INTRODUCTION

Leon Wickersham began his career in lithography working for the Dupont Company in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware. In 1948 he moved to his wife's hometown of Racine, Wisconsin, to work for Western Publishing Company as a stripper in the lithography department. His first experience in the Amalgamated Lithographers of America was as a representative of the strippers on the local union executive board.

From the position of strippers' representative Wickersham was elected president of his local and found himself immediately on strike against Western in 1952, the first strike against that company in fifty years. He describes how this strike in Racine and the concurrent one against Western in Poughkeepsie, New York, became an issue that was used politically against International President John Blackburn, a situation which led to Wickersham's appointment as International representative in 1956 servicing the Central Region under the supervision of Vice President Oliver Mertz.

Wickersham then discusses union politics as they developed in the late fifties, gives his impression of George Canary's presidency, and tells how he was appointed as President Ken Brown's personal assistant in 1959, which post he still holds today. His responsibilities have included heading the Research Department and supervising negotiations. Wickersham analyses his position as a non-elected officer and his relationship with other officers in the organization. He discusses the problem of regional vice presidents and how the union was reorganized on a national basis. He describes the union's major campaign over the last fourteen years to eliminate job classifications across the country and effect coordinated bargaining, and he tells how mergers with the Photoengravers and the Bookbinders have helped that coordinated bargaining effort.

Wickersham relates how General Counsel Ben Robinson had to step down in 1962 because he would not terminate his ties as counsel to Local One, and he discusses the whole question of the relationship of the general counsel to the union.

Leon Wickersham was a member of the committee to work out merger plans

with the Photoengravers Union. He explains how compatibility in the areas of skill and of union philosophy made merger between the Photoengravers and the Lithographers in 1964 a workable arrangement. He relates how opposition to the merger led the New York Local One to leave the organization. Wickersham also explains why merger efforts with other unions, such as the International Stereotypers and Electrotypers Union, the International Typographical Union, and the Printing Pressmen, were not as successful. He describes some of the problems that had to be confronted in the merger with the Photoengravers and evaluates its results.

The merger with the Bookbinders Union created some new problems such as sex discrimination and the emergence of the GAIU as an industrial union. Wickersham reflects on these and more generally on the future of his industry and his union.

Oral History Interview

with

LEON WICKERSHAM

December 10, 11, 1975

By Alice M. Hoffman

WICKERSHAM: I was born December 28, 1922, in Wilmington, Delaware.

INTERVIEWER: I'm a little surprised to hear that you were born in Wilmington, Delaware because I. . . . Is that what you said?

WICKERSHAM: Yeah. Wilmington, Delaware. As a matter of fact, my family comes from that area of the country, oh, as far back as the 1930's or '40's, I would say. . . Quaker background. . . in the West Chester area, you know?

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: My father was born and raised in Wilmington and worked there all of his life in the newspapers. As a matter of fact, he was the sports editor for the daily newspaper when he was sixteen and worked in the newspapers and the radio stations through the Depression. Then he went to work with Brown & Bigelow, which is strange because now, you know, we have contracts with Brown & Bigelow.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: He worked with them for about five years until he died, which was in 1938. I think I was about fourteen then.

So, as I said, I really don't know what his political inclinations were because I was really too young to even understand what was going on myself at that time.

I worked for Dupont after I got out of the service; I was in the Navy. I got married when I was in the Navy to a girl from Racine, Wisconsin.

I worked for Dupont as almost everybody does who lives in Wilmington in some point in their life. If there is some kind of a tie as to how you get involved in union work, maybe that would be it because you quickly get the feeling when you work for Dupont that you do what they want you to do, even politically. You know, you wear Republican buttons and you swear allegiance to the Republican Party, at least you did in those years!

I can remember when Willkie [Wendell Lewis] was running for president, and he spoke in the city. They closed the whole main office of the Dupont Company down which, of course, was great for us because in those years, if you got an hour off, you took it. But when the Democratic candidates would come to town, they would do the back-of-the-train speeches, you know.

INTERVIEWER: What did you do for Dupont?

WICKERSHAM: I worked in lithographing work from the very first day I went to work, right after high school, the day after I graduated from high school. I did lithographic work all the time I was with them, which was over a period of about eight years, but actually about five years of work when you take the war years out.

Then I quickly realized that I wasn't going to get anywhere. I didn't want to go into engineering. I worked in the engineering department. Finally I was convinced I wasn't going to get anywhere. I liked what I was doing in the trade.

Coincidently, my wife came from Racine, Wisconsin, where Western Publishing Company was located, and during vacation periods we'd go out there. Her next door neighbor was a foreman at the plant, so I did some plant tours. And over a period of about three years that we lived in Wilmington after the war, why, I kept getting more interested and more interested.

Finally I just quit Dupont, just, you know, on the spur of the moment. I figured, if I'm ever going to do it, I'd better do it. And that was in about 1948. I went to work in the shipping room because that's all I could get. There were no openings in the litho department. That was quite an experience, too.

INTERVIEWER: The shipping room where?

WICKERSHAM: At Western Publishing Company.

INTERVIEWER: In Racine, Wisconsin?

WICKERSHAM: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: I worked there for about a year and a half--really about the only heavy work I've ever done in my life--unloading boxcars and things like that, which was good training. You know, even today I know what it's like to work damned hard: you unload boxcars in zero weather, which you had to do occasionally; they weren't all inside.

And for some strange reason I think I used to get the more difficult jobs because I was a complainer even then.

INTERVIEWER: (Chuckle)

WICKERSHAM: If I didn't like what was going on, I would complain. If there were five boxcars inside and one outside, I would invariably end up in the one outside, which was okay. I enjoyed it. It was different, and I enjoyed it. I probably would still be there today if I hadn't complained there, too, and finally quit that job. And that was like six weeks after I'd just bought a house.

INTERVIEWER: What did you complain about?

WICKERSHAM: Oh, I don't know. I think it was the supervision. I just didn't hit it off with the boss, who, incidentally, was my wife's next door neighbor, so there was a family tie there. I just would argue with him, and he didn't like to be argued with.

So one day we had an argument at a very, very, high decibel level, and everybody in the shipping room was looking over skids, you know, at this argument going on. Finally I quit. I said. . . I think as I recall. . . "If that's the way you feel, I should get the hell out of here!" He said, "I think that's a great idea!" And then quickly, you know, I started thinking what my wife was going to say when I went home and said, "We just bought a house, but I'm unemployed."

So he said, "Well, I'll get you an interview with the personnel department because," he said, "I promised you I'd do everything I could to get you in the litho department." I said, "Nah, don't worry about it, I'll quit!" "No," he says,

"you're going to get an interview." So, to make a long story short, within a half an hour I was in the litho department. Strangely enough, they were looking for somebody with my skills for about a year. The next week I was working in the litho department.

INTERVIEWER: Now, what specifically were you doing in the litho department?

WICKERSHAM: I was a stripper.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: When I worked for Dupont, I did a variety of things--cameraman, stripping, platemaking. But they put me in the stripping department as an apprentice stripper. That was about 1950. In fact, I just checked my membership; it was twenty-four years this month that I became a member of the Lithographer's Union. Let's see now. . . . I'm trying to connect the dates. . . That was 1950, and by 1952 I had just become a journeyman because they gave me credit. I think I had to serve eighteen months because of my experience with Dupont. So early 1950 I became a journeyman.

How I got involved in the union was that there were only three strippers, and on the executive board the strippers were supposed to have representation. They had a platemaker representing them, and that sort of bothered me. We had two journeymen, and they weren't interested. They were a little older, and they weren't interested. I went to them, and I said, "Well, will you support me on the executive board because I don't see why platemakers should represent strippers on the board." So that quickly happened, and I got on the executive board. That was the Racine local.

Right about that time we had an upheaval in the local. We went through about two local presidents that weren't servicing us. They had at least two elections quickly. One [president] was practically thrown out, and the other one couldn't stand the gaff and resigned. And they approached me about being president. I really wasn't even eligible at that time because you still had, I think, the five-year rule. But I ran for president and won by--I often think about that--about nine votes. There was a recount, you know; it was that close.

I remember years later when I went to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the local with Ken Brown, my opponent was there. The poor guy is dead now, but he was really sloshed and was leaning all over Ken. I said, "Ken, there but for nine votes might be your assistant."

INTERVIEWER: (Laughter)

WICKERSHAM: That was the only time I'd ever seen the guy because he left the company shortly after. I've run into him a couple of times, but. . .

INTERVIEWER: How big was the local, and what were some of these problems?

WICKERSHAM: Well, there were about two hundred members at that time. And really the problems were lack of representation. You know, they wouldn't process grievances. They would negotiate provisions without contacting the members, and it just built up and grew until a period of time that everybody just sort of rebelled.

The one thing that bothered me when I got elected, the guy I ran against was what we would all refer to as an agitator. He was a four-color pressman, a good one. But nothing was right, and the company was really supporting me. That sort of bugged me. All the company officials came up quickly and congratulated me on being elected president. I guess probably that was good because that made me more determined to do a good job.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. To show that you weren't a company man.

WICKERSHAM: Yeah, yeah. It was sort of a cross I had to bear because at the first union meeting the whole pressroom came. It was my first experience at parliamentary procedure, other than quickly boning up on Robert's Rules of Order and buying outlines and everything to. . . . I'd never run a meeting before. So at the first meeting the entire pressroom was there. They started attacking. I took it for awhile, and then I attacked back. I think they were complaining about my parliamentary procedure: "It wasn't really very good." and so on. As I recall, one of the things that I mentioned was, "I'm here to run the union, and you're going to have to bear with me for awhile if you want me to run it according to all the rules." I really got the support of the pressroom very quickly. It was an uphill battle because I hadn't even been in that part of the trade long. When I came to work for Western, I'd never even seen a press because we didn't have them at Dupont. And all of a sudden, you know, I'm a president of a local representing pressmen who run web presses and four-color presses. We had the biggest press equipment in the country at that time, so, you know, I was awed just walking through the pressroom as the leader of these people.

INTERVIEWER: (Chuckle) I imagine so.

WICKERSHAM: So it was quite an experience.

INTERVIEWER: How did you go about gaining the knowledge that would be required for bargaining and so forth?

WICKERSHAM: Well, every meeting that I went to I would take a pressman representative and a feeder representative with me, and besides that, I spent a lot of outside time with both of them, you know, so that I could sort of pick their brains as to what the problems were.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: I could handle the preparatory department without too much help, but I spent a lot of time with the pressmen representatives and the feeder representatives; and that was very helpful.

When I'd go to conferences--we had regional conferences in those days--I'd always take them with me. In those days our local was one of the few that had enough money to be able to afford that. I could take them to New York or I could take them to the regional conferences, and our local could stand the expense because we still probably pay the highest dues in the country. We pay two percent. It's never been changed. We're one of the only locals in the union that has never changed their dues structure in thirty-five years.

INTERVIEWER: So right away you must have begun to look beyond Racine, Wisconsin, to see what was. . . .

WICKERSHAM: Well, no, it was the furthest thing from my mind, really, although I was interested in the union. I was immediately thrust into negotiations. They were tough, Western negotiations. They're still tough. We've got a strike against them now in Mount Morris, and they've managed to just break our union down, I mean, break the will of the union. Our contracts are not as good as they used to be. All of a sudden I was president of a local that was on strike. It was the first strike that Western had had in fifty years of existence. Western was like Kohler and the old coal mines, you know. Western was the city. They had front-page articles about the union. They had a columnist that wrote it, you know, a

frontpage column, a local color column. He [the columnist] referred to: "Who could doubt that this is a communist threat" and just attacked us terribly because Western did everything right. All during the Depression they didn't have layoffs; they kept people on. They supported the Boy Scouts. They supported the Y.M.C.A. and everything else--Western and Johnson's Wax. So when you strike a company like that, you've got to be bad. I appeared before everybody in the city that I could appear before.

INTERVIEWER: Now this strike was in what year?

WICKERSHAM: 1952. . . . (hesitating)

INTERVIEWER: 1952?

WICKERSHAM: Yeah. Let's see. . . 1953, I guess, in the early part of '53. I don't recall the date, but in winter. It was 26° below zero--I recall that--on the picket line, so I know it was in winter.

INTERVIEWER: (Chuckle)

WICKERSHAM: It lasted about three weeks, and at the same time there was one in Poughkeepsie.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, yes.

