of money.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. What was that, on cost of living?

MEYERS: On cost of living.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: So actually that extension agreement gave me more money than I ever even negotiated before in previous years. Of course, we're up for negotiations now, and I'm looking for a decent package.

And just conversely, I understand Philadelphia has offered their employers a pass this year. Possibly one of the problems you have in Philadelphia is that we may be better organized than they are, too.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: We have no printing pressmen here in Pittsburgh that are giving us trouble. We started to take care of that over some years ago when

we started organizing.

There is not a printing pressmen's shop in the city of Pittsburgh of any degree that's got lithographers in it.

INTERVIEWER: How did you do that, Ted?

MEYERS: I worked!

INTERVIEWER: What was your strategy there?

MEYERS: Work! I went out and organized everybody that could be organized.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: And they sat back in their ivory towers and watched their membership dwindle, that's all. Number one, they didn't no anything about lithography, didn't no anything about organizing, and they were. . .

INTERVIEWER: This was the Pressmen that sat back?

MEYERS: The Pressmen, sure, all of them did.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: And, of course, it takes work, you know. You've got to be working ten, twelve, sixteen hours a day to do that and meet any time of the day and night with these people, and that's what we did! As a result of it our membership has grown; the fruits of our labor. . .

INTERVIEWER: Do your shops tend to be fairly large? That is, you don't have very many of what we call "ma and pa shops"?

MEYERS: We have very, very few, in fact, no "ma and pa shops"!

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: One of the reasons we don't have that is because, you know, that kind of deal was fostered by the Allied Printing Trades where they gave their label away. You know, they didn't charge their correct and prevailing competitive wages. You could buy the union label off the Allied Printing Trades. That's one of the reasons I have very little regard for them.

No, our shops aren't large. They are medium size--ten, twelve, even three, four, five. If we have a three, four, or five-man unit, of course that shop might be a fifteen or twenty-man shop overall. We do have a theory--of course, I presume other locals have it too--of sharing the work. Now we have a couple of shops there that . have been marginal; they might work a four-day workweek. A four-day workweek is a lot better than a hundred dollars a week on unemployment.

INTERVIEWER: (chuckle) I should say so.

MEYERS: So we have a couple of soft spots like that. We have a couple of shops that we could push out of business because of the situation that ?. a lot of money. But other than that, I don't know why there's a big difference between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh anymore than there's a big difference between Chicago and Pittsburgh. I think the numbers game is the name of the game.

INTERVIEWER: Are these employers, do they tend to be local employers, that is, the owner is located here? Or are you faced, as many other places in the country are faced, with conglomerates where you're not, you know, where you're really. . . ?

MEYERS: No, basically in our commercial industry it has been all localized ownership with one exception. Now, as an example, Banker's Lithographic Corporation is part of American Standard or Standard Radiator, or whatever it is, with the exception of the metal trades, such as ?. Cans. But we've got some other metal trades now, Anchor-Hocking Glass, which is part of the big hookup. And we've got a new plant in West Virginia, Metal Litho of West Virginia, which is part of an operation they have in New York and Philadelphia. Other than that, it's all local ownership. Some of them had been handed down, but the family ties are fairly well gone now. If I were to sit down and tell you about family ties, I think you'd only see about one or two shops that has

been handed down from father to son, so to speak.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Hm-hm.

MEYERS: But there's been an awful lot of upbringing like salesman or other peoples, that have worked their way up through the plant, that have taken over the operations of the presidencies and chairmans and stuff like other companies.

INTERVIEWER: So that really makes for a much different bargaining situation, doesn't it?

MEYERS: Yes, yes, definitely, sure, because you're talking to the horse, so to speak, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Right. And you're talking to someone that has a real stake in the future.

MEYERS: Stake in the future of the company.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Well, one question I wanted to ask you, here you are right under the nose of the Steelworkers, so to speak, and some of the jurisdictional problems which the Amalgamated and the LPIU ha had over the years has certainly been with the Steelworkers as far as metal decoration and the can industry. I was wondering. . .what have your relationships with the Steelworkers been like?

MEYERS: Of course being in the city of Pittsburgh, which is supposedly the hotbed for the Steelworkers and is their International office, I've had an awful lot of contact with an awful lot of steelworkers, whether they be in our shops or whether they be in other mills and what have you. And as a result of the contacts that I've had, I, personally, and through other means such as the Central Labor Council, such as sitting on the various boards, such as the United Fund and the United Way, such as being active educationally with them, I've enjoyed a tremendous rapport with them. I've known Dave McDonald personally but not on a real, real good basis because

of the fact that one of his right arms was a very, very personal friend of mine.

INTERVIEWER: Who was that?

MEYERS: I'd rather not say at this time.

INTERVIEWER: All right.

MEYRS: The reason I'm saying this is I just got through reading The Union Man. . .

INTERVIEWER: Oh! (chuckle)

MEYERS: . . .which was written by Dave McDonald.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

MEYERS: And he talks about some of his friends who had turned traitor on him, and I'm afraid this fellow turned traitor on him; in fact, I know he did. He was working for the Abel group and became financial secretary-treasurer.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

MEYERS: But he happens to have a brother who was also an organizer in the Steelworkers, and I know how he got his job, so I'd rather not say at this time.

But to say our jurisdictional problem. . .we have no jurisdictional problem here with the Steelworkers. What else do we have with them? We just came through a two-month strike where eight hundred to a thousand steelworkers respected our line to a man.

INTERVIEWER: Where was that strike, Ted?

MEYERS: Western Continental Can Company, Plant 72.

INTERVIEWER: Oh

Meyers: And we came out of that thing with our. . .About twenty-five or thirty of our members, if they'd close that plant tomorrow, would be

immediately on pension. I'm talking about people that are fifty years old, fifty-five years old that need a pension. As an example, one man's got forty years of service; it would be about $600 a month that he'd get on pension alone, let alone his supplement which is another $230, makes about $800 some dollars. I wouldn't have to worry about placing that man too fast because he could go out and pump gas or even tend bar and still make a decent livelihood.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: But that's what the strike was all about. We got the steelworker's package on pension, plus other things, and that's the kind of support we've been able to get through the Steelworkers.

(End of Side One, Tape One)

MEYERS: I've had no conflicts with them whatsoever. They do have some of the Paper Workers. They have some of the boxboard industries which we never got into, and they were in their back door to start with.

INTERVIEWER: They were there at the start.

MEYERS: That's right. I did have a little conflict with a form's house here recently in the last few years. I was going in to organize them, and I found out that the Paper Workers were there. We were still going to organize them because they weren't doing the job for their people. Through International pressure and because not wanting to upset the apple cart with the AFL-CIO level, we pulled out of that. As a result of it, that company picked up everything and moved out and left the employees stranded and moved to another area. Other than that, I've had no jurisdiction with the Paper Workers.

They were in a place called in papercraft.

INTERVIEWER: Which?

MEYERS: Papercraft. They're out in Oakmont now.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

MEYERS: I know I used to help picket with them when they were on strike every year. But they weren't in our particular area of jurisdiction, they still aren't. They have their own particular line presses, and I wasn't interested in that.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I think we might say something about. . . I know on the other interview you talked briefly about your considerable discomfort over losing Local 1 and how much opposed to this you were. I think by indirection in the first interview, but we didn't spell it out very clearly, you perhaps thought of supporting Local 1 and maybe even aligning your local with Local 1. I don't know how serious your thoughts were along those lines--did you give any serious thought to that kind of move?