WICKERSHAM: You probably heard about that.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: When Fred Munson wrote his book about our union and about the history of bargaining in our union, I recall there was one chapter that said, "The Poughkeepsie Strike, How Not To Do It". It was probably the most appropriately titled chapter in his book because everything was wrong. They weren't feeding information to us in Racine. They told us the plant was completely shut down. There were 170 lithographers and 400 bookbinders. The bookbinders never did go on strike; they were all in our local at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Now, you're talking about Racine or Poughkeepsie?

WICKERSHAM: Poughkeepsie.

INTERVIEWER: In Poughkeepsie the bookbinders did not go on strike?

WICKERSHAM: Yeah. But in Poughkeepsie the bookbinders were in the litho local. And of course we got reports from our people in Poughkeepsie, 100 percent strike. It wasn't. The company knew it in Racine, but we didn't know it.

That was one of the things, I think, that really led to the Lithographers Union moving away from the regional system where each vice president had his little domain and "don't come across my line", you know. That's exactly what it was.

INTERVIEWER: Who was the regional vice president at that time?

WICKERSHAM: Ed Stone was the regional vice president on the Atlantic Region. Ollie Mertz was the regional vice president in the Central Region, and Marty Grayson was the regional vice president in the Mountain Region. We had Western plants in each of these three regions so you couldn't even get the vice presidents to talk to each other. So how could you coordinate negotiations? I think that probably was one of the major things that led to us changing to a national system.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: In any event, we got our strike settled pretty quickly, I think two or three weeks probably. Twenty-one days, I guess it was.

Poughkeepsie went on and on and on and on. There's still bad feeling. When I go to Poughkeepsie now, they still remember me as the person who settled the strike in Racine and turned my back on Poughkeepsie. At that time I didn't think I did. In fact, I checked with the International president. It came up, I think, at the Boston convention that we checked with the International president. He said, "Settle it," so we settled it. And there's still bad feelings after twenty years. It's unbelievable. There's still bad feeling.

Poughkeepsie was one of the few locals that voted against the merger with the Bookbinders because of the bad feeling there still between the Lithographers and the Bookbinders.

INTERVIEWER: And the Bookbinders.

WICKERSHAM: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Right. So when you looked at this situation, your thinking, I gather from what you say, was primarily focused on Racine, and you didn't have enough experience really in the union to be concerned about these kinds of political problems with respect to the vice presidents. Or did you learn through the strike?

WICKERSHAM: Oh, yes, I learned through the strike about the political problems because I can recall I took a trip to Buffalo to meet with the president of the Poughkeepsie local and Ed Stone. And Ollie Mertz wouldn't go, and he wouldn't let Gus Petrakis go, who was an International rep at that time. So here I am, a fledgling local president with a strike, and I was on my way to Buffalo to meet with these people by myself. So I knew what the political problem was. I learned it the hard way that they couldn't talk to each other.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

WICKERSHAM: But aside from that we had a very, very tight strike in Racine. Some of our older members were leaders in keeping track of the strike. We had a highly organized strike where we visited each picket line several times in each period of time. We could see that it was deteriorating.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: Of course, the company was feeding the true information about Poughkeepsie to our members on the picket line, and finally we began to understand that we weren't getting the straight story. So that really led us to move for a settlement. I don't recall the terms, but I do recall that it was a fairly decent settlement at that time. Again, the Poughkeepsie strike went on for many, many months after that. We haven't recovered strength in that city yet, just haven't.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Did you feel critical of President Blackburn for failing to exercise leadership there?

WICKERSHAM: I held International presidents in great awe at that time because I really didn't know that much about the International structure. You know, very naively speaking, I guess, I felt that they were, you know, almost like Godly powers because my only association with the union was with what I read in the paper. And when I called him, [Blackburn] I felt, "Gee, here's the International president telling me. Well, what else can I do?" You know, I didn't realize until I got to know him that he was just another person, probably not one of the most brilliant persons, and that was quite a shock when that finally came to me.

I can recall when I went to the Boston Convention which was the end of that year 1953--August or September, I believe, of 1953--and on the plane going into Boston I read in the officers' reports that Blackburn was actually accusing Racine of selling Poughkeepsie out. You can imagine what a good frame of mind I was in when I got to Boston because I hadn't heard that before. But now I saw that the president, in his report for that convention, was accusing Racine of selling Poughkeepsie out.

So I appeared before the Officers' Reports Committee and--as a matter of fact, Gus Petrakis went with me to that meeting even though he was an employee, an International rep--lodged a formal protest against the president, which, I guess, was quite unusual. It created quite a stir because at the same time there was a political battle going on to oust Blackburn.

I really haven't figured out the motivations, but I became very, very important all of a sudden because I was attacking. . .

INTERVIEWER: Now, this was in 1955, right?

WICKERSHAM: No, '53. Oh, I'm sorry, '55. I said '53.

INTERVIEWER: Right. That was your first convention, in '55?

WICKERSHAM: No. I'm sorry, I'm ahead of myself. My first convention was the Toronto Convention in '53.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

WICKERSHAM: Immediately after the strike I did go to Toronto, but the smoke hadn't cleared in Toronto. And by the time the Poughkeepsie smoke had cleared we wereup to the Boston Convention. That's how long it went on.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, okay.

WICKERSHAM: I got ahead of myself there. So it was at the Boston Convention that the Poughkeepsie strike became an issue that they were using--and I guess properly so--politically against Blackburn because it was handled terribly. The way he handled Racine, the way he handled Poughkeepsie, was just handled terribly, so it became a big political football.

Then, of course, when I came in and filed formal charges, there were meetings with me and Ollie Mertz and Pat Slater, who was then the vice president from the Pacific Region, and they asked me not to raise a question on the floor. Then they met with Blackburn and got him to apologize from the plat- from for his remark, that that wasn't intended. And in the interest of not stirring it up anymore I think I said then that I accepted the president's remarks.

But it was at that convention then, because of all this activity, that I was asked if I would come to work for the union. Strangely enough, I went back to. . . .

INTERVIEWER: Now, you were asked to become an International rep.

WICKERSHAM: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: By whom?

WICKERSHAM: By Ollie Mertz. And Ben Robinson, also, who was the attorney.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: They met with me and asked if I would come to work. At that time that was a pretty select group because I think there were only about eight all across the country.

I went home that weekend. Nothing exciting had happened to me for years, you know, and Monday morning they called me downstairs and asked me if I'd like to be a foreman.

INTERVIEWER: (Laughter)

WICKERSHAM: So there I was, sitting, you know, with two interesting offers. I talked to Canary who had been nominated at that convention to be president and subsequently became president, and George was a kind of a guy, . . . He was a great friend of mine, but he never did make any major, drastic decisions, very very cautious. We used to say that if you come to George with a good idea, he'd say, "Let me think about it for six months and then I'll talk to you in a year; and if it still looks like a good idea, we'll do it six months later. That's an overexaggeration, but I think that pretty much portrays the way George thought. Very, very cautious. He said, "Why don't you take a crack at the foreman's job because you're not going to go on with the union until at least April." This was like in October.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: So I took it. I became a key man. That was probably the worst six months of my life because the guys turned against me. I had to give up my president's job. I knew what was happening, but nobody else did. You know, I knew that the International was considering my name.

In those days you had to send the name around to all the locals in the region. And if a local said, "No, I don't like Wickersham" or if enough locals said that, that would slow down the appointment process. So I knew that it would take until April for my appointment to be approved. In that period of time it was a little difficult because I had to take a lot of guff from the guys, in spite of the fact that in my department every single person in the department got a five-dollar-a-week wage increase in that six-month period.

INTERVIEWER: They got what a week?

WICKERSHAM: A five-dollar-a-week wage increase.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, a five dollar a week.

WICKERSHAM: You know, a premium wage increase.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm, hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: It really threw my efforts. Then they said, "Look, we've got to adjust this man's rate, and we've got to adjust that man's rate."

In addition to that, I worked nights for that six months, which was really not the greatest thing in the world. In any event, I finally came on in April of 1956 as a rep and working under Ollie Mertz.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I notice at that '55 convention in Boston your name shows up as being involved in the dues structure?

WICKERSHAM: Yeah, I was on the finance committee, I believe.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

WICKERSHAM: Yeah, one of the things at that time was the Racine dues structure, I believe, if my memory serves me correctly.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

WICKERSHAM: The Racine dues structure was something that everybody had an eye on because even in those days it was two percent of your total pay. And it's proven! The theory was that you don't have to go to your members and ask for a dues increase. That two percent was based on 1938 wages. It's still there. I think I'm paying now about eleven dollars a week dues, and other people are the same, and they never changed it. It's allowed that local to function as a prosperous local.

INTERVIEWER: So the dues increases come from negotiation rather than wages?

WICKERSHAM: Yeah. Every time you negotiate a new wage increase or every time a member works overtime. The

Photoengravers, you know, used to have an overtime penalty--if you worked overtime, you paid X cents an hour. Well, if you work overtime in that Racine local, the union benefits. The disadvantage, of course, if you have short-time, and they've had some of that, then the local suffers.

INTERVIEWER: Right, then the local suffers.

WICKERSHAM: Yeah, because there's no minimum.

INTERVIEWER: Right. All right. Well, you started servicing locals then in 1956 and were working, I would imagine, fairly closely with George Canary?

WICKERSHAM: Well, that was still at the time when the vice president was in charge of a region, and it was still Ollie Mertz; his office was in Cleveland.

But I was close to George Canary because we were friends when he was president of the Chicago local and I was president of the Racine local and naturally looking around to people like the Chicago officers to help me because every time I would get in a jam I would call Chicago and ask how to get out of the jam.

INTERVIEWER: (Chuckle) Right.

WICKERSHAM: And they were very helpful. I still have a good relationship with the Chicago local officers.

But I serviced the Central Region, which is still basically the same today, from Wisconsin south over into Ohio and Michigan. Generally, I was assigned to the Wisconsin area because there was a move to try to organize, and I guess my only claim to fame as an organizer was the Banta Company in Menasha, Wisconsin, where we had about 140 members at that time. I organized that shop. I guess they are close to 400 now, with a good contract and good conditions. But that's about the only shop I really ever organized because I was used in almost every part of the area.

Another problem of the regional system was the vice president would have certain people that he would like to do things, and I knew as well as. . . . Luckily I was working with

good reps because they understood it. There was Gus Petrakis and Bill Taylor and John Pesar and Rudie Harper, who's no longer. . . .

(End of Tape I, side I)

INTERVIEWER: (Starting in midsentence). . . . sometimes got assigned even to go into Cincinnati?

WICKERSHAM: Yeah. I really went into almost every part of the region. . . Cincinnati, which was fairly far south; I was in Louisville. Mertz would give me what we would consider today to be the choice assignments. . . or the difficult assignments, one or the other. Difficult negotiations, I would get. I was one of the newer people on his staff. At that time Harvey Lovin came on the staff, and he's still with us.

Then I got involved in politics--I mean union politics. And I had ambitions, and the Chicago local was fostering these ambitions; they were egging me on. It was made pretty clear to me that I could become an International officer if I wanted to be. There was one small problem--I didn't have enough service to be an International officer. You needed ten years at that time, and I had nine years or thereabouts.

So I was deeply involved in the Canary episodes. I recall the Cleveland conference where Canary resigned, and there was a very, very volatile conference, I was the secretary of the Central Region caucus, and Mertz was the chairman. I spoke my piece and was very, very critical of Mertz and very, very critical of some of the local presidents who were fighting Canary because at that time I felt Canary was a good person.

INTERVIEWER: Now, how did you see this whole issue? You saw it through George Canary's eyes, I guess?

WICKERSHAM: Yeah. That's an interesting point. I saw it through George Canary's eyes, George Gundersen's eyes, and Ollie Mertz's [eyes], who was trying in his way to support Chicago but really wasn't doing it. Ollie was sort of keeping his head down and staying away from the flack. But in his private conversations with me and the other reps in the Central Region he was supporting Chicago. I was seeing everything, right, through Canary's eyes. I felt he was doing a better job, but I was getting sort of a jaundiced opinion of the kind of a job he was doing.

For example, it was some years later before I realized that at the Chicago convention, when he was president, he came in with absolutely no programs, This I've learned since. You know, he just came to a convention and said, "Well, here's a convention. It's the members' forum. The locals will come in with resolutions and so on." Well, obviously, that's great, but you can't run a union that way. You have to have some idea of what you want.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm, hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: So what really happened then. . . I thought the International Council were real villains, including Ken Brown (you know, he was part of that council), including Eddie Donahue, including a lot of the people who are my closest friends and associates today.