MEYERS: Not only did I but my membership did also.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: Yes, if it was not a problem of possibly losing or tying up our Inter-Local Pension monies, we may have been long gone also. To show you how strong it is and how strong it was and our feelings of that conflict and what they were doing, we, as a local, are the only local in the country to this day that is administering their own early retirement program which, International formulated in 1966.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: They went in in June of 1966. And, of course, I had a history of ten years of trying to get pensions in this area. I went in by Septem-

ber of '66, which was just a couple of months later. We had done something that nobody had ever heard about before--opened up a contract umpteen months early, like about eighteen months early or eight months early, somewhere around there, with the new pension program in. And that program is being run by this local and administered by this local, and it's not tied into the International at all! That pension program is healthier than the International pension program. And they told us it couldn't be done.

INTERVIEWER: How many people does it cover?

MEYERS: It covers all of our shops.

INTERVIEWER: Oh.

MEYERS: It covers all of our people. This is one of the problems. It took me a lot of time to get it off and running because I had contracts that were closed for at least a year or two years; I had to find a way of breaking in there. And we had the money in an escrow account for many, many years. When I got everybody in and saw it wasn't big enough, we went

INTERVIEWER: So after how many years of service does it provide for early retirement?

MEYERS: Immediately, the same as the International. We've got the exact benefits; everything else is verbatim. In fact, we copied it from the International!

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Except that it's administered here.

MEYERS: Administered here. . .And it's not used as a political football. It's used for the benefits of the people, which it's supposed to be used for.

That's how all these other politics started. They use the various funds--and are still doing it today--to call meetings for their own particular

interests, they exclude certain types of people if they don't want you in at the meeting, and they put it under the guise of "expense of this fund."

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: That's what they did. They had a tremendous wedge with the Inter-Local Pension Program. It was a base for their financial manipulations, like setting up their political machines.

That's how strong. . . what our jurisdictional problem was at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Were there other locals that considered pulling out with Local 1?

MEYERS: Yeah, there were some other locals, but how strong they were, I don't know. You talked to their leadership and then you look later to leadership and you see them wishy-washy and you doubt whether they were strong enough or whether they. . . There could have been about five other locals that members. . .

INTERVIEWER: What might they have been, like San Francisco or. . .?

MEYERS: No, not San Francisco, I don't think, but some of the ones. . . You know, that's an interesting question. Knowing San Francisco like I do, that could have been a chain out there because you've got some imports from New York out there in San Francisco, and that's a outfit out there.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

MEYERS: So there could have been some movement there. I know there's . . .

INTERVIEWER: Now, for example, Gene Macellari from the West Coast.

MEYERS: Gene Macellari of Seattle, yes. There's a possibility that he may have been inclined to go that way because he joined in our suits stopping the merger of the Inter-Local Pension Program. Gene has been a. . .

He could have gone, maybe three or four or five others. That we don't know. We never got into that because it was not our intent to break up the International. I was trying to keep New York in as a matter of fact.

INTERVIEWER: How did you go about trying to do that?

MEYERS: Oh, by having conversations on both, with New York and Ken Brown. As a result of that, any time you were seen with an opposite faction, of course, you were called all kinds of names, a turncoat and everything else. I could care less about it because they were out after one sole purpose. There's a couple of people in there, and I'm not going to mention names because you've mentioned a couple of them today, that had personal vendettas to deal with Robinson and Swayduck.

It's a shame. They got a lot of help from some of these people, and they got a lot of help from the International to do their jobs . I can show you one local that's got about two or three or four paid representatives, an office staff. Christ, they still have repreeentatives in their area organizing and negotiating. I think it's ridiculous! It's ridiculous! They can't stand on their own.

But these people get up at conventions and condemn everybody and run everybody else down and over.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Well, I assume you must have been at that so-called, depending, I guess, on your point of view, rump convention in Montreal at the other hotel. What was being discussed there?

MEYERS: I don't think there was any rump convention, and yes, I was at the meetings. Discussions were being had as to what the merger actually meant to us, what we could do to keep New York in, what we could do to get into a different form of amalgamation or merger. There were a lot of viewpoints expressed by a lot of people. You know, they talked about "loose federation" and things like that. They wanted to try it for awhile; they were very, very suspicious of it. There were only a few meetings held.

INTERVIEWER: Were you invited to that by Swayduck?

MEYERS: Oh, definitely, sure I was invited. A lot of people were invited. Sure.

INTERVIEWER: Did he issue any kind of general invitation to anyone who was interested? Or did he selectively invite people that he thought would be open to listening to what the discussions were about?

MEYERS: Oh, possibly I may have been doing some inviting myself at that time because the lines were fairly well drawn. And, of course, one of my concerns was the fact that originally this started out as a grab or takeover the Engravers. They were just going to take them over and push them aside. It was a numbers game, that's all. But whenever they saw everything wasn't going right, of course that changed; and that gave a little more power to the photoengravers, which, of course, they capitalized on.

No, there were invitations issued to various locals or all locals, anybody that wanted to come.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. So it wasn't a secret meeting?

MEYERS: No, it wasn't secretive at all! It wasn't secretive at all. It was open. I don't know if that's when Jim O'Neill ran against Ken Brown or not; I think it was. I'm not positive, but I think it was.

That may have developed out of that meeting because there was some bitterness there.

INTERVIEWER: Well, now, since the merger do you think that politics, and the disaffiliation of Local 1, has politics sort of calmed down or have other factions developed to take the place of Local 1?

MEYERS: Sitting 250 or 300 miles away from Washington, D.C. like I am and working the way I do, I'm not too much interested in their politics.

But I understand there's a hell of a lot more politics now that's under-cover. There's a very, very much dislike for Kenny Brown by a lot of the photoengravers and by a lot of the bookbinders. Now I don't share that dislike because I like Kenny Brown; I think he can do the job. I just don't like his politics.

INTERVIEWER: What do you mean, you don't like his politics?

MEYERS: I don't like the way he helped to tear the International apart.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: I'm still bitter about that because I think it's hurt us--badly! We spent to much time, money, and effort on that battle.

There's been rumors of dissatisfaction in the International family itself between some of the V.P's and what have you. It was called to my attention about a year and a half ago that there were two of them ready to be dumped. These were the same people that told me whenever Petrakis and a few of the others were going to be dumped, which was four or five years ago. And these were the people who were strong supporters of Brown. But as I say, he used them or they use them for a particular time and then. . .OUT! Well, I guess that's politics.

INTERVIEWER: How did you feel about Gus Petrakis and Ted Brandt?

MEYERS: I knew them both very, very well. I liked Gus and I liked Teddy Brandt. They both had their particular useful purposes, but. . .

INTERVIEWER: Maybe we better say what the issue was there.

MEYERS: Well, I don't know what the issue was. . .

INTERVIEWER: (chuckle)

MEYERS: . . .other than the fact that they were scheduled to go long before they did. They used Teddy Brandt against Swayduck. He came out of New York, of course. Gus Petrakis came out of Chicago. Of course, Chicago dumped Petrakis.

They said that they were in effective, you know. But they were no longer in control of votes, I don't think. They were limited, you know. They called Teddy crude and rough. And sometimes you have to be crude and rough in this business, you know. He came out of the tough areas of New York, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: Gus Petrakis. . .I served with him as secretary on his Technological Development Committee, did a little work for him. Of course, he had all the attorneys and everybody else do all his write-ups and that. The job was over his head, actually; no two ways about that. You don't build up a guy and then cut him down; you take time and work him, you know. But they killed the poor guy. Again, it was the realignment of Chicago, Twin Cities, so on.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Well, as an outsider I can't see any particular issue in it other than just whether they were competently doing their job or not, and the membership seems to have rejected them in both cases.

MEYERS: Well, I wouldn't necessarily say that. I won't say they were incompetent because they had. . .they had to do possibly. But there were other people coming in, and there had to be places made for people from Chicago, Twin Cities, and Philadelphia. And you take a look at what's happening now, you'll find out that Schroeder [William] out of Chicago, . . . find out who's on International from Philadelphia, Twin Cities, what have you. And there are other people back there wanting to come up too, you know. So they had to make room for them. These guys were expediently gotten rid of.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Right. Well, both of them were old enough to go on pension, were they not?

MEYERS: Gus was not, I don't think. They may have worked a deal out or he may have been bordered on this early retirement.

But you know, you have a man traveling around on an International setup for fifteen to twenty years and then you overnight cut his legs off without his even knowing it, it's a change in life. They could have or should have maybe given him a little fair warning and taken him to task. I would have, anyway! I would have let him know that if he doesn't fit in the picture, let's see what we can do, you know. There's nothing wrong with that, but to do it the way they did it, I don't like it.

In fact I voted against Teddy Brandt whenever he ran for election. Very, very strongly, I voted against him. But I still don't think what they did to him was right. Of course, that's being sentimental, you're not supposed to to that.

INTERVIEWER: (laughter) Now, on the other hand (chuckle), a trade union should have some feeling for a man's job, it seems to me. . .

MEYERS: That's the way I feel.

INTERVIEWER: . . . and not behave like an insurance company.

Well, what have been your thoughts about the various programs of the International--the steamlining of record-keeping, the educational programs, and so on? Do your members participate in those programs, by the way?

MEYERS: I don't see any programs coming out of the International. We have participated recently in some of their educational stuff. We have a new educational director here now that we have on a part-time basis. He was formerly our vice-president here; he's retired. He's about fifty-five, fifty-six years old. We give him a nice stipend which helps him. He's doing like a full-time job for us.

INTERVIEWER: What type of education programs. . . You mean he runs them like your own program?

MEYERS: We run our own program. Oh, yeah, we've had an educational program for over. . .well, since 1950, '51 when I went into office.

INTERVIEWER: And what does it include?

Meyers: Well, basically, up to this time, it included theory. Then our practical or technical education was run through Carnegie Tech. and or the printing industry--the former Graphic Arts Institute. And more recently we've been having it in shops. As an example, we have a camera class, we'll have the photographer take a whole bunch of people into a shop and work right on the camera there or press into another shop.

INTERVIEWER: Now is this for apprentices or is this primarily. . . ?

MEYERS: Apprentices and/or retraining of journeymen.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

MEYERS: And now, of course, with this new headquarters. . . I don't know if you saw here there's a beautiful theory room here and then all in the back. it's going to be all practical stuff, technical stuff. We'll have all of our. . .We've got small little presses there now and a cutter; we'll be putting more equipment in the back there, camera, platemaking, stripping, and I'm even talking about getting into computerized typeset. I'm talking to somebody about that right now.

INTERVIEWER: And you'll get that equipment donated by employers or. . . ?

MEYERS: I would hope so. . . Not employers, by manufacturers. I would either hope so or let's go out and buy it!

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: We've got an educational dollar here, and we'll buy it if need be.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Now do you send people to these conferences that are held in Missouri?

MEYERS: Yes, we have been. . . No, wait a minute. Missouri? You're talking about the educational conferences for officers and stuff like that?

INTERVIEWER: Right.

MEYERS: I sent my assistant when he first came on the job out to the University. . .I guess it's the University of Missouri, isn't it?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

MEYERS: He came back and told me he didn't learn a damn thing, and I'm a little disappointed because. . . I don't know. I don't know.

I send them to school classes here. We have classes here from the Labor Council. I've done that myself even, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Now, what kind of classes are those, the Union Leadership Academy?

MEYERS: The Union Leadership Academy classes. We just finished one now on community services,too.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

MEYERS: I'm starting to get some other younger people interested, too.

I haven't seen any programs come out of the International other than they've journeyed throughout the country. My director and I will be going up to Vancouver, British Columbia, next week. I think this might be the last one they have--for all their educational directors, you know.

Record streamlining. . . I don't know enough about that; they're talking about their computers and what have you. You have to be able to tag a guy, you know, because this is the same as a big company, you're on a computer; you're just a number, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: Through all their programming that I've seen the only thing that's happened is they've lost the personal touch. And I've always found the union on a personal touch. I haven't got any figures. . .

INTERVIEWER: What about research, do you benefit from that when it comes time to do negotiations?

MEYERS: I benefit from the gauge that they put out possibly, but that gauge can be taken two different ways. As an example, you talk about a cos-of-living gauge in there from Cleveland, I'm negotiating right now. I picked up a dollar and eight cents an hour over the last year and a half, and I'm facing negotiations now with Cleveland for a reopener. I got 64¢ last year in a one-year contract, which was $22.40 a week increases. Cleveland's got a cost-of-living that gave them a maximum of two dollars and eighty cents.

INTERVIEWER: A week?

MEYERS: A week, compared to my twenty-two. So if they tell me that Cleveland's got a cost-of-livjng, I'm assuming that's the standard one that we formulated through the International. Then I found out that the employers meet across the table with it, which they did to me recently, how good is it?

INTERVIEWER: (chuckle) In other words the stuff that's coming from the research department is being used against you?

MEYERS: It helps. Sometimes, sometimes. I mean, any information helps. You just have to know how to use it; that's the problem. You have to know when to use it, when not to use it, and it's beteer off to hide it even sometimes. But it's helpful. No, there's no two ways about it. It's quite expensive, quite costly, too, though, I think

INTERVIEWER: Right.

MEYERS: I'd like to have more of it, to be honest with you. But other

than that. . . Of course, they criticize me too about not getting my contracts signed and in there. There's just so much that can be done by one or two people, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: And the way we work, the way I work, you just don't have time to do everything that has to be done!

INTERVIEWER: How many contracts do you have?

MEYERS: About thirty. About twenty-two, twenty-five, thirty.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: And basically, with the exception of four of them, they all are to be negotiated independently. Now, of course, the four that we negotiate we try to parley that into the rest of the area. Sometimes it's difficult, sometimes it's not. That's what was the cause of my strike with Continental Can Company. The company tried to parley my last extension into their benefit, and, of course, we wouldn't buy that. So that was the cause of the trouble that way, so it works both ways.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Right. It's a game that two can play. (chuckle)

MEYERS: Well, that's right. Of course I had already outlined my plans at least eight months to a year prior to what was happening, and this was the calibrated risk that we took. We knew what we were getting into so there were no regrets.

INTERVIEWER: Well, why don't we talk about this bookbinder situation and what you see as the basic problems there? First of all, how many bookbinders do you have here in Pittsburgh, how big?

MEYERS: They indicate to me that there's about three hundred and some organized in the local 73B.

INTERVIEWER : Hm-hm.

MEYERS: Whether there is that many or whether there isn't, I don't know. They are in our shop, you know. Some of them are not organized in some of our shops, which I could or could not go after, too.

I can't tell you too much about the bookbinders other than my own personal contacts with them. We have no rapport whatsoever with them to the extent of any of their officers meeting with ours, any preplanning as to what's what. They don't attend too many conferences on the International level, they're too broke, they don't have the money.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: They've got one full-time officer/business agent here who I've known from the trade. I worked with him twenty-five years ago. I saw him yesterday, as an example. We exchange some conversation and information on the phone. We've extended to them an invitation to meet with us and our officers; they never even had the courtesy to answer it.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I see two problems, one is the discussion about the strike benefits which you alluded to at the very beginning . . of our conversation here this morning, and the other is this issue of equal employment opportunity on the basis of sex, both of which, it seems to me, are going to be increasing problems. And I'm just wondering from where you sit how you see these being resolved?

I understand there's some considerable issue that the bookbinders are going to raise at this next convention with respect to merger of strike benefits, Am I misinformed about that?

MEYERS: Let's go back. I said I didn't know too much about them locally here other than having worked with them in the shops. But at our last coordination-negotiation meeting, I made myself leave one of my other meetings just to go and sit in with them. They're funny in their ways.