I guess, when we went to the Portland convention, that gets us through Chicago, which was sort of a. . . .

INTERVIEWER: Well, I don't think we should go too fast through this Cleveland convention.

WICKERSHAM: Okay. I'm really trying to establish in my own mind. . . I know Canary resigned at the Cleveland convention, but then he came back again.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. He was persuaded to take his resignation back.

WICKERSHAM: Yeah. And that was, I think, in Apple Valley or something, wasn't it?

INTERVIEWER: Right. Exactly.

WICKERSHAM: Then he came back, and it looked like everything was going along smoothly, but then he left again. You can possibly help me about the timing of that. I'm not really sure what the timing was of when Canary finally left.

INTERVIEWER: Well, in '58 Patrick Slater became president "pro tem" as it were.

WICKERSHAM: Right. And then Ken Brown became his assistant.

INTERVIEWER: His assistant. Right.

WICKERSHAM: And the thinking there, as I was aware of even then, was that Ken was being groomed to be president but that he didn't have enough International exposure as a Canadian president to move right in and be president. So in order to get everything shaken down he became the assistant and really started running the union as of that date (1958) or whenever he came on as Slater's assistant.

INTERVIEWER: Well, now, in 1957/'58, did you--looking at things through George Canary's eyes--did you see Ed Swayduck and Ben Robinson as the villains in the piece? How did you look at Local One at that point?

WICKERSHAM: Strangely enough, at that time I had great regard for Robinson and great regard for Swayduck. I've often thought about how you could do that. I guess what I was really seeing was someone who I had great regard and respect for not being able to handle what he was doing, which was Canary. Even after. . . Well, I don't want to get that far ahead; I'll touch that later.

But I always had a close relationship with Swayduck. Even during our fight with Swayduck, I had a close relationship with him. I learned a lot from Swayduck, and I learned a lot from Robinson. Obviously, the more active I got the more knowledgeable I got about what was actually going on.

That period from Cleveland to Portland went very, very quickly for me. I guess I sort of moved out of the political arena then except, as we got closer to the Portland convention, which was. . . .

INTERVIEWER: In 1959.

WICKERSHAM: . . . 1959. As we got closer to that time, all the forces were beginning to get into line. I can remember a meeting I had in George Canary's home in Chicago. Gundersen was there and Spohnholtz was there and Gus Petrakis was there. Yeah, let's see, Ollie Mertz was still a vice president then. Right. It was a political meeting. They wanted Gus to run for vice president because Mertz was going to retire. They said they would support me as secretary-treasurer because Stone was identified as a New York boy; he didn't support Canary. Canary, 'til the day he died, would not speak to Stone!

It was really sad. I'd been in Stone's company and met George Canary, and George would say, "Hi Wick. How are you?" and completely ignore Stone, so that never subsided. So obviously I was the candidate to dump Stone, and that would satisfy Chicago because they knew I got along with Swayduck all right. It was sort of a "quid pro quo". You know, they'd support Brown, and New York would support me. Swayduck hated Stone worse than Canary did, so it was a great scheme. I didn't know all the gory details of the scheme, and frankly, my youthful ambition really took over for my brain power. Probably the thing that saved me, and maybe was one of the greatest things that ever happened to the organization, was that I still didn't have enough time to be an officer. I still didn't have my ten years in.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: So the compromise then was that I would be made Ken's assistant. Swayduck used to always rub it into Ken saying, "Yeah, we had to jam Wickersham down your throat." Well, it wasn't exactly true because. . . . although Ken and I hadn't had. . . I say it wasn't exactly true. There was no question that Swayduck said that we're going to support Wickersham, and so did Chicago.

But Ken and I knew each other and we'd been to a variety of meetings and spent some time together but probably couldn't be considered close friends, even in those days.

We came out of the Portland convention, and I guess about November or right afterwards Ken called me and asked me if I was interested, and I said, yes, I was. That brings us up to about November of '59. . .

INTERVIEWER: Right. Now, before we get that far there's one question I would like to ask you. Of course, one of the big issues was where the International headquarters was going to be. Are they going to be in New York or are they going to be in Chicago? And one of the hypotheses which I have developed is that this revolution that Spohnholtz cooked up, or at least some people say that he cooked up, to put to the membership as a referendum about the headquarters in New York being changed, it never seems to have gone anywhere. And I'm wondering why not. In other words, were you a party to meetings in which. . . . I mean, one would suppose in most unions there would be a considerable amount of activity on the part of the staff reps from a particular area to lobby for that resolution. Was that happening?

WICKERSHAM: Oh, yeah. But there you get around to the regional set up again.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: You know, we were getting Mertz's instructions, so obviously where ever we went we were saying the office should be in Chicago: "It makes sense; it's the central part of the country; it's the growing area of the industry."

But I would imagine the same kind of meetings were going on on the East Coast where the reps were saying, "What do we want to take it out of New York for?"

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: Yeah, we were all involved in that. I don't know what the West Coast's position was--probably for New York because there was a tremendous New York influence, particularly in Los Angeles. So, yes, we got involved, but, you know, we were blowing in the wind in those days. Chicago wasn't a political animal in those days; they thought they were. I'm not sure they are now, but more so today probably.

But Swayduck was [involved]. He knew how to line up his votes, and he did it. I think that that's one of the things that put the cap on Canary's relationship with Stone. Canary was the last one to know that we'd bought a building!

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: It was done. A week or so later there was a front page. . . . We still kid Donald Stone about the fact that he was such a tremendous editor that he could get the four-color picture of the building on the front page of the Lithographers Journal before the ink was dry on the contract. I don't think Canary actually knew what was happening until he saw the picture on the magazine! That might be an exaggeration, but it all happened so quickly.

That did go to a referendum, if my memory serves me correctly. There was an initiative and it went to a referendum and it was defeated.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. The reason it was defeated, you feel, was simply because Chicago didn't have the votes, not because George Canary was not putting it out to what I might describe as "his people" to work harder for it.

WICKERSHAM: No, I think that there were a lot of people working for it, but there again, I wasn't involved at that time in what was going on in other parts of the country. But I know that I went to a lot of meetings, and I'm sure all their reps that worked under Mertz were going to a lot of meetings, suggesting that they vote. It would be interesting to go back and look at that to see what the results were on a regional basis. I think that would probably really point out what had happened because I think you'd probably find that it was a regional vote.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Okay. Then coming up to the Portland convention in 1959, you went to that convention with a plan that. . . Did you know at that convention that Ken Brown was going to ask you to be his assistant?

WICKERSHAM: I was never told, even at that convention,by Ken. Ken doesn't telegraph things that far in advance. I was never told by Ken that "yes, he was going to hire me." I was told by the Chicago people that they were supporting me.

As a matter of fact, when I went into that convention, mind you, I was still a candidate against Stone when we went into that Portland convention. I had to tell my supporters because I knew that I couldn't run, but they didn't. I had to tell them, "No, I can't do that." So I knew that I was going to be appointed assistant to the president. I mean, that was the recommendation. I got it from Swayduck, and I got it from Spohnholtz: "Don't worry. There's a place for you. We want you in that International office.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: And obviously they had to give me some advance word because it meant moving, you know, and disrupting my family in Racine, and so on, so they had to get to me. But Ken never mentioned it. Ken called me in Racine after the convention and asked me if I'd like to be his assistant. It all happened very quickly. I think by November I was in New York.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm, hm-hm. Okay. Well, now, here's Ken, the newly elected president, and you as his assistant. I think it would be interesting to talk about what you remember about conversations in terms of program and what he had in mind.

WICKERSHAM: Well, at that time he was assistant to the president and I was the assistant to the assistant to the president if you really wanted to have titles. I think my title then was "International Representative Assigned to Additional Duties", or something like that.

I moved into New York and lived in a hotel, as did Ken. When I first moved in, he was in San Francisco. We had a strike at that time. As a matter of fact, he took office for the first time while he was negotiating to get that strike settled in San Francisco. So the first month or so I spent a lot of time by myself just sort of getting acquainted in New York and finding out as much as I could about the organization, about that part of the organization. When finally Ken got back, we spent about nine or ten months, I guess, before I moved into New York, and every waking moment that we were both in town we spent together. When I say "every waking moment", there were long moments because we were in New York and we would work until. . .

INTERVIEWER: Both of you were there without your families.

WICKERSHAM: Yeah, we lived in a hotel, and we would usually work fairly late--you know, eight, eight-thirty in the office--and then go out and have a few drinks and dinner. And then we did a lot of walking and talking. You could walk in New York then, you know. We spent a lot of time also with Ben Robinson who was very helpful in telling us about history and what various people did. He went back, obviously, many, many years. At one point, we even had formal meetings with Ben. I think, like every Wednesday, we would meet him at the Yale Club, and we would just talk about history and what had happened in the ALA.

So during that period of time, Ken and I obviously got very close to each other. And I think Ken used the statement when we finally started fighting with the New York people: "The problem was that they gave two young guys the reins who they thought would be excited about being in New York and overwhelmed with the glamour of being thrown quickly into such. . ."

INTERVIEWER: Heady atmosphere.

WICKERSHAM: Yeah. But one thing they didn't realize, and Ken has said this many times, is they handed us both the reins; and as soon as we started steering, they got upset. Ken made no bones about it in our many, many discussions that he was going to be a president. He wasn't just going to be somebody that was going to follow the direction of Robinson and Swayduck.

We started out very quickly on that basis, that we made decisions and we made a lot of them together. Here is where my memory really might get things out of their proper place in time, but so many things happened during that period of time. One of the first things that Ken wanted to do. . . . I had a job as assistant to the president, and he leaned on me as he does now. But I was a minister without portfolio. And the vice-presidents in a number of cases resented me because they felt that I was another guy between them and the president. There were many, many tenuous days on the light side. We used to kid; I used to have to fight my way for a seat at the table. You know, I'd come into a meeting and there would be no place for me to sit because they'd all crowd up around Ken; and if I had a seat, it was at the far end of the room. Well, Ken being the kind of a person he was, he would make one of them move.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: You know, he'd say, "I want Wick to sit <u>right here</u>!" Well, that took several years to get the vice presidents to the point where they would recognize it if they sat in that chair that they were going to have to move! Ken has done that even. . . not so much to this day, but for the first number of years of merger he just made it clear, "Look, I want. . . " I'd come in, "Where do you want me to sit, Ken?" "Right here." And that was a little difficult. But we did work very closely, and I got put into assigning the reps, which was obviously a key position because you were in touch with all of the locals. I was put in charge of the Research Department, which was very small then, but which grew. Also, under Ken's direction, I supervised negotiations, which I still do today, those two major functions which he has retained as a prime responsibility of the president.

But the politics still went on and increased. I think one interesting segment, and I really can't give you the time sequence of this, the first thing Ken wanted to do was give me portfolio. Swayduck supported this. And Robinson supported it. He wanted to make me an executive vice president, and he wanted to appoint me. But he wanted to make it a constitutional position. No, I'm wrong. He didn't want to appoint me; he wanted me to be elected, and that was supposed to take place at the Miami convention in 1961.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: Well, we went to the council meeting, which was at Mt. Gabriel, I guess in August of 1961, probably, thereabouts.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: We had a number of resolutions, and we would discuss them with each of the officers because the fight had already begun with Swayduck. We came into that council meeting, and there were about five or six resolutions that Swayduck had had written by Robinson that were designed to take things away from the International officers, take power away from the International officers, and to give the International Council powers that we were afraid of, such as opening up the emergency fund for public relations and a number of other things. Our concern was that if Swayduck ever got <u>that</u> accomplished, there would be a constant drain on the emergency fund. So there was a resolution in for that and a number of other things, so we sat down with Robinson and we had him design resolutions on the same subject but to say what we wanted them to say. That was one of the arguments we had with Robinson; how can you be a lawyer and write one resolution for a local getting at us and then the next day write one getting at him? Well, you know, his answer was, "A lawyer can do that." But we've never been convinced that a lawyer can do that because we really think that a lawyer should have <u>some</u> principles as far as the kind of work he's in for.

Robinson was treating us as a client that he could do anything for. You know, in its simplest forms he could probably represent the husband and the wife in a divorce case if you followed his line of thinking through. He could do that. And I don't think that's possible.

So at that council meeting we reviewed all of the resolutions very carefully. The one we didn't review was the one creating the office of executive vice president. Well, when it came to the Council board, it got shot down in flames. It took about seven minutes of discussion. <u>Every</u> vice president, even Ken's father, voted against it.