They've got some older people around. Some of the women are quite elderly; some of the men are, also. Now, of course, they've been in a different production-line basis than what I'm used to in the lithographic industry.

INTERVIEWER: How so, TEd?

MEYERS: Well, I've been used to fast-running equipment--presses, you know. That's what I was, a pressman.

Whereas the bookbinders that I have known, the fastest they worked was on the hand stitches and what have you. Now, of course. . . and the papercutter, too, he did his thing, but it just didn't do time, you know, and there was no speedup. And then you had a lot of other girls/ usually sitting around and collating. You know, there was not that whole big rush, rush, rush to get it out.

INTERVIEWER: Right. In other words, they were not in a job in which they had to keep up with with the machine in the same sense.

MEMERS: This is correct, this is right. But I think now that is changing in a lot of areas. Now, what is happening too though in those areas, a lot of bookbinders are losing their jobs because of automation coming in. This is the tragic. . . which is the other thing that you didn't talk about. You talked about the strike fund, you talked about the prejudices of sex biases, but the technology change is going to be the biggest thing, I think, that's going to erode them away like/the engravers. it did

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: But getting back to that, I went to this conference, and I was impressed by some of them because they got up there and they sounded off and they talked. And a couple of their officers, who I don't even know yet, were fairly good; and I thought they were going to go home and do a job. It's the same thing, I guess,. . .

INTERVIEWER: Do a job in organizing, you mean?

MEYERS: No, do a job on this defense fund of theirs, you know, selling that. That's what they were talking about at the meeting I went to.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, Right. Yeah.

MEYERS: But they kicked the heck out of it. So evidently they didn't do the job and they weren't serious and they had no leadership to be able to do the job. In other words, their membership aren't following them.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: They think, I feel, that, since they've merged now, that everybody else is going to carry their burdens. Well, I lived with this enough before, you know; they've been hangers-on for years. Locally here in the city of Pittsburgh, they've been following the printing trades, see, the ITU, and what have you. They let everybody else settle up, and then they come in and settle for the programs. Of course this last year they outdid the ITU by a couple bucks a year.

But you get into the sex bias. . . . I think that sex bias has been more hereditary than anything, and they let themselves get into a rut. I think possibly that you may find women in the bindery shops, not necessarily the union, doing skilled jobs--journeymen jobs--and they're entitled to them. But in the organized shops, I guess people just thought, well, that's what they're supposed to do-- you be a collater, you do this and do that. I'm not without a doubt that they're going to have to change, and the employers are going to have to change. I blame the employers more than the union because they didn't want them in there anymore than they wanted color and things like that. The employers are bringing in color now just to make sure the pictures look prettier, you know, when ever the government man comes around. But basically they didn't want them in there; they're to blame.

I had a problem just recently in an organizing effort where we had some young girls in there—and they were artists—and they quizzed me about the differences between our scales, and they were hard to believe and they were hard to sell that we don't discriminate in our union. In other words, we have very, very few press people, necessarily because of the big equipment. Now, we do have some female pressmen that are running small equipment where they can handle it, you know. But in time that's going to change, too. I know one girl that because of . . . you know, that's where she was supposed to stay, period, and was never able to progress, and she would have been capable of doing it— moving up into a better classification.

But I'm a little bit funny in stuff like that. I would not go out and fight for their right to do this or to move up because they were either white or women. I would go out and fight for their right of their ability but not . . . I'd probably go the other direction. I'd fight you on it rather than. . . What I'm trying to say is that I think you're entitled to go as far as you can whether you're a women, whether you're white, black, Jew a Catholic or what have you. That's the way it should be. And I'm not going to fight any harder just because you are something to get you something you shouldn't be in.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: But that's going to have to change in the Bookbinders, when, I don't know; how, I don't know. You're going to have some court decisions, I presume, come down that are going to slap both them and our International, I guess, and the employers.

INTERVIEWER: It looks that way. Right.

MEYERS: Yep. We're in our heads over that, and the tragedy is you don't hear too much of it from the International at all. In fact, they try and keep it muffed, you know, unless you happen to know somebody; and then they

can tell you a little about what's happening.

INTERVIEWER: Right. So, would it be fair to say, Ted, that your feeling is that education programs ought to face these issues directly on; that there ought to be some kind of explanation out in the program in St. Louis, Missouri on exactly what the EEOC is, what the law provides, what it's going to mean to the union, etc., etc.?

MEYERS: I think they're doing that now. I'm not sure because I don't attend them. I don't have the luxury or time, to be honest with you.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

(End of Tape I, side II)

MEYERS: If you're talking about the International staff, that's one thing.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: If you're talking about local staff, that's another thing because you get into the position of the International staff not being able to control, unless they come in with some kind of a muscle, and the local staff, I don't know if they're competent enough to/be able to get the message and do anything about it or whether they want to do anything about it.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Right.

MEYERS: I've heard at some of these meetings some good girls talk; and if they could do the job like they talk, maybe we've got some hope, you know, I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Are some of these younger women likely to assume more leadership, do you think?

MEYERS: Well, I would hope so. We had on our International . . . I can't think of her name now. Mary is a VP and she was there because she was a nice lady. What she put into it I don't know. She was getting a damn nice

salary, I presume. But that's not right. I think anybody that's getting a salary, no matter who they are, they should be earning it and they should be doing the job, not there because they're something they want to be shown, you know.

I think what's happening with the Bookbinders is they talk one way and act another way. And they have been a very, very loose organization, no controls at all. Of course, as time goes by and if we prevail, they'll start wising up and they'll start learning, I hope.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of future do you see for mergers? Now, when Ken Brown first assumed the presidency of the Graphic Arts International Union, he. . .It wasn't the Graphic Arts International Union then obviously, but there was a tremendous amount of talk for merger, almost, I think it would be fair to say, merger fever. And merger discussions were conducted with a number of unions. It was a very near thing with the Stereotypers. Discussions were conducted even with the Printing Pressmen, with the Guild. Do you see this as having kind of died down, or do you think that there are possible new mergers in the future?

MEYERS: Well, I guess they talk about it just to keep it alive. But I see and feel no pressure from mergers. Of course, we're meeting with the Guild this next week on a legislative conference get-together.

But, see, too many people are saying, "But why does it always have to be Ken Brown that's going to be on the top?" And they don't think that Ken Brown's got it. This is what's happened now. In fact there may be, and I don't know, I'll have to shake it down pretty soon, there might be some problems with Ken Brown and some of his other friends. I just heard this recently. I'll shake this down over the weekend and see if there's any truth in it. I don't see any big mergers at all anymore. There can't be any. The ITU, number one, is not about to merge with us. The Printing

Pressmen are pretty well satisfied with the ITU affiliations. The Stereotypers, of course, they're out, period, you know. The only thing that may happen in the future is technology changes something in the newspaper field which it very, very likely could. There could be some drastic changes there. Of course there the ITU's being eroded too, though. They're losing jobs like mad with this new automatic computerized typesetting thing. So maybe attrition will be the name of the game of future mergers. I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: You mean that mergers will come about because people see themselves like the Photoengravers in what is essentially a dying trade.

MEYERS: Could be. And maybe they might get so weak that they finally do have to band together. You know, the Stereotypers had no other course. You won't find a stereotyper in the city of Pittsburgh with the exception of the newspaper. They had eight electrotypers here. I don't know how many they have now, maybe two or three. The ITU is still strong and big, and as a result of it they can be as independent as hell. But if they get eroded away and attrition keeps coming to bear, somewhere along the line something is going to give.