INTERVIEWER: (Laughter)

WICKERSHAM: That was sort of a shock to all of us, you know. But I don't think there was even one vote. Swayduck was conveniently not there; Robinson was conveniently not there. They were the ones that were stirring this up. So it just went down in flames. I said, "Look, Ken, let's not struggle with it. Let's move on to something more productive." So that ended another approach for me to become an officer. Well, it didn't end. The fight got tougher then, and Stone was still on the griddle.

I remember a very interesting meeting that probably very few people know about, maybe more than I think. We had a

meeting at the Barclay Hotel, a memorable meeting. Spohnholtz was there.

INTERVIEWER: The Barclay Hotel where?

WICKERSHAM: In New York City, off Forty-Ninth Street, a long walk from there to our office, which is part of the story.

Spohnholtz was there, Robinson was there, Swayduck was there, and Ken and I. We met all morning; we had lunch. We met all morning to lay a plan for me again to run against good old Donald Stone. Donald knows about this; he and I've talked about it. But we talked all morning, and they had me convinced that with New York and Chicago supporting me it was a shoo-in, no problem at all. So finally I said, okay, I'd do it.

Then the meeting ended, say, two o'clock or so in the afternoon, and Ken and I started walking across to the office. The Barclay Hotel is at Park Avenue, and we walked from there to, you know, our office, which was west of Broadway, about six or seven blocks. We stopped on the way; it was a very leisurely walk. We had a drink, and we walked another block or so, and we stopped and maybe had another drink and talked. It probably took us two hours to get back to the office. In that two-hour period both Ken and I agreed that that was the dumbest meeting that we'd ever been to and the dumbest position that either one of us had ever taken. It was all off!

INTERVIEWER: Why?

WICKERSHAM: Well, it just didn't make any sense to get involved in a political fight. And we felt that really Swayduck was taking advantage of us, that he was again using us to get at Stone, and he was pulling Chicago in because the only thing that New York and Chicago ever agreed on was that they didn't like Donald Stone!

INTERVIEWER: Why didn't they like Donald Stone?

WICKERSHAM: Well, Swayduck had never really liked Donald. I don't know why. I guess he felt he wasn't doing the job, or whatever reason. Swayduck had a long history of putting people in office and then attacking them until they were destroyed, and I think that he tried to do that with Stone. Of course, the Chicago feelings was all

the way back to Canary again, the purchase of the building and Stone not supporting Canary.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

WICKERSHAM: So they were natural allies in getting at Donald Stone, and they were using Ken and I as the instrument to do it. For that, and a number of other reasons, we said, "No." I agreed that I did not want to get involved in a political fight. I guess not the least of that was in that period of time we had gotten so that we felt that Stone was doing a pretty good job!

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: You know, the longer we worked with him we found out that he wasn't the dummy that Swayduck portrayed him as being, he was doing a pretty good job.

So, as soon as I got in the office, I called Swayduck, and I said, "It's all off!" Oh, I'll never forget the conversation!: "You'll never go anywhere in this organization! I've given you your last chance!" And on and on, as he could well do. He was a master at blasting you, and he blasted me for like fifteen minutes on the phone. I said, "Well, okay Eddie, I don't care what you do; I'm just not going to do it. I'm happy with the way things are." I said, "You wouldn't support me as an executive vice president." He said, "Well, you weren't ready for that." I said, "You mean, I wasn't ready to be an executive vice president, but now you say I'm ready to be the Secretary-treasurer, which is the Number Two job in the organization?" It was inconsistent. I think I told him at that time, "It's obvious to me what you're trying to do; you'll do anything at all to get rid of Stone."

So that was the end of it. And that was the end of my political aspirations as an elected officer, not the end, because Ken has always told me that, if I wanted to be an officer, even in this last election when Petrakis and Brandt were deposed, that if I wanted either one of those jobs, that he would support me. But that's behind us now, and correctly so.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, well, there are a number of issues that I think we might talk about in terms of these long conversations. One, is the posture with respect to negotiations, what yours and Ken's thinking was

about what was required in the organization with respect to organizing and also with respect to where you were going in negotiations. That's one topic. Another, which I suspect is related, but maybe not, is the question of merger.

WICKERSHAM: Hm-hm.

INTERVIEWER: Another is this question of reorganization with respect to the vice presidents and the number of councilors per local union and this kind of thing. I wonder if we might take these three topics in turn.

WICKERSHAM: Okay. Well, let's hit the reorganization first.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

WICKERSHAM: I really wasn't much involved in that. That pretty much took place simultaneously with the Portland Convention.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: I mean moving from the regional setup to the national setup. So I really didn't have much of an involvement in that except as I became the assistant to the president. We were then going through the transition of a vice president being assigned national duties, and I guess that's where I got involved in some aggravation from the vice presidents because instead of them being. . . . For example, Ted Brandt, Teddie and I had numerous discussions about why I shouldn't be where I was. (chuckle) But you have to consider their feelings because they, both Brandt and Petrakis, came in with their only knowledge of the organization being how great it was for Pat Slater and Ollie Mertz.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: You know, they had their own little domain. They traveled in a very, very circumscribed area. All of a sudden they had this great job, and they were being given assignments such as union label department, metal decorating, which took them all over the country, and they didn't even have an office to work in. So I did get in-

volved in that. So there was, you know, a little bit of reaction from some of the vice presidents about what they would term their lack of stature and status. But that was really my only involvement. It was a matter of trying to bend and stretch to get over that period of time, which I think. . . .

(End of Tape I, side II)

WICKERSHAM: Well, when I came into New York, we had one girl in our Research Department, and she was very capable. Whatever she learned about research, she learned from us. I mean, she learned, not from us, but from working with us.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

WICKERSHAM: In those days the secretary-treasurer was responsible for developing statistics for the local. And this gal did a commendable job of putting statistics together.

INTERVIEWER: Now, was she somebody that Marty Grayson had hired?

WICKERSHAM: I think so, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: I was given the assignment of working with that department. As a matter of fact, you know, we didn't have that many contracts in those days. As a matter of fact, in the early days I had to read every contract. She would give me a memo--and we follow that procedure right up to today--she would give me a memo on what she thought the contract said or should say or shouldn't say. Invariably I would read them, which was good training for me because I quickly got an insight into what was going on around the country. In the early days I didn't have much work to do. There were days when I first became the assistant to the president that I wondered, "What the hell am I here for? What am I going to do?" So obviously I could read all the contracts. Well, it wasn't very long. . . And then Ken Brown or the president would sign them all.

My early recollections of that was that I would go into Ken, who was very busy, with a stack of contracts a foot and a half high, and he would laboriously sign six copies of every

contract. Well, that seemed dopey as the dickens, you know, for the International president to be doing that. But we were still a small union, and you'll never believe the difficulty I had in moving to a rubber stamp for his signature.

INTERVIEWER: (Laughter)

WICKERSHAM: You know, it was just unbelievable! The way I got around it finally was that we would put the International seal over the rubber stamp, which we still do today; you know, that sort of made it official. If I would rubber stamp the president's name on the contract and then put the International seal over the rubber stamp, that was okay. But it was a terrible job! I would argue even with the lawyers and say, "How the hell can he sign all of these contracts!?"

You can imagine the Chicago contracts, even in those days, would come in in a big box, four or five hundred contracts, three or four copies of each one! So we ended that. That's just a little interesting sidelight as to what we were facing in those days.

Very quickly Ken said, "What we should have is an economist. Somebody to help you and I." Because neither one of us were economists, not even really very, very good mathematicians, if you wanted to be honest about it. So that was the first thing that we did. We hired an economist, a very good one, Len Irsay.

INTERVIEWER: How do you spell his name?

WICKERSHAM: I-R-S-A-Y.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: Leonard. As a matter of fact, he's now the economist for the city of New York, their Labor Relations Department. But he was very good, and we were really fortunate, in developing a department, to get a person like that because he then very quickly developed his staff. He hired a statistician and someone to read contracts and analyse them and eventually, as we got into it, a junior economist. And from that day we started building the statistical information that was sent out to the locals--the Red Book for instance, which is the handbook on bargaining.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: That, I think, started us on our way and was helpful, not just in developing our bargaining posture, but was also later on helpful in the mergers because for a union our size we probably had one of the largest and most effective research departments in the country.

The theory that we used was that we had to get information out to the locals to help them in bargaining. It was easy for me to think this out because, by being a local president and being an International rep, one of the greatest problems I had in the field was "how in the hell do I find out what they're making in Louisville, Kentucky?" The only way I could find out was to call up Louisville and say, "Send me a copy of your contract." So it was very easy for me; I knew what I needed. It was easy for me to put myself in the position of the local president and then go to the economist and say, "Can we do this?"

So that very quickly we developed a high level of statistical information that that department prepared for us. And along with that then went the. . . . Once we got the statistical material, we could move into national comparisons. Nobody really knew what they had, and as a matter of fact, if they didn't have a good contract, they would hide it under a bushel basket. So that Philadelphia didn't know what New York had, and New York wasn't telling anybody what they had, except the good things. Once we got it all on paper, the first few times we published that at meetings, people were defensive of their position. But we used the argument--and we still do today, incidentally--we use the argument that you shouldn't let wages be the means to be competitive or not be competitive. It's all other things that the employer should be concerned about, but it shouldn't be us. I can recall, when I negotiated as a representative in Milwaukee, the employers and the union agreed with them that there had to be a ten percent wage difference between Milwaukee and Chicago. Otherwise there would be no work in Milwaukee; it would all be in Chicago.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: Well, that's been proven untrue because now, today, the wages are the same or maybe even higher in Milwaukee, and there's just as much work and probably more than there ever was.

INTERVIEWER: Right. What kind of differentials did you have? Where were the depressed wage areas?

WICKERSHAM: Well, there was no pattern.

INTERVIEWER: There was no pattern?

WICKERSHAM: No.

INTERVIEWER: In other words, you couldn't look at the situation like the Steelworkers could and say, "We've got a North-South differential."

WICKERSHAM: No. You might say that because we still have a North-South differential. But there was no rhyme or reason between rates in, let's say, Chicago, San Francisco, New York--New York and Philadelphia, whoever was the most effective negotiator. That's not the only thing; the worst thing was in work rules and fringe benefits because that was something that wasn't bandied about quickly. That was something that they could hide under a bushel basket.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. You couldn't put a number on that so easily.

WICKERSHAM: No, you couldn't. So that that was our first objective.

INTERVIEWER: So in other words, you had the same job description, the same job class, were being paid at different rates. I mean, in other words, in one area of the country a particular job might have been considered a higher skill, a higher job class.

WICKERSHAM: Well, I'll give you a specific example: Years ago we had opaquers.

INTERVIEWER: Had what?

WICKERSHAM: Opaquers. Now, that was a breakdown of both the dot etcher's skills and the stripper's skills.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: In some cities the opaquer was paid the same rate as the stripper. In my city, for example, when I was a stripper, I did most of my own opaquing. There was reasons for that, you know. I wouldn't trust an opaquer to do it because, if the job bounced, it was my job that bounced, not his. If he opaqued part of a machine out or something, it was _my_ problem. So I would hold on to my opaquing, unless I was completely swamped. But in many cities they had opaquers lined up, and they would work at a _substantially_ lower rate.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: Maybe the stripper was the same rate in, say, Racine and Milwaukee. Maybe the stripper's rate was about the same. But in Milwaukee they would have a whole batch of opaquers so that, if you added the two together, the stripper's rate was really lower. Those were the things that we ran into. Breakdown in classifications: Sometimes as many as thirty or forty separate classifications in a preparatory department, where they would take the platemaker's job and they'd have one person coatplate, and they'd have a coatplater, and they had another person who sensitized plates. You know, they'd maybe have five different classifications in the platemaking department; and they'd only have maybe three platemakers, but they'd have thirty people working in there.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: So, if you just look at the contract and see platemaker, fine, great! But you'd have to look further and find out what the mix was.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

WICKERSHAM: So our first objective was to trot out the facts. And we started early on with coordination-of-negotiations meetings.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Now, how did you go about selecting bench marks in terms of, you know, if you have this tremendous variety of skills and job classes?

WICKERSHAM: Well, the first thing we did was we had a major campaign to eliminate classifications, figuring if

we could get to a manageable level of having a photographer and a stripper. . . . They had black and white photographers who did nothing but black and white half-time work, and they had color photographers. We still have some of that. They had black and white strippers and color strippers. Their skills are the same, you know?

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: You strip a black and white job exactly the same as you do a color job; you just have to be a little more skillful to do the color job, but that comes. So eliminate black and white strippers, try to eliminate black and white photographers. Again, their skills were the same; you had to run a camera. So that was our first objective, and we were reasonably successful in that.