One thing you mentioned about the coming convention. . . you were talking about that you had heard some rumblings about the Bookbinders defense fund coming in line with ours. Yeah, there's word out on that already. But mark my word, if they try to do the same with that as they tried to do with the pension programs, there will be a hell of a battle! And I'll be there! We're just sending money up to them. We'll give the money away, but don't let them steal from us. I think that's just another gimmick, though to try and make them a little . . . . . They're in deep trouble. They can't see the forest for the trees. They don't understand it, you know. But they owe their own fund $600,000; and if they're going to put

that kind of a deficit and merge our funds and then expect our membership to pay for it. . .NO WAY! Now if they work out something that they will be in debt and some way along the line they will make it equitable. . . yeah, I'll buy that! We'll buy that! There's nothing wrong with that at all.

INTERVIEWER: Have they had more strikes since merger than was characteristic of their collective bargaining prior to merger?

MEYERS: I think so. Definitely, yes, because they've initiated them. Of course they've gotten more militant. They thought. . .

INTERVIEWER: They thought they had more strength.

MEYERS: That's right! It was false strategy, and I don't know how we got into a lot of that stuff, see. And I think maybe some of our underpaid International people are to blame for it; I don't know that either. Now, I'm a good one to talk because I've had my share of strikes, but they've been calculated strikes. They've been organizational strikes. I've only had one economic strike in twenty-five years.

INTERVIEWER: Was that this one that you just had?

MEYERS: The one recently, yeah. That's right. Of course, I calibrated that twelve months in advance. We knew it was going to happen, and we were prepared for it. Everything that we laid down a year in advance worked out. The tragedy was we couldn't settle that one, and we had to go the route. No, I think they felt the muscle that was not there. They're under assessment now, too, though, see. And maybe those people are sick and tired of that too because they got nothing from. . . .Well, I better not say that. They say they get nothing from their leadership, nothing from the unions, see?

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Now they mean their own bookbinder leadership?

MEYERS: Yeah, their own bookbinders here in the past, you know. The vote here was. . . . I won't say it was overwhelming. There was just no

vote here. I mean, they had one or two people who voted for it, I think, out of the whole membership.

INTERVIEWER: Voted for what?

MEYERS: For the strike assessment, the last one.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I see.

MEYERS: They voted it down three times! Then, also, I understand the bookbinders'. I know here locally a lot of the members never even get a chance to vote.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, really, why?

MEYERS: You'd have to ask them that. I don't know. I just get that through the grapevine. My people tell me that their people say well, hell, they don't even know what's going on! Number one, they're lackadaisical, they don't go to membership meetings, so I have no sympathy for them there. But number two then, if you can't get the message across, you better do something about it.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Well, now, for example, historically the Lithographers here have had compulsory attendance.

MEYERS: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: It's possible, as I understand it, to call a meeting in which attendance is absolutely compulsory. Isn't that true?

MEYERS: Yes. Then you have to weigh that, too. Then you have to weigh that, too. You know, rules are made out of paper and on paper and books, and yet they're flexible and bend, but you have to administer them fairly, you know. But they don't have any of that stuff, and they could care less. Well, they wanted it that way! They didn't want anybody giving them any. . . . You know, their officers don't want to be bothered, what the heck. "Don't have anybody down at the meetings, they agitate us." I think that's what it's all about.

INTERVIEWER: (chuckle) The fewer people you have at a meeting the fewer there are to rock the boat.

MEYERS: That's right. But the tragedy of that being is that you have an uninformed membership, and as a result of that, you've got an ineffective membership.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Have they participated in Central Council activities?

MEYERS: They've even dropped out of that here locally. A few years back they dropped out of that. I believe, but I'm not positive, but I think they may be affiliated on a state level. I'd have to check my records because I just got a list of all of our affiliates on the state level, which I have to work and try and get them into the state. So I have to check them out. But they can't get a dues increase. They can't do anything because they don't understand it!

INTERVIEWER: What are their dues, do you know?

MEYERS: I don't know. I could assume that they're not enough. They're never enough!

INTERVIEWER: (laughter) Right. That's for sure, they're never enough, depending upon which side of the table you're sitting on. To get a dues increase is not an easy thing for any union. Even a union like the Steelworkers has had its historical hassles over dues increases.

MEYERS: Oh, that's a ramrod! They have to ramrod those things because how the hell can they go out and talk to a million people to get them to even rationalize about it. That's all power politics.

It could be worked here too, but we like to think that our membership makes the democratic. . . .

INTERVIEWER: Well, I think it's true, don't you, that there's an awful lot more of local autonomy and democratic input in this union than there is in some?

MEYERS: Oh, I would say so. In fact, I fought for that right for them to have that.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

MEYERS: They also know how to turn it off whenever they have to use it, that's the tragedy of it. (chuckle) That's the tragedy.

INTERVIEWER: How long have you been active in central labor activities in Pittsburgh? Do you go back to Pat Fagan?

MEYERS: Oh, no! No, no, no, Pat Fagan was before the war!

INTERVIEWER: So that you're much too young to. . . .

MEYERS: Sure. I started getting active in it in 1946 or '47.

INTERVIEWER: Who was the president then?

MEYERS: Then it was the old CIO; Chick Federoff was in there at that time. . .and Milt Weisberg. In fact, Milt Weisberg was from the Wholesale-Retail Department Store Union, which is under Greenberg up in New York now.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

INTERVIEWER: They started us in our first office in 1952, '53. I rented their meeting hall . I think they used to rent for about five or ten bucks a night then. It was in the old Mayfair in 1947 or '48. And I had gotten to know them at that time. As I say, they set us up in our first office. For fifty bucks a month we had an office about half this size, no windows.

INTERVIEWER: Half the size of this room, you mean?

MEYERS: Half the size of this room here.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, (chuckle).

MEYERS: But we had the right to have as many meetings as we had, and it gave us some respectability now.

Milt came from a very liberal Jewish family. His father was very, very active in helping the coal miners and stuff like that, see. He was a newspaper man or something like that. So they were very, very good socially trained people, good people, you understand?

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: So that's how I got to know him. Of course I was active. I became the vice-president of the old CIO, on the Executive Board, down there. And then we got into trouble with the AFL-CIO again, so I got out of there. Then in '55 they merged--the AFL and the CIO.

INTERVIEWER: Right. How did that merger work here in Pittsburgh?

MEYERS: We were out here. They merged late here. They didn't merge immediately. There was that faction between Federoff and. . .

INTERVIEWER: Don't feel bad, Philadelphia still hasn't merged. (laughter)

MEYERS: Oh, I know that. Philadelphia and Pittsburgh were the two. . . They're still out. Of course we haven't merged on our International level either. . .Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

But no, it was very, very bad. They were trying to bring the entire Allegheny County in with the head councils in Pittsburgh--two, the AFL-CIO, the Central Labor Council of the AFL and the Steel City Industrial Union Council, which was us. And they had a CIO in McKeesport and a CIO in Tarentum and they had an AFL up there in McKeesport, too. They were trying to merge the whole four areas; eventually they have.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. What were the problems? I think it would be interesting because this. . .

MEYERS: Oh, I think the problems were who was going to form up, who's going to shape, who's going to get all the glory.

You had Bill Hart up in Tarentum, who was trying to call the shots, from the Steelworkers. And, of course, he was the undermining one. The undermining influence of Dave McDonald, also, you had him going. Well, Nick Haggerty up in McKeesport wasn't too bad of a stumbling block if my memory serves me correctly.

INTERVIEWER: Was he the AF of L guy?

MEYERS: He was the AF of L guy. He came out of the Musicians Local--Nick Haggerty. And of course you had a lot of them here--stron people. You had them on the AFL side and the CIO side here. Let's see. . .I think when Chick died was when that merger came about. But you had a strongheaded Chick Federoff here. The same as you had on the state level, you had conflicts with Harry Boyer. Of course, [he] is a strong man, a good man, but he came out on top. But we couldn't resolve that issue here locally.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Were you working to try to obtain resolution or did you just think it was kind of hopeless and you would have to wait for somebody to die? (chuckle)

MEYERS: Well, maybe that's the way it resolved itself. I don't remember now exactly because I think I was out. . . In fact, I'm positive we were out whenever it happened, so I had lost some of my contact. We were out because of the jurisdictional conflict now, by the way, when I think of it with the old. . .with Westinghouse.