Then when we got to less and less classifications, we were able to zero in on regional comparisions and, to a degree, national comparisons.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Now, how did you go about doing this? Did you bring people in for conferences and coordinated bargaining sessions, or what?

WICKERSHAM: Yeah, we still do that. I believe we started out by bringing them in regionally; it's possible that we might have even gone right in with the national meeting. But my recollection, I think, is that we had regional meetings. For example--and we still do this today--they refer to them as the "six cities": Cincinnati, Kansas City, Rochester, the Twin Cities, Milwaukee and Chicago. All their contracts expire at the same time--their litho contracts. We would bring those people in, and we would have our research department draw comparisons as to where they would compare to each other. Our theory, which we tried to get across to them, was that the old days of ten dollars looks great, so let's everybody get ten dollars, was the wrong approach. If Chicago got five dollars, it's conceivable that Milwaukee. . . . because in those days they were like ten percent behind. If Chicago got five dollars, then Milwaukee should be going for seven or eight.

So we're going to direct our attention Thursday and Friday of this week to what kind of an approach we should take in those two cities.

I should mention this. The reason that Ken was proficient in advising on how to proceed was that Canada's been

doing this for twenty years! They negotiate one contract in eastern Canada; Ken was involved in those negotiations and led them, really. He and Dick Clarke led those negotiations for several years. They negotiate one contract that covers all of eastern Canada. So we sort of use the Canadian history as a guide.

INTERVIEWER: Right. But they really were way ahead of everybody else in coordinated bargaining.

WICKERSHAM: Oh, sure. And we're years away from that, but we're heading in that direction, hopefully.

INTERVIEWER: Now, in this period of time it seems to me there's been quite a bit of change in the printing industry, in that printing certainly was a process where you had a lot of family-owned businesses; if they weren't family-owned businesses, they were businesses where their primary economic interest was in printing. Now you're beginning to see. . . . at least I know, certainly, bookbinders have talked about this a good bit to me. . . . you're beginning to see that you're really bargaining with a financial interest that is not particularly concerned with printing but in the development of multi-national and multi-industry kinds of interests. Is that affecting this whole process in any way particularly?

WICKERSHAM: Well, I think we're probably fortunate that we started as early as we did to develop a statistical approach to bargaining because there's no question that you used to be able to sit down with the owner who started the company and negotiate. . . . well, horse trade, you know, because he knew you and you knew him. And in many cases he was a member of your union. He didn't expect you to be a financial or an economic wizard.

So we went through a period of time there when we had different rates. And if you look at those six cities today, thirteen, fourteen years later (probably about thirteen), they're within pennies of each other, We've really been able to do a good job. So that this year we were able to get virtually the same increase in every one of those cities--three and a half percent the first year and ten bucks the second year. The negotiations were all over in these cities in about a month, no strikes. And the cost of living was in there, of course. So if you look at those wage rates now and compare them to where they were ten years ago, you'll find that we've really been successful. . . . a long ways to go. But that was the mechanics we used.

INTERVIEWER: Are you now in the process of identifying other areas like that--a group of seven cities, a group of four cities, and a group of. . . ?

WICKERSHAM: Right. Well, Ken and I are meeting Thursday and Friday, an off-the-record meeting with Philadelphia and Washington because they are both going into bargaining in May of next year. In the last two years Philadelphia and Washington got about the same wage increase. Washington got a little more, I guess. But Philadelphia got three cost-of-living adjustments; Washington got one. I have, again, statistics on my desk. . . .

INTERVIEWER: Now, why should that be?

WICKERSHAM: Because of the way they negotiated the cost-of-living clause.

INTERVIEWER: I see.

WICKERSHAM: Washington negotiated more money up front and the cost-of-living later on in the contract for reasons that happens in all bargaining--what kind of a settlement can you get? But I think we're fortunate that we started developing statistics because now we can. . . . An example was, during the wage and price freeze--during the wage freeze and the price "whatever it was. . . ."

INTERVIEWER: (Laughter)

WICKERSHAM: Our average increases during the five and a half percent of supposedly freeze, our average increases, were running about 6.2 percent because we were able to give our locals sufficient information so they could squeeze every drop out of that freeze by, you know, explaining to them how to develop base compensation and to get them the largest possible base that they could apply the five and a half percent to. A lot of unions simply went in and negotiated five and a half percent. We, because of our statistical approach to bargaining, were able to do that.

We had employers in here, in this office, on several occasions, with our economists, doing all the arithmetic on the government forms, literally accepting without question our approach to it. So that there's no question now that we find ourselves bargaining more and more with lawyers.

That's a bad thing because in many cases, particularly in your smaller towns, the lawyer getting involved in negotiations is the way some of them send their kids to college. We resist our lawyers going to the bargaining table; they give us advice outside of the bargaining table. I don't recall when we ever had a lawyer at the bargaining table since Ken became president. Isolated incidents, where you have some kind of a strange situation, will bring a lawyer in sometimes for effect, sometimes for legal advice. But we find ourselves more and more negotiating, 1) with lawyers or 2) with industrial relations managers. I think that makes life more difficult because there's no way, in my opinion, of not facing, in some cases, the fact that an industrial relations manager is. . . . that's his job, so you might just as well be patient and carry it on. This week in Dayton, Ohio, at McCall Printing Company, I think we're having our seventieth meeting, which is a disgrace!

INTERVIEWER: Oh, my!

WICKERSHAM: . . . . Our seventieth bargaining session! Those are all-day meetings!

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: Now, if you were negotiating with the owner, you wouldn't have that because he would be running his company. He couldn't afford seventy days! He would have compromised somewhere along the line as we probably would have.

INTERVIEWER: Right. I think you're seeing that a lot in our society, that laws are being written in such a way that only lawyers can administer them. They do have a way of making themselves indispensable.

Well, one question that relates to this, too, is that there was a tremendous--in this period of time--a tremendous impact of technological development, which must have affected your Red Book. I'm wondering, what kinds of steps did you take? What was your thinking in trying to rationalize that?

WICKERSHAM: Well, strangely enough, the technological development--and we'll be learning more as time goes on--the technological developments in the litho industry--let's start with that--really, probably were helpful to us because what we did was we went in the litho industry from tremendous amounts of black and white or one-color,

maybe two-color, jobs, to a tremendous amount of four-color jobs. When the electronic scanners came in, for an example, it was so much less expensive to do a four-color job that there was more four-color work done.

I used to use an example in Wisconsin, a tremendous resort industry in northern Wisconsin, where you could just see the transition. Everybody owns six cottages. You know, it's a mother/father resort state where a guy retires or maybe he doesn't retire, maybe he just likes the North Woods, and they go up and they buy six cottages and they run it. Well, he would have a black and white brochure that the Chamber of Commerce would ship out. I would venture a guess today that you'll see very few. If you got a black and white brochure, you wouldn't want to go to the resort because it's really probably a rundown place.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: Then you might have. . . well, you really didn't lose work because, first of all, instead of running a job through the press one or two times, you ran it through four times if you had a one-color press or you had bigger equipment, and the work just sort of increased.

In the photoengraving industry we had some problems and we still have because the photoengraving membership is going down every year. In some cases the photoengravers are moving into litho. But in the Litho Division, you see, even if it went down in the preparatory department, it went up in the press room so that the balance was there. None of the technological developments that came in had a drastic effect. You didn't have any one machine as you do in the coal mines, where once the machine went in, four hundred people were out of work. It was a modest adjustment. It was so modest that you probably wouldn't even know it was happening. It would happen over a period of two or three years that a dot etcher, for example, would retire or die; they wouldn't replace him.

When I worked at Western in 1955, we had like twenty-five or thirty dot etchers. I think today they have about eight. But nobody's been let go. It's been a case of not replacing them.

So to answer your question, it really didn't have any kind of a dramatic effect on our bargaining. I have never had to relate technological change to changing our position in bargaining at all.

INTERVIEWER: That's interesting.

WICKERSHAM: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That's very interesting.

WICKERSHAM: There was a theory when we went to the thirty-five-hour workweek that that was going to be the salvation, that we would have less man-hours of work; and consequently, because of technological developments, there wouldn't be an effect on the work force. I'd be hard pressed to come up with examples where that happened.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: I think--as I say, we'll have to learn about this--I think we'll find it more now in the bookbinding industry. . . .

INTERVIEWER: In the binding. Right.

WICKERSHAM: . . . because there they can put a machine out or they can put a machine in a plant that can eliminate a whole department, you know. And we haven't really gotten into that yet, but I think we'll have to. The fluctuation is there.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Well, how did this what I would call a kind of a rationalization of negotiations, bringing in the economists and putting out the Red Book and so forth,. . . did that affect your thinking at all in terms of merger?

WICKERSHAM: No, I don't. . . .

INTERVIEWER: Or was merger a complete and separate issue?

WICKERSHAM: Well, there is a connection. There is a connection in that, not so much with the Photoengravers. . . Photoengravers' rates were comparable to ours. But the one we haven't merged with yet, the Pressmen,

is still obvious today that they have no national policy on bargaining--whatever the local wants to do. That's what we had in 1950--no national policy on bargaining.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

WICKERSHAM: In 1960 we had a national policy. That was to remain competitive with other locals. Pressmen to this day, to my knowledge, don't have any national policy so that in the City of Philadelphia, who we are meeting with this week, the Pressmen's rates are killing us! Yes, merger with that kind of a union would be good. Merger with the Bookbinders was the same problem. A lot of the companies would settle with Bookbinders and say, "Okay, look, we can't give you more than we gave the Bookbinders." And their International Union structure was not big enough to carry out any kind of a national policy.

INTERVIEWER: What was happening with respect to mixed shops where you had a variety of processes in one shop? Was this something that was increasing in this period of time or had it already developed?

WICKERSHAM: It was already there.

INTERVIEWER: It was already there.

WICKERSHAM: It might have decreased because several of the printing unions were trying, because they were running into this problem, several of the printing unions were trying to get whole shops, which led to the constant raids we were involved in getting out of the AFL, getting into the CIO, getting into the AFL-CIO, getting out, you know, because of all the raiding that was going on. And it's still going on today!

The variety of unions in some of these larger shops, particularly. . . . the Western Publishing, I think, had --even in the days when I worked there--had eleven or twelve unions. And obviously the company, they're not dummies, you know. They would go to the union that they felt they could hammer away a settlement at and then dig in their heels.

Even worse, you were faced in many situations with the Bookbinders going on strike and then having to convince your lithographers that they should support them. Or visa versa. The Lithographers had a more serious problem because usually our

rates were better, our hours were shorter; we were able to do that in spite of the other unions. We had the only thirty-five-hour workweek in shop after shop after shop. To this day we have, in many shops, we have the only thirty-five-hour workweek.

So we had more trouble getting people to support us than they did. They'd say, "What the hell do we want to support those guys for? They've already got more than we have!" I was involved in one strike situation where we went to the Central Labor Council to get their support, and one guy got up and said, "What the hell! You guys are getting more in strike benefits than I'm making a week! Why should I support you!?"

INTERVIEWER: (Laughter)

WICKERSHAM: So we were constantly facing that kind of a problem. And I think the merger of the Bookbinders was more important in that respect than the merger with the Photoengravers. Now, you know, we have the control. We had a strike at Simplicity Pattern in Niles, Michigan. Several years ago the Lithographers might have settled and the Bookbinders would have been on strike, or visa versa. As it turned out, they both went out the same day because one person was negotiating the contract.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: That, I think, will be one of the good benefits, that we'll be able to control that. We had a strike in Washington recently where one of the Bookbinder locals was on strike, and there were only eleven bookbinders spread through three shops that the Lithographers' local had under contract. Over a hundred lithographers stayed out for five weeks to support those eleven bookbinders. That would have never happened five years ago. But because we're one union. . . You know, it's one thing to cross somebody else's picket line, but nobody wants to cross their own union's picket line. Most people don't; we have, obviously, some weak spots. That's the one place, I think, where negotiations were closely connected with merger.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Well, when you and Ken began. . . on these long walks, did the question of merger come up?

WICKERSHAM: Oh, yeah. That was one of the first programs, I guess, that Ken brought to the Council. That was

probably back in about '61 where the Newspaper Güild. . . . This sort of gets us into a whole other. . . .