INTERVIEWER: Oh.

MEYERS: That's probably the reason we weren't at. . . .because even when we were not affiliated officially I still attended meetings. And I was accepted because I worked with them for many, many years. But then one of the guys from the IUE came in and made the statement' We had an election out there. . . but they didn't want me in there anymore. So I sent my letter of resignation

in which I. . . In fact, I was paying dues and everything. I never did resign even when we were not in.

INTERVIEWER: You still continued to pay per capita?

MEYERS: Oh, yeah. I continued [to pay]. . . .

INTERVIEWER: Really?

MEYERS: Oh, yeah,yeah, yeah. Because I was one of the guys. What the hell, I worked with them for years until this guy. . .

INTERVIEWER: You made reference to this Westinghouse dispute in the previous interview, but I don't think we ever really found out what that was really all about.

MEYERS: There was no dispute. Actually back in 1950 they had an election at Westinghouse between the IUE and the UE .

INTERVIEWER: Right.

MEYERS:/ It was being headquartered out of the CIO offices here, who was behind the IUE. Of course at that time we were on strike too in the industry. But we were in that election too to carve out our unit--the Lithographic unit. And because of the closeness of the vote, they asked us to bow out and throw our support with the IUE with the promise that if they win, when they win, we would carve that unit out. And that's what we did, but we never got the unit!

INTERVIEWER: Oh, boy! (chuckle)

MEYERS: We never got the unit, and we kept calling it to a lot of peoples' attention. So we finally did it the other way.

INTERVIEWER: To whose attention did you call it? Did you go to Dave McDonald or did you go to the IUE itself?

MEYERS: No, the IUE themselves.

INTERVIEWER: Did it go as far as James Carey or. . . ?

MEYERS: It may have. Yeah, I think it did go there. But no action. So we did it the rough way. We got the cards and we went in it for a separate unit. We were out of the AFL-CIO at that time--CIO because they had merged locally. So we went ahead with it. We lost the election big!

INTERVIEWER: When was this exactly, about 1955?

MEYERS: Oh, no, it had to be later than that. It had to be somewhere around '59. . . .I have the records all here. Just let me check. . . .

INTERVIEWER: You say it was in 1960?

MEYERS: In September of 1960. We filed in August and we had the election on September 29, 1960.

INTERVIEWER: So you were pretty patient, really.

MEYERS: Oh, yes, yes.

INTERVIEWER: This situation went on for almost ten years.

MEYERS: Ten years, yes. And we couldn't make any headway.

INTERVIEWER: Why not?

MEYERS: They just ignored the situation.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I know, but when it came to having the election in September of '60, why did they beat you so badly?

MEYERS: Well, they beat us so badly because they had gotten a lot of false propaganda out of. . . .Number one, they have a strong seniority deal out there. That's one of their problems. That's one of the reasons why the plant is ineffective, is inefficient, because if you've got seniority and you're even sweeping the floor you've got a right to bump into that job. Well, you can't bump into a skilled job unless you've had upteen years of training.

INTERVIEWER: Certainly not as a lithographer.

MEYERS: That's right. So that's what happened, they had informed these people that they would lose all of their seniority rights; number two, that they

were going to lose all their pensions and what have you. Now, when you've got people with thirty and twenty years seniority, this starts bothering them!

I had these people. . . .We'd talked to them. I had thirty-nine people involved. I had many, many meetings. Then they started throwing some very, very bad propaganda out at the last minute, and it scared the people off. It really scared them off.

INTERVIEWER: How are they as far as wage-scale is concerned now compared with you?

MEYERS: Oh, no comparison!

INTERVIEWER: So these people really paid a very high price as fara s their wages were concerned.

MEYERS: Oh, definitely. No comparison on wages.

INTERVIEWER: Did Westinghouse stay out of this, or did they put their fingers in to muddy the waters?

MEYERS: No, I had no problem with management at all on the thing. I had enough problems with the. . . .

INTERVIEWER: With the IUE.

MEYERS: Now here's a sign here. . . (reading from drafts) "To maintain your seniority and all your hard-fought benefits." And they set They had the people all scared as to what was or what could have happened to them. Needless to say, they've got their seniority. They don't have many jobs. They've lost a lot of jobs, I guess. They've lost an awful lot of money, too.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of printing are they doing out there? Is it. . . .

MEYERS: I guess they do a lot of ~~the~~ Westinghouse's own work. What they. . .

INTERVIEWER: It's in-house printing in other words.

meyers: In-house printing. And, of course, they print on metal, too--those little tags and that, you know. This is just a sample of the stuff.

INTERVIEWER: Right. That says: "You Can Be Sure If It's Westinghouse" (check

MEYERS: Yeah, and things like that. But the only thing that they're sure about is that they are in trouble.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

MEYERS: But they had one of the nicest print shops and one of the biggest print shops in western Pennsylvania. But the problem was that they didn't have the wherewithal to necessarily run. Now Floyd came out of Westinghouse. He started some of these apprenticeships.

INTERVIEWER: Floyd Lamb this is?

MEYERS: Yeah, my assistant. He came out of Westinghouse into one of our trade houses. He was lucky;, he got out. We've got a few people on it that stuck with us. But basically they've all retired now--the ones that were in there then.

INTERVIEWER: What kinds of relationships and involvements do you have with manpower development and apprentice training through the school system or through upgrading programs from the state or the government?

MEYERS: None whatsoever.

INTERVIEWER: None whatsoever.

MEYERS: I'm active personally with some groups. As an example, this urban youth thing, they want me to get on their board. They've requested I get on the local apprenticeship board here, too.

INTERVIEWER: This is the school district?

MEYERS: Well, no, I'm on that. That's an advisory thing. Once a year they meet, and that's a farce. All that does is try and rubber stamp some stuff with some of the people in the plants there. Some of the teachers are doing it.

No, they have another with the state they have a Printers' Trade Council. They requested I get on it, but I've been too busy. I missed the last two

meetings. I'm going to try and make the next one, though.

Other than that, we have no control--no control over affiliation. We do have, though, our schools recognized by the federal government for apprentice training, and we've just recently gotten that through. We got our first apprentice on there, but he's from the ranks, too, he came from the ranks. That's quite beneficial. He's getting a nice check from his Veteran's pay, you know. So that's the only thing that we have. Now there's. . . .

INTERVIEWER: How many apprentices are you training?

MEYERS: Not too many at the present time. Not too many. We're trying to retrain people. One of the problems we have is that we have more apprentices down in West Virginia in the metal plant that actually need training, but they're too lackadaisical. They've got it too good, I think, and they're not going to become good craftsmen. And I'm not going to be able to place them in years to come unless. . . .

INTERVIEWER: Where are they working, Ted?

MEYERS: Continental Can Company. You know, they think it's too far to come. I've traveled that thirty-five miles down there two or three or five times a week when necessary. But they don't want to put a couple of hours in to take care of their own benefit in the future. It's a shame! It's tough trying. . . .You know, it's like leading a horse to water, but you can't force him to drink.

INTERVIEWER: Right, right.

MEYERS: I think it's a big mistake that they're making. But, you know, we tried to put it there, but you can't force them into it. Oh, we can indirectly if you have the cooperation of the companies, but then, of course, you've got the company playing politics. . .

INTERVIEWER: And it becomes a very difficult kind of thing.