(End of Tape II, side III)

(December 11, 1974, Second Session with Leon Wickersham)

INTERVIEWER: Wick, we left off yesterday leading into the discussion of merger. But we were kind of talking a little bit about Ben Robinson as general counsel, and you had made reference to the fact that Ken came to feel that he could not represent Local One and the International at the same time. But the written record that we have in the Archives of the convention proceedings looks a little peculiar in this regard because in 1961 Ben Robinson appears to be the "fair hair boy"; he's made an honorary life-long member of the GAIU; and by the following convention in 1963, the announcement is made that he no longer represents the International but is only the counsel for Local One.

WICKERSHAM: Well, I think, strangely enough, that the lid began to come down on Robinson at the 1961 convention, and you're refreshing my memory on that because I hadn't checked that myself. But at that convention--that was the Miami convention. . . .

INTERVIEWER: Right.

WICKERSHAM: At that convention, that was really the first convention for Ken Brown, and the whole format of the convention changed because Ken had a lot of support from a lot of people. At the same time the fight with Swayduck was generating steam. So that many of the issues that were brought up at the convention were discussed ahead of time with various delegates so that there weren't people just popping up with their own comments that they had just thought of at that time. Every single issue at that convention, to my knowledge, was discussed in committee and smoked-filled rooms and so on. As I recall, it was almost a twenty-four-hour day every day where Ken and I were meeting with somebody, usually in his room, to develop or to structure the convention as much as we could. Because up to that time, previous conventions, frankly, were pretty much structured by Robinson. Whatever took place, the fine hand of Robinson was behind it. So that's where it really all started.

To jump ahead now from the convention to the meeting that we voted to discontinue Robinson's services, which was in August of '62, about a year later, there were many, many meetings between the '61 convention and the July Council meeting in Mt. Gabriel that Ken and I had with Robinson. Strangely enough, we felt at that time that he was doing a good job as a lawyer for us but that he was constantly being pulled off track by Swayduck's manipulations. We had many, many meetings with Robinson and Silverman to try to get them on the International track full time. That was where we had discussions, for example, where Robinson said that it was very easy for him to write up a resolution for Local One that was designed to "get at" something in the International, and then come right around and write one on the same subject for the International; and we just couldn't see how that could be done. Not even knowing much about legal ethics, it just didn't seem to us that that would even be ethical. As I said yesterday; it would be like one lawyer representing the husband and the wife in a divorce case. It just doesn't seem as though that's possible.

Just to switch back to the convention again. . . One of the issues that Swayduck was trying to push was to open up the emergency fund for, among other things, public relations. That was a period of time when Robinson was really deluging us with all kinds of Madison Avenue, McCann Erickson, public relations schemes. He would get them all cranked up, and eventually the International would end up paying for them.

He had, I recall, a press book--I think I still have a copy of it--a press book of clippings, some with Brown's picture, but many, many of them with Swayduck's picture, just enough with the International flavor to go to the International Council and get the International to pay a portion of the bill. I think he had something like twenty-five thousand of the things printed up; they ended up in a baler some place.

He also had the house built. We refer to the house that we bought. In fact, it was in the lobby of the Doville hotel.

INTERVIEWER: You mean the glass house.

WICKERSHAM: The glass house. Right. I think that that ran at that time something like thirty-eight thousand dollars.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Now, we better explain what the glass house was.

WICKERSHAM: Well, he developed an idea, which, you know, wasn't a bad idea. We have some displays now for the Union Industry Show that we've had developed, much more modest, of course. But he had this house built. It was all walnut paneling and glass. The idea of it was to have an offset press installed inside of it, and it was all glassed in. In fact, he had it installed in Grand Central Station with the press running and models handing out things that the press was running. So it seemed like it might be a pretty good idea. The only problem was we didn't really know how it was going to end up cost-wise. He figured it would be a good idea to ship it to Miami and put it in the lobby of the hotel. Well, it was the worst thing because everybody walked by it, and it became, you know, an issue in the convention--the glass house in the lobby. And it was referred to in the convention minutes several times.

I think John Petitti from Cleveland made the statement that he'd like to have the house delivered to Cleveland and have it installed somewhere there but that there was a city ordinance against littering on the beach, or something like that. That was the kind of reaction that he got from the house.

The one thing that nobody told us, which we learned later, was that nobody could afford to have it. The idea was to have the house sent all around the country and put in your local train station or the airport or wherever you could get in installed. What we found was that it cost about ten thousand dollars to move it and erect it. It wasn't put together in modules; the glass had to be installed each time, for example, and you had to hire a union glass company to come in and install the glass.

The kind of exhibits we buy now for the Union Industry Show are all in modules, and they just bolt together. You know, you've seen those kinds of things? It can be done in a matter of hours. Anyhow, that's about enough on the glass house, except it did end up on a happy note. We couldn't sell it. We spent about a hundred dollars a month to store it, and that just kept building up, you know. Everytime I would get a bill for the storage, I'd say, "Oh, what am I going to do with this house!?" We'd just keep paying a hundred dollars a month, or something like that. There was a projector in it with one of those built-in screens; that's what we recovered out of the thirty-eight thousand dollar house. We made a deal with Bell & Howell to take the projection unit and give us one that we still use today. So out of that thirty-eight thousand dollars we were able to recover one sixteen-millimeter sound projector.

INTERVIEWER: (Chuckle)

WICKERSHAM: The happy note was that we donated the house to, I think, the Florence Leek Home, which is an orphanage in New York City. They were very happy to get it. They used it as a reception center or something in their home. So somebody is getting some value out of the house today. But so much for that.

One more thing on that. Swayduck came into the '61 convention with his own PR department. He had a full-page ad in Business Week magazine. That was when he had the ad on "Featherbedding is for the Birds" where he attacked the ITU that he's now a member of. He had copies of Business Week delivered at everybody's door; when you woke up in the morning and you opened your door, there was a copy of Business Week with his ad in it. McCann Erickson was running the whole thing. The interesting thing was that the account executive's name was James Wickersham.

INTERVIEWER: (Laughter) No relation.

WICKERSHAM: No relation. No relation. So he came in there, and the convention relaxed the rules and let him talk for about an hour on his PR program to try and convince the delegates that they should vote in favor of his resolution to open up the emergency fund, and the resolution was defeated. It was really the first time that the pendulum started to swing. It was the first time that Swayduck lost anything--publicly, you know. The whole convention voted it down with vigor.

INTERVIEWER.II: Was it seen then as a crucial issue in terms of the political ramifications that were to follow? Or was it simply an issue that many people felt opposed to and that later could be looked back on as the first time? Did people relate to the issue at that point as a test vote or vote of confidence?

WICKERSHAM: Probably a dozen people related to it as the first nail in the coffin. But generally speaking there was, I think, a fear that the emergency fund was sacred (which it was) and that once he got his hooks into that--with the house sitting out in the lobby--there'd be more of these kinds of things. So, I think, a handful of key people figured, "Well, this is the end of his running things."

We went into the next year, right after the convention, and, as I said, we had a number of meetings with Robinson and Silverman, who was really handling our account, (Silverman

was Robinson's partner). We got right up to the August meeting, and Robinson just flatly told us that he was not going to leave Local One. So we went into the Council meeting with a recommendation that Robinson's services be terminated. Let's just stop for a minute now.

(Short pause in the tape)

INTERVIEWER: Now, was this Council meeting in July or August?

WICKERSHAM: August of '62.

INTERVIEWER: August, Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: We came into that meeting, which was in Mt. Gabriel, Canada, with a recommendation to the Council that either Robinson work for the International exclusively or not work for us at all. And our feeling even at that late date was that, if Robinson would say to us that he was giving up Local One as a client, that we would keep him as the general counsel of the International. He flatly said that he could not do that. So we went to the Council with that position, and there was a lengthy discussion that went on, I guess, for the better part of a day. In the final analysis the Council voted overwhelmingly to discontinue the services of Robinson. I think the only people that voted in favor of keeping Robinson were the East Coast councilors who Robinson controlled. His votes controlled who got elected on the East Coast. I think it was Teddy Meyers from Pittsburgh and Newton Quick from Albany/Schenectady and then, of course, the two in New York City, Hansen and Swayduck. I think that was about the results of the vote.

INTERVIEWER: What about Los Angeles where he historically had a certain amount of control?

WICKERSHAM: No, I think it was just the East Coast that voted to retain him. There was some concern on the part of Ken, I recall, at that time because there were a couple of people that we really weren't sure of. Teddy Brandt was from California (vice president) at that time and he had a <u>long</u> association with Robinson, and Eddie Donahue had a very, very close relationship with Robinson. He had him to his local meetings and so on. In those days Eddie was a kind of a guy that wasn't really telegraphing what he was going to do, and it was strange because, when we looked out at the vote. . . not strange, it was exciting really, but when we looked at the vote and we saw that Brandt. . . . well, we knew Brandt was going

to vote because we'd had discussions with him as a vice president, and he spoke against it, against Robinson; but we weren't sure what Donahue was going to do. And when he voted in favor, we just sort of breathed a sigh of relief because we knew that then we had gotten the Council behind us. So that brings us right up to Robinson quitting.

An interesting sidelight, which I don't know if anybody has put on record, an interesting sidelight is that Mt. Gabriel is an old ski lodge, and the walls are log cabin walls, and you can hear people breathe in the next room. We knew who was in every room and, unfortunately, Ben Robinson was in the room right next to Ken Brown. So we had to have all of our discussions someplace else. Robinson didn't even know for a whole week that Brown was in that room. That morning before breakfast Ken called me down to his room and said that very early in the morning Matty Silverman had come into Robinson's room and they'd spent an hour scheming on what they were going to do at the meeting. "Okay, Matty," Ben said, "I'll get the floor," and we'll do this and we'll do that. "And then I'll introduce you," and you'll do this and you'll do that.

So when Robinson came down to the meeting. . . . Of course, Brown was taking notes, and when Robinson came down to the meeting, he said, "Wick, when Ken comes in, I'd like to have the floor at the beginning of the meeting to say good-by to the Council." I said, "Well, I'll have to talk to him about it." So Ken came in, and I said, "Well, Robinson wants the floor." I think he turned the gavel over to someone else, and he went over to Ben and he said, "What do you want to say?" "Well, I just want to say a few things and then bid the Council good-by." Ken said, "Well, I want to hear what you're going to say." Well, this went back and forth like a Ping-Pong game. Finally he said, "Well, just write it out so I can see what you're going to say." Robinson knew that he'd been had then so he didn't even comment. He just said "good-by" and took off.

It was just an interesting thing, and we affectionately think of Mt. Gabriel every time we think of those thin walls because they probably saved the record a lot of grief.

INTERVIEWER: (Laughter)

WICKERSHAM: We go up and throw wreaths on the swimming pool every so often in memoriam to the occasion.

INTERVIEWER: I think this raises a very interesting question, not just in the history of the Graphic Arts Union but in the organization structure of the labor movement as a whole because this whole question of the relationship of the general counsel to the union is one,

I think, that the Graphic Arts anticipated a certain amount of discussion on because historically the general counsel has played a pretty powerful role, and the line between making policy and carrying it out has been somewhat blurred.

Just a year or so after this incident, and it certainly was in the air at the time, the Steelworkers were ready to have a pretty historic contest in which the role of the General Counsel, Arthur Goldberg, was going to be an issue in the election, actually, of the International president. I. W. Abel was going to contend that under McDonald the counsel had been actually not simply implementing wage policy negotiations but initiating them. I'm just wondering in what terms you and Ken talked about this. Did you talk about this in terms of the philosophy of the structure of the labor movement, what the general counsel should and should not do? Did you have discussions with Ben Robinson about what the counsel should do and should not do?

WICKERSHAM: Yeah, we did. We'll have to go back a little bit. It got so bad in the ALA--and this is when we had meetings with Robinson where he helped Ken and I on the history of the organization, you know, the private history that wasn't published--it was so bad during the term of Reihl, when Reihl was the president of the ALA, that Robinson used to actually come into the International office in the morning and go over the mail and give Reihl what he thought he could answer and take the rest to his office and take care of that. That's how far we went down the road of a general counsel running the union. That's where we started having trouble because Ken Brown wanted to run the union, and every time he would do something he would be bumping into Robinson.

So, yes, we had a lot of discussions about Robinson advising us but then letting us make the decision and letting us talk to other local presidents and deciding what course the International was going to follow.

On merger, for example, Robinson was advising us, fine; it's the thing to do; he's quoted in the minutes; do it as expeditiously as possible. Then when we got around to it, he took Swayduck's side and fought against merger. When he was running things and he had great control, his policies were being followed. He would sit in on negotiations; we stopped that right away. To this day we don't have lawyers sitting in on negotiations. He developed our organizing policy. He developed the policy of us getting out of the AFL-CIO. Nobody has ever been thrown out of the AFL-CIO for raiding. But he convinced us, convinced our Council in those days, that if we were to be thrown out, we would then be considered the same as the Teamsters. Well, there was no comparison at all! The Teamsters were thrown out for corruption! Nobody to this day [has been thrown out of

the AFL-CIO]. The ITU has been under sanctions for fifteen years, I think, and they've never thrown anybody out. So that was bad advice that we took from the lawyer.

We thought that we were getting that advice because of the fact that, as long as Robinson was the guy that knew everything, then we had to depend on him for what we were going to do. Since we took Brown's position. . . . The record throughout conventions is very, very clear. We have resolutions, for example, to participate in central labor councils, not only participate by attending, but try to become an officer so that your voice is heard. We participate actively in the AFL-CIO; we never did that before.

The move to Washington was to be here with other unions. We see more union people in this city in a week accidently than we used to [see]in New York on purpose in a year.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: That's the kind of a policy that Ken started with from the very first day that he became president and which really led us to problems with Robinson and Swayduck. You don't find Swayduck going to any national conferences or anything like that; you never did. He felt that the AFL-CIO was just taking our money. As a matter of fact, we used to kid about it: "We could buy glass houses for the per capita we paid to the AFL-CIO. What did we get out of those characters?" But that's changed. We're active, as you know, in the AFL-CIO. We joined the World Federation, the IGF, and we're active in that.

INTERVIEWER: You better spell out what I.G.F. means.

WICKERSHAM: The International Graphic Federation, which is the world trade secretariat for graphic arts unions. We are the only union, the only United States union, that is affiliated with that organization. So that's our policy, and it's been our policy.

INTERVIEWER II: Has the policy also involved a decentralization of decision-making in terms of committees that are appointed? Whereas the power was concentrated in the hands of the counsel before, did the power then become concentrated in the hands of of the president? Or was there some move to set up an organizational base that decentralized it?

WICKERSHAM: No, I think, probably, it's more central, that we do use the committee basis of operation. For example, the legislative committee with Donahue chairing it. And the Union Label Committee. There's a whole raft of committees that the Council has. But generally speaking, the committee sooner or later gets up to Brown and has discussion with him before a policy position is taken. So I guess you'd have to say that, while we've spread the decision-making among a lot more people, Brown is involved in some point in most of the decisions. The finance committee might be a major exception (chuckle) because obviously your top people on the Council are on the finance committee. They keep a very, very close watch, and we don't object to that. That's a good position.

INTERVIEWER: Well, to pick up on this merger story. . . . Right away, almost as soon as Ken becomes president, you begin to talk about the possibility of merger; and you and Eddie Donahue are scheduled to meet with Walter Risdon and Edward Nyegaard. Right?

WICKERSHAM: Well, actually the Newspaper Guild really generated that meeting. We met in Washington, and Eddie and I were appointed as the two-man committee to represent the ALA. Even at that point some people made light of that. Swayduck made light of the fact that we were wasting our time in Washington. Eddie and I, you know, off on a boondoggle to Washington.

All of the unions met at the Newspaper Guild offices--all of the printing trades unions, including the Paper Workers. They came to maybe one meeting and then figured that. . . In fact, they were pretty outspoken. They said, "When you guys get your heads screwed on right, we'll come back. We don't want to waste time until you do." They probably knew more about what was going on than we did at that time because we had about three meetings in Washington, and we quickly agreed that it wasn't going to go anyplace. The Pressmen were there and the Newspaper Guild and the ITU. That was right after the Pressmen had scabbed on us in Miami and practically destroyed our whole Miami local. So we quickly agreed that that wasn't going to go anyplace.

The Photoengraver representatives were Walter Risdon and Ed Nyegaard. I think they were both International representatives at that time. Later on Nyegaard became a vice president. Nyegaard was the president of the New York local, and Risdon was a full-time International representative out of Washington. So we developed a close relationship, Eddie and I, with those two fellows.

INTERVIEW WITH LEON WICKERSHAM

December 10, 11, 1975

by Alice M. Hoffman

We kid about it because we say the LPIU merger really started in the men's room. In one of the breaks Walter and I were in the men's room, and he said, "Let's dump these guys and talk together." Either he or I said that. And I said, "Do you really mean it?" "Yeah." he said. So within a week we had a meeting arranged in New York with Bill Connell, the president at that time of the Photoengravers, and Nyegaard and Ken and I. We sat down and really started actively talking merger. That was probably in 1962 by that time. Of course the whole thing came to a conclusion in September of. . . what, '64?

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: So we really worked hard at it. From the first meeting, we had regular meetings. We met for a whole year! And, of course, in the middle of those meetings there was a political battle within the Photoengravers. We were making great headway with merger talks without anything on paper yet; it was a getting-to-know-you type of meeting. I think it was Bill Connell and Ben Schaller and Walter Risdon and Ed Nyegaard who were the principal people that we were talking with.

Then all of a sudden they had a political battle at their Chicago convention, and Nyegaard was defeated, and Bill Hall came in as president.

INTERVIEWER: You mean Bill Connell was defeated?

WICKERSHAM: Bill Connell was defeated as president because they elected at the convention, which they agreed was a pretty sad situation because all the convention was was a political thing where you could entertain delegates. A vote from Des Moines, Iowa, was just as valuable. . . . If you could get five locals together or seven locals, whatever it was, from small locals, you could offset New York's vote. It was really a terrible situation. They were running for office every day. It was a one-year term; so as soon as you got into office, you were running for the next term.

We didn't know Bill Hall at all. We really weren't sure whether he was with merger or against it; but as it turned out, of course, he was with it.

INTERVIEWER II: He ran in his convention publicly against merger.

WICKERSHAM: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER II: Was that a sign of worry? You say you had some doubts about that. Maybe you knew that was a politically expeditious move and that you thought possibly he would come along afterwards?

WICKERSHAM: Well, people were telling us that it was a political move, that we shouldn't get overly concerned, that there were enough people. . . .

INTERVIEWER: This was Chicago people who knew him?

WICKERSHAM: Well, some of the other officers of the Photoengravers Union. A variety of people were saying that it was the obvious way to unseat Connell and that we wouldn't have to worry too much about that.

(End of Tape II, side IV)

INTERVIEWER: (Starting in midsentence) Why the Photoengravers? You say this happened in the men's room, and that leaves the impression that it might have been almost happenstance, except that I don't think so. The same conversation could have taken place in the men's room with the ITU or the Printing Pressmen or the Guild.

WICKERSHAM: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Why the Photoengravers?

WICKERSHAM: Well, I think that we both agreed, both unions agreed, that the skills were the most compatible skills. The jurisdiction was overlapping in that field more than it was really in the other fields. In other words, the ITU was losing jobs to coal type, and their salvation was really to get into somebody else's jurisdiction. But the Photoengravers' skills were constantly crossing. We had a number of litho shops that did photoengraving and a number of photoengraving shops that did litho.

In the shop I worked in, for example, we interchanged, even though there were two unions. Way back in the '40's, maybe before that, we had. . . . the strippers did. . . . the litho strippers didn't do any photoengraving because the work was going to litho, and consequently there were many times when the photoengravers had not enough work to do. When they didn't have enough work to do, they'd move right in and do our work. The photoengraver cameraman: we didn't have a litho cameraman in the shop that I worked in. The photoengraver cameraman did all of our camera work--our black-and-white camera work.

So I think that's really what did it. The skills were compatible; the philosophies of the union were pretty close. That developed, of course, in our discussions, that our philosophies were very, very close, which you couldn't say about the Pressmen or the ITU. That would have been a merging of philosophies; and if it happens, it will still have to be a merging of philosophies.

INTERVIEWER: All right. Now, in what way were the philosophies compatible?

WICKERSHAM: Well, the approach to the membership, the pride in your skill, the pride in your union. When you go to a meeting now, it's pretty hard to tell the difference between a photoengraver and a lithographer.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: The Lithographers, because of the. . . . as I mentioned earlier, the development of research was something that the Photoengravers needed because their full-time staff was limited; and they didn't have any research department at all, so that was an incentive for them to get with it. It's pretty hard to nail down when you say what philosophies were the same. It's something that you sort of develop in many, many discussions with the people. We didn't find ourselves in the informal discussions arguing, "This is the way you ought to run a union meeting" or "This is the way you ought to negotiate a contract." There was agreement on those kinds of things.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: That's why I say we met for a full year before we started even making notes.

INTERVIEWER: Right. What do you think was the impetus, insofar as the Guild was concerned, in calling this meeting?

WICKERSHAM: Well, I think there they had the. . . . I'm not so sure that they had the necessity to merge in mind as much as they were trying to be the neutral party to end the raiding. At that point the Guild hadn't gotten involved in any cross-currents with other printing unions. I think they really felt that they were the only ones that were in a position to conduct such meetings without having their own ax to grind.

INTERVIEWER: Right. But at the same time the raiding was going on, kind of swirling around their heads.

WICKERSHAM: Yeah, yeah. It really was. Of course, as there are today, there were people who kept saying "one great union", you know, "one great union." John Connolly still says that to this day: "What we need is one great union." Of course, our philosophy was the same, "Yes, we need one great union, but the only way you're going to do it is one at a time."

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Right.

WICKERSHAM: Now, let's move on with the merger. We then went, of course, as soon as we felt that we were getting the LPIU merger worked out, we moved very quickly to go to the Stereotypers and Electrotypers. There again, the reason for that was that we looked around and said, "What's the most possible?" And that looked like it was the most possible because of the size, because of the technological developments that were really affecting their union and, as it's seen today, practically eliminated them. So we went with that, and then we. . . . Well, of course, we figured, if we could pull off one more merger, then we would really be the spokesman for the Graphic Arts Union. We brought off two mergers. And who's next? As history has proven, if we could have nailed down the Stereotypers and then moved to the Bookbinders, obviously we would have been in complete control of what the next merger would have been. But then Swayduck reared his ugly head again, and I think really his efforts were the prime reason why the merger with the Stereotypers. . . .

INTERVIEWER: When was this? This was prior to 1964?

WICKERSHAM: No, no. That was after '64.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay. So after the merger with the IPU had been consummated, then you moved to the Stereotypers?

WICKERSHAM: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Well, almost immediately.

WICKERSHAM: Almost immediately.

INTERVIEWER II: Could you talk a bit about that vote? I guess you had in your constitution that the simple majority had to swing the election for you, and the Stereotypers had a two-thirds vote. I think you carried the vote in terms of the majority, but you didn't get the two-thirds. Is that right? Are you saying that Swayduck had some control or influence with the Stereotypers, maybe the New York Stereotypers, at that point?

WICKERSHAM: Yeah, that's true. The Stereotypers had to have a two-thirds vote. I don't recall the result of the vote. It seems to me that we didn't need a two-thirds. I think we had it even though we didn't need it.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: Our members were really behind the merger. But Swayduck did everything possible in New York City. And then he extended it out, you know, by talking to the Chicago people, stirring up all kinds of doubts. We're convinced that he was the prime reason that it didn't go.

INTERVIEWER: Before we pursue this with the Stereotypers, I'd like to back up a little bit on the Photo-engravers merger. One of the big issues that was involved in the merger convention where the

merger was discussed had to do with the health and welfare and the pension programs, that there was a fear because the Photo-engravers were older as a group. Now, what basically I'm getting at is, was there a difference between the issues that emerged at the convention as opposed to the issues that might have been difficult in your preconvention discussions, that is, these discussions that you were having with Risdon and Nyegaard? What were the principal difficulties that had to be overcome in those private, off-the-record discussions which you were having with them?

WICKERSHAM: Well, health and welfare wasn't a problem at all because even to this day the Photoengravers' approach to health and welfare was let the company furnish it, whereas the Lithographers' approach was joint-trusteed funds where the employer pays into a joint fund and then we purchase benefits and both the union and the employer have something to say about it. The Photoengravers had just the reverse.

But pensions were really a problem because the people who were against merger were saying, just as you said, that if we merge the pension funds, all the Lithographer pension funds are going to go down the drain because of the higher average age of the Photoengravers. Of course, our position, even with Local One, and that was the issue that Swayduck was using to defeat merger, was that it's going to hurt his pension fund. The record is clear in a number of different locations in the past minutes that there was no intention from the very beginning to force locals or the internationals to merge any kind of a pension fund. We knew that the Lithographers' pension fund could stand on its own feet, and we knew that Local One's [pension fund] could stand on its own feet. We had a number of them. We had San Francisco, Vancouver, Canada; there was no intention at all, <u>ever</u>, for us to talk about merging those funds.