MEYERS: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Well, at this next convention up in Canada, what issues do you see as being important, other than this one that we've discussed with the Bookbinders? That, plus the fact that you sense a little political maneuvering of various kinds.

MEYERS: Well, I think what might. . . . I don't know whether it's going to uncover or not, but I've seen some dissatisfaction in the support that some of our sister locals are giving to each other. I've seen and heard of people crossing picket lines. I haven't seen but I've heard. . . .

INTERVIEWER: Now, what kinds of crossings?

MEYERS: GAIU members crossing their sister. . . .

INTERVIEWER: GAIU picket lines?

MEYERS: Crossing GAIU picket lines. And I've understood that it's been either condoned or not by some of our people, some of our reps. Of course, I'd like to see the true story come out, so I'm not going to pass judgement until I hear firsthand. I can assume that there's going to be at least a play-on-words about organizing and/or the high unemployment that I understand ~~that's~~ they're in the industry, which a lot of them won't admit to, some will. Of course none of them will admit to the cause of the unemployment.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think is the cause of it?

MEYERS: Well, one of the causes, beside the depressed industry, is the fact that you have too many people competing for the same job! And our educational dollar was used to retrain these people! It's as blunt as that, and I don't care who knows it. We're paying per capita money, of course, they are too, to retrain people for our jobs; this is what it's amounted to.

INTERVIEWER: And this you feel is particularly Photoengravers?

MEYERS: Not particularly, that's what it was! Sure, sure. You've got "X" number of photoengravers in there that were half trained; it wouldn't take too much to train them into it. But then you put a bug on the Photoengravers' shop that never had it before that says he's qualified to handle your particular work. See, we didn't have these problems before. We got our bug and it had to be done in our shop, but now you open up the whole thing. And you're not supposed to have people crossing jurisdictions. I can still show you in our constitutions. You've got them doing two and three jobs in any one shop! That's a bunch of garbage!

INTERVIEWER: Right. How do you feel the International should handle an organizing campaign? And how are you working on organizing here in Pittsburgh?

MEYERS: I've had a poor track record recently. I had never had a failure in organizing, but I have tried recently going the P & M unit route and I'm getting my teeth kicked in. I just lost one up in Delavern--MapCo--something like 26 to 9.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you think that you lost it?

MEYERS: Number one is that. . . .Well, I haven't done a full survey on it yet, but I know basically is that I wasn't able to. . . . It was right in the middle of this move, and we were trying to do too many things at one time, number one. I wasn't able to put the time in that I had to; that is, I didn't have the personal contact with every person that I usually do. And then the mass meetings that I had it was questionable as to whether they believed me whenever I told them we had no discrimination in our union. They were scared of a strike. [number two]

INTERVIEWER: Now, they were concerned about racial discrimination or sexual?

MEYERS: No, sexual, sexual discrimination.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: They were afraid of a strike. The company had just beaten the Teamsters in a strike and had threaten to pull the whole darn place out of there. So they were concerned about that. Even without strike benefits though, they would have been getting more money on strike benefits than they would have been getting in the shop.

INTERVIEWER: Now they were nonunion?

MEYERS: Nonunion. And they're still nonunion. Now we won't be able to go after them for about a year. They're getting into competition with one of my shops; this is one of my problems. And where I may have complement of about six on a press they maybe have two or three. And the hourly rate could go anywhere from about fifty, sixty or seventy bucks an hour of our flat rates to maybe about their six or seven dollars or ten dollars an hour. Top rate up there was five dollars an hour, and that guy should have been getting about eight or nine dollars an hour. That's another reason. But basically I didn't. . . .It went too smooth and it went too fast, and I didn't have a chance to work on it. And I relied on an in-plant committee, which they tell me is good.

INTERVIEWER: (chuckle)

MEYERS: And I guess it would be good if you were talking about masses, but there's still nothing to replace that personal contact, and that takes time. As I say, I'm having my own difficulties here.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that there's kind of an increase in general anti-union feeling that's making things more difficult also?

MEYERS: Well, it's not necessarily an anti-union feeling, I don't think. I think it's a feeling that they don't need the union.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: And this is the tragedy because, you know, they keep saying that it's the union guy that's out of work. Look how many of the building trades are out of work. Even the small. . . .

(End of Tape 11, side 3)

INTERVIEWER: In other words, there's a lot more press coverage on the auto workers being out of work than there is on some guy who was washing dishes in a diner.

MEYERS: This is true. The tragedy of it being is that those without the union have no recourse whatsoever! They are out, period!

These poor people up in NapCo, up in Belle Vernon, as an example, they are scrutinized every six months for a raise. If the guy likes the way they part their hair that morning, they'll get a raise. But then they ask, "Well, gee, the cost of living's gone up more than the ten cents you gave me." "Well," they say, "your cost of living's in that, too." They have no representation, and people are just fearful of their jobs! So I think they're just fearful of the whole economy and that's a shame. I feel sorry for them. At least our people have some place to come to cry if they have to cry. We have a sympathetic ear.

INTERVIEWER: (laughter) And a sympathetic ear.

How did you feel about this march on Washington? You know, as a labor historian I detect a trend that in depressed times, when industries are down, there is generally on the part of the labor movement a stronger move towards political action rather than--not necessarily rather than but more of an emphasis on it, we'll say--than on economic action. Yet there were some quarters of the labor movement who didn't exactly support that march.

Meyers: They didn't support it from the very top. We didn't support it at all from what I gather. They considered that march a flop! But hell, they had 60 thousand people there, I understand, so it should have been pretty good. But from what I gather, Meany was fearful of it.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Did people go from Pittsburgh?

MEYERS: Yeah, they had people go from Pittsburgh. But there again, we were too busy to participate. Now we're going to Washington next week. . .

INTERVIEWER: For this joint Guild. . .

MEYERS: For the Guild-Lithographers Legislative Conference, yes.

Interviewer: Hm-hm. And this will be to support legislation for full employment and so forth for these people? This is largely what's on the agenda?

MEYERS: Right. Now we had a CLC meeting, which is the Central Labor Council meeting, last night. We had young Hines and Congressman Morehead there, both Congressmen, talking on this. So I'll be up there talking to them next week again.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Well, both of those Congressmen are pretty sympathetic to this kind of legislation, are they not?

Meyers: Oh, they had to be, sure. Of course, Morehead's a down-the-liner. Of course Hines is a Republican, but he's a young fellow and he's got a sympathetic ear. And he's got the support of labor, too. He took Jimmy Fulton's place. He was challenged on the floor last night, but he handled himself very, very well, I thought.

INTERVIEWER: What about your own political activity of your own local? Have you been active in city politics?

MEYERS: No, we've been very, very lackadaisical. I presume it's because I despise politics, to be honest with you. We support them and do what we have to when we have to. But I've got a bitter taste about politics in my

mouth. Maybe that's why I don't like the International politics.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I would say it's fair to say that throughout your whole career you've been goal oriented in terms of getting the job done and you didn't much care who did it as long as he got the job done.

MEYERS: That's right. We support them. I'm getting some money together for them. I send money around, but that's about the gist of it.

INTERVIEWER: Send money to the candidates?

MEYERS: Various people, yeah. This is not what made me bitter, but I remember the first time we got Elmer Holland elected into Congress; He'd been a state senator for many,many years.

It was very, very bitter cold up in the McKeesport area,-- the snow and ice was a foot deep-- and we busted our tails off getting these people to the polls and everything else and brainwash them. I found out I was doing it because I believed in the cause; I found out everybody else was doing it because they were getting paid for it! That's some of the crap you have to put up with in politics.

INTERVIEWER: (Laughter) Yeah, right.

MEYERS: But I've got a very, very bad taste about politics for other reasons that I don't want to go into. I don't like any of them, and I don't trust any of them either. They're all the same. Very, very few of them are out for the best interest of their constituents.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I think there's a general feeling growing out of Watergate and so forth that this is true.

MEYERS: The tragedy of it is, it's too late! What the hell, we told them the guy was a crook before. Nobody would believe us, you know.

Of course, McGovern was so far ahead of his time, you know, as far as what the people were looking for. No one would believe him either! Of course

a lot of the people that were behind him didn't make a good show.

But if anything is learned out of Watergate, I don't know what the hell it's gonna be because it will soon be forgotten.

INTERVIEWER: (chuckle I hope you're wrong.

MEYERS: Well, I would hope so too, but it's gonna be forgotten. Did you read All the President's Men?

INTERVIEWER: Yes. I did. I did. Well, we haven't said too much about the efforts of the International to obtain uniformity of language and so forth, which for some locals was a very big issue. I detect some feeling on your part that you've done your own thing here in Pittsburgh?

MEYERS: No, we were down-the-liners. Language used to be a damn important thing to us! But the language we had, of course, did not necessarily fall right in with the mergers. So you had to change the language or they had to negate the language to get the merger through and what have you. We had all the language necessary, all the language Internationally approved, and so on and so forth. Yet, there's been no thrust on language whatsoever.

INTERVIEWER: In other words, you haven't departed in terms of language at all?

MEYERS: No, I never did because I was a strong believer in language. But what I have not done either, though, is I haven't concentrated on making too many waves about language anymore. I used to be able to sit down and bust my head open for months and months and months on language and get no results on economics. So I've handled the situation where I use what I have or have what I need and leave it go. Now, as an example, I had an opportunity of breaking through to them the cost-of-living language last year. It was better than we have on the International level. But they asked me not to do it for the sake of uniformity. So I didn't do it. Then I find out we don't have uniformity.

INTERVIEWER: (laughter)

MEYERS: And my backdoor neighbors, they're coming and stealing all the gosh-darn work out of the city of Pittsburgh.

I've got another breakthrough right now in language that I've got. I've got a direct percentage deal. I'm going to talk to them about it when I see them in Washington next year. Whether I'll do it or not, I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: A direct percentage deal on what?

MEYERS: Well, right now we have X number of cents for every point rise. I could put that into every point or half a point X number of percent.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I see, rather than pennies.

MEYERS: Which would be rather than pennies. The break-even point, that would be eight dollars, of course, to be the same as I had. . . I've got so many people over and above eight dollars, it's pathetic! So that would be benefiting them. But I may not deviate from the norm, see?

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

MEYERS: So they know me this way. They don't bother me. They know I'll do the job that has to be done.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I hear some people saying that one of the things that Robinson was very strong on was language and that he traveled around the country preaching that uniformity of language was very important. And some people feel that they over-emphasize language and that now it's necessary to go back to more emphasis on economics.

MEYERS: You have the economics with the language. In fact your language gave me more power for economics. What they're doing now. . .those people that have negated a lot of the language have weak organizations now, weak locals, and they're being eroded out. Right now in the city of Pittsburgh they're having trouble with the Printing Pressmen in the newspaper field

in the presses themselves--over language and over control of manning. This is all over man, you know. It's over language. You have to have strong language, but the emphasis hasn't been on it. The tragedy being is that you bring in organizations, you know, the Photoengravers, it took us time to get them in line, too. Of course they were good trade unionists, the people themselves. But they had so many men that were bosses of it, their owners. That's one of the problems they have. Then you bring in an organization like the Bookbinders that could care less and doesn't even know what language is all about. You know, who's going to tell them what to do, now you've got fifty percent of your membership. ~~The International,~~ I'm finding out now that we didn't even know what the hell we were getting into when we went into that merger. Somehow they're weak, very, very weak.

INTERVIEWER: Right. There's no question about that. That leads me to ask a question that I never thought to ask anybody before. Lithographers and Photoengravers have foremen as members. Did the Bookbinders have that structure too? Did they have member foremen or foreladies?

MEYERS: Yeah, they have foreladies and foremen that are members, too. Yeah, they were all members of the union. But you didn't have too many bookbinder owners running a printing plant. They may have had bookbinder owners running a trade house--just bindery work, you know. Yeah, all the foremen are usually members of the organization.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. But you're talking about card-carrying owners?

MEYERS: I'm talking about card-carrying owners. We used to have them too. In fact, we still do have some, but not to the degree the Engravers have.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. And the Bookbinders did not have that?

MEYERS: I wouldn't know. I couldn't say that.

INTERVIEWER: I gather that the Bookbinders were also much more involved in these conglomerate situations.

MEYERS: Oh, very much so. Yes, yes.

INTERVIEWER: It's kind of typical of . . . .

MEYERS: Particularly your trade houses are all owned by somebody, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

MEYERS: Now if they're in an in-plant like Johnson Herbicks and what have you, they're all run under a standard contract usually. But there again now, you talk about language, they farm so much of that work out-- the trade binders. . . .You know, that's what language is all about, as to whether you can or whether you can't do certain things.

And, of course, with the change in the laws, you know, in 1947, 1959, it's hurt us bad as to the strength of what our language can do.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. How so, Ted?

MEYERS: Well, you've got your secondary boycott. This is a hard enough ball to start with, and you've got your certain. . . .employers have a lot more rights now than they ever had, and they never even had to test them. If they ever want to test the laws, boy, they'd run rampant. They'd run rampant on us.

INTERVIEWER: Speaking of boycotts, how have your relationships been with the Teamsters? They have honored whatever picket lines you've had and so forth?

MEYERS: We've got very, very good relationships with the Teamsters, we always had. I think I mentioned to you once before, some of the Teamster members, I grew up on the playgrounds with them. not members, officers, rather. Of course, now, they're a lot older than I am; they're all bowing out. But there're still a couple of them around, like Pat Fagan's son. He's a Teamster president. I didn't grow up with him, but I came from the same local area. He's head of the Joint Council. I meet with him at various times with other people at different meetings. They know who we are.

INTERVIEWER: Is he still in the Legislature?

MEYERS: No, he's city Councilman.

INTERVIEWER: Oh.

MEHERS: No, he resigned that. They know who we are. You know, you talk to the Teamsters. . . . They run 636--the Warehousemen--and so on and so forth. They're all affiliates. And they remember the times when they had a one-man strike and we supported them and they won their cause.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Well, now, some people have talked to me about the International and Eddie Donahue being very strong on supporting the United Farm Workers, and I'm sure philosophically you are too. But some people in your union have expressed a certain amount of worry that you're very dependent upon Teamster support and if they get too mad at you about the Farm Workers you might be in a considerable amount of trouble.

MEYERS: Well, I think if that's the problem then I never even gave it a thought, to be honest with you, because I don't have that same problem. . . . [If that's the case] then our International had better take a new look.

You know, in all due respect to the desire and need of the Farm Workers and the moral issues involved, they better keep their damn nose out of stuff that's gonna bother other people. A very important thing is not to control and concern themselves about the morality of other things. Their job is to take care of our people first, and if they get themselves stuck there, they better take another look because they could be hurting our organization. I never gave it a thought to be honest with you. I never looked at it that way. My only concern with the Farm Workers. . . . I was up in Indiana, Pa. not too long ago and lost another election up there. That's two out of the last three, I think. One of the fellows in there was a Farm Worker. He came from the West Coast. And he knew the cause, you know, He knew it and knew the necessity of it.

He was running a press there for the Farm Workers for all their propaganda. Now a lot of our guys get up tight when they see all this stuff. You know, they've got to get literature out and they're poor, but. . . .

You know, we're so far away from it here that all we can do is basically support their boycotting.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Right. Well, is there anything that we should talk about that we haven't talked about? (chuckle)

MEYERS: Well, I don't know what it could be. I'll probably think about some stuff later.

INTERVIEWER: Right.