INTERVIEWER: Because your own pension programs were not entirely merged. Not everybody was in the Inter Local Pension Program.

WICKERSHAM: No. No. I think at that time we had about five separate pension funds. So that there was never any. . . .

INTERVIEWER: Right. So if that wasn't a problem, what kinds of problems were there? Was it who was going to be top officer? Was it how local mergers might be affected? I mean, what were the sticky things as you had these discussions?

WICKERSHAM: I'm just trying to recall. There was never any disagreement to my knowledge on the officer structure. That just sort of fell right into place.

INTERVIEWER II: Was that because, you feel, the numerical superiority? Or was it because of the technological direction that things were moving in? Was it obvious that the ALA was going to continue to grow, where the Photoengravers needed jobs and needed some assistance?

WICKERSHAM: No. I don't think that the Photoengravers really ever, up to that time, felt that anything was going wrong with their industry. As I said, they are a proud group; they still are. I don't think they were concerned that their membership was declining on a rather steady rate. I think they looked to the ALA, though, because we were twice the size. We had really gone out in front for a union that size as far as owning our own building and having a research department and approaching bargaining on a more programmed basis. I think they looked to us for leadership at that time. As I say, there was no problem at all on that. There were some problems as far as--and we got this from both sides. . . . I'm trying to recall the various meetings. You know we did set up a large committee. It started out with all of the full-time officers from both unions. We met several times, and we had draft after draft of the constitution. Most of the discussions we had were on various articles in the constitution, each side obviously trying to protect their own interests. We tried to take the best of both constitutions and put it together.

There were discussions, for example--I read one yesterday--of the assistant to the president, a lot of discussion about that. Who is this guy? What kind of power does he have? And can Ken Brown appoint other assistants to the president and thereby dissipate the strength of the officers? There was a lot of discussion on that both in the early meetings and in the convention. They wanted to make sure that the duties of the president were sharply defined so that the executive vice president would not become a figurehead.

INTERVIEWER: Now, these were the Photoengravers who had these concerns?

WICKERSHAM: Yeah. I don't think there was as much discussion from the Lithographers because in many

cases the Lithographers' policies and positions were being used in the new constitution.

The Photoengravers to my recollection had to make more changes in their constitution than the Lithographers did. I can't really think of one specific issue. It was just rewriting a constitution and every single article. The Photoengravers were much stricter constructionists than the Lithographers, I think, and they looked at every word and wanted to make sure they knew what it said and so on.

INTERVIEWER II: Did they recognize because of their history of having a vote every year and the kind of power that the ALA gave to their president traditionally made him a strong president? Even at local levels I think this was representative. The ALA presidents of the locals were strong figures; they had power separated between three officers. Did they feel at that point that they needed to opt for more centralization and give someone some control and move away from the every year [vote]? That was really a handicap for them in terms of making strong decisions.

WICKERSHAM: Yeah. I think they quickly went, Greg. . . . I think they quickly jumped to the opportunity to get the election of officers out of the convention because, when you have 125 people determining whether you're going to be a full-time president for the next year, you know, it's a pretty precarious position to be in. In some of their conventions they had 125, 130 delegates, and they would vote. Each one of them had an equal vote. They weren't voting membership strength. Each delegate had one vote. And that was a hell of a position for an officer to be in. They quickly jumped to that.

They had difficulty, I think, with the president down on the local level; the structure, they had difficulty with that because even a lot of the people on this committee were business agents or secretary-treasurers, and the president in many cases was a figurehead.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: And that wasn't true in any case in the Lithographers. In every single local the president was the top guy. To this day some of the top people in the unmerged Photoengraver locals, like Cleveland, the top man is the business agent and the secretary-treasurer, I guess, of the local, and the president works at the

bench, comes in once a month, and runs the meeting, which still doesn't make sense to me; and I don't know how it does to them.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I noticed in looking at the *Journal* that, right while you were having these conferences of local presidents and so forth, the ALA negotiated a mutual pact with ITU. Now, that was a pact with respect to raiding, I think. Is that right?

WICKERSHAM: Yeah, it had something to do with that. But it was a pact where we, as I recall, we each put fifty thousand dollars or so into a fund.

INTERVIEWER: For organizing?

WICKERSHAM: For organizing on a cooperative organizing basis. But there was never a dime spent out of the fund. It never really got off the ground.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Why was that?

WICKERSHAM: Well,. . . . As a matter of fact, Ken Brown and Jack Wallace served on that committee. The problem with ITU was that they could agree with you in a meeting; but as soon as you started to put it down on paper, we'd run into stumbling blocks. We could never get them to agree on anything that had been written. Finally we just moved away from it; it just sort of died by lack of interest. It just died. I guess the way the pact was terminated was we closed out the bank account; we sent the money back.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. But at the time did you see this as a step in the possible direction of some kind of merger with ITU?

WICKERSHAM: Yeah, yeah. That was the objective. I think that even started *before* our talks with the Photo-engravers. My recollection is that very soon after I became the assistant to the president we had meetings with the ITU. We weren't talking merger, but there's no question that that was at the end of the tunnel. You know, if we could start talking with the people. . . .

INTERVIEWER: Or if you could do some joint organizing.

WICKERSHAM: Yeah. That that in itself would lead to something better, but it never went anyplace.

INTERVIEWER II: Where would you do joint organizing? Where did you see the possibility of an overlap with ITU in an organizing campaign?

WICKERSHAM: Well, particularly in areas where there was coal type, the Lithographers Union had achieved jurisdicition over the stripping with the ITU, referred to as "pasteup". We had several board cases where--I think Seattle was the first one--the board gave us jurisdiction over that pasteup. The logical division which we were trying to work out with the ITU was to have them run the key board as they did then, and then we would take the product out of the machine, develop the film, and patch it up. That's what we were trying to work out, but we never could do it because they weren't about to sit down and sign a document that said we would take the product off the typesetting machine. That's where it fell apart.

I don't think it's happened as rapidly as we thought. At that time we thought that typesetting would change completely, almost overnight, and that we would constantly be battling about who was going to be pasting that material up; it just never went anywhere.

INTERVIEWER: Well, that brings us to. . . .

WICKERSHAM: Excuse me. It ended with Donahue. . . . Donahue's been involved in our history, you know, here and there over the years. Donahue, George Gundersen, and I were invited to the ITU headquarters in Colorado Springs to tour their school; and this was part of the "be friends campaign". The morning we arrived there they had a strike in Denver where the Lithographers had taken jurisdiction over a piece of machinery that the ITU said was theirs.

INTERVIEWER: (Chuckle)

WICKERSHAM: So we walked into their headquarters like. . . .

INTERVIEWER: Daniel into the lion's den.

WICKERSHAM: Yeah. And we didn't know because we didn't know it had happened. They knew, but we didn't know; and we couldn't understand why we were getting the brushoff. But an all-day meeting ended up to be like a two-hour meeting, and then we were virtually tossed out of the place.

INTERVIEWER: (Laughter)

WICKERSHAM: So that ended the whole relationship, that trip.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I guess that brings us to the Montreal convention where suddenly, it looks like, Eddie Swayduck and Ben Robinson, who have been talking merger for fifteen years, come on strong as anti-merger. Now, from your point of view, how do you account for this? What happened?

WICKERSHAM: Well, it's just a personal reaction because nobody knows what's in Swayduck and Robinson's mind. But a personal reaction is that I think that Swayduck was very, very concerned about the fact that he represented twenty-five percent of the ALA; and when we merged, his power would be, to a degree, dissipated. Now I think it was just that.

Robinson's position was easier to understand. He was just mad at us! We had fired him, and anything that we were going to do he was going to fight! There were all kinds of lawsuits that he was handling. To show you how interested he was, he came into Montreal and stayed in a different hotel up the street and invited a whole raft of our delegates over to his room one night and had a long conversation about why we shouldn't merge.

An interesting sidelight of that was, John Stagg, who's now the educational director, was a delegate from Philadelphia local, and he had a couple of other delegates, I think Bill McFadden was one of them, went to that meeting. John's memory is unbelievable! He took a few notes, but he came back after that meeting. . . I'll never forget it. We were into the middle of the night really with John reciting virtually word-for-word everything that Robinson had said so that we were prepared the next day to refute all of the positions that Robinson came in [with].

We went to that convention, and I think it was one of the few times we had a night session, and we had everything documented. They used to kid me about that, even Swayduck, because I would come into a meeting with a whole stack of books with sheets of paper sticking out of various pages; and when Brown would be making his speeches, I would be handing him a book and he would read it; and it really bothered Swayduck. Sometimes I got to the point where I did it without even a plan; I would just aggravate him by bringing a whole stack of books in, and you'd never know what we were up to.

INTERVIEWER: (Laughter)

WICKERSHAM: So I came into that convention with documentation because Ken and I had discussed what he was going to say and the points he was going to make. That was the evening when Gilligan, secretary-treasurer of Local One, read the statement where, if this happened, Local One was going to pull out, and Brown took off. I don't know how long he talked, but it was. . . . He didn't use any of my material. I lost him. He went so fast that finally I just pushed it all aside because he didn't need the material. He just said everything right and got, you know, several standing ovations. With that, they all walked out, the whole New York delegation, and that's the last we've seen of them. You know? That's the last <u>I've</u> seen them. Brown, I think, has seen Swayduck a couple of times since then but they've just disappeared!

INTERVIEWER II: Did you feel that that might be an eventuality beforehand? Or was this a legitimate surprise?

WICKERSHAM: No, it wasn't a surprise, but it was just the way they did it, I guess, that got to Brown. You know, a prepared statement written by Robinson, following a meeting where they tried to influence our delegates. I think that's what got to him. And it was a roll-call vote, and I think there was only, probably, about seven or eight votes against him; I'm not really sure of that. You probably have that from somebody else.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. You mentioned that there were lawsuits prior to the convention?

WICKERSHAM: No, I think the lawsuits, in thinking it out now, I think the lawsuits came after they left. . . .

INTERVIEWER: Right.

WICKERSHAM: . . . because they wanted their share of the emergency fund and they wanted their share of the mortuary fund. The lawsuits before they left were libel suits against the officers and the councilors. They sued each officer for a million dollars, I think; each councilor for a million dollars; Brown, a little bit more. That was there, and long before that Swayduck had sued Teddy Brandt and Don Biedenbach for some statements that he said they made. So those kinds of lawsuits were just taking their normal course. But then the lawsuits against the International were after the merger was consummated. Swayduck wanted his money back and we wanted some of his. He held up his per capita, you know, for some months. We got to the point where we didn't even have enough money to pay the payroll.

We went to our locals, had some emergency meetings with all the local presidents, and arranged for a number of locals to pay per capita one, two, three months in advance. That was when Brown first took to making films, and we hit every single local in the country, to my knowledge; I don't think we missed any! In one week I think I went to seven local union meetings with my projector and my film, and everybody else did the same thing, pointing out what Local One was trying to do to destroy the organization. I think Swayduck was still a member then, and he voted, I think, eighty votes in favor of the assessment and the rest of his membership sixty-eight hundred or so against. A very well-controlled vote! In spite of that, the resolution passed, and we had a fifteen dollar assessment per member, which got us back in the red again.

INTERVIEWER: In the black.

WICKERSHAM: In the black again, out of the red.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

INTERVIEWER II: Can I just ask something aside about the vote that Swayduck was always able to deliver? That comes up all the time. How was Swayduck able to deliver those kinds of votes? Was it loyalty of his membership to him? What was the relationship that allowed for those kinds of votes?

WICKERSHAM: Well, I don't think I can be completely objective in answering that because I don't see how anybody

can. . . . If you put a resolution out to your members to give them each a Christmas turkey, you know, there'd be a large segment of your membership that would vote against it, even if you're going to give them something; and that's been experienced. We've had referendums on improving pensions in the Inter-Local, and there have been a tremendous amount of people voted against improving their own pension! So for him to come up with that kind of a vote--we like to think that it was an honest vote; I think if it was honest it was because of fear!

One of the things that I recall they had was that your folio number, your membership number, would be printed on the outside of the envelop, and the reason they said for that was so that they would know who voted and who didn't vote. They would tell you that we open the envelop and throw that away and put the envelop in one basket and your ballot in another. But the people in the shop didn't think that. They thought, "Oh, oh. They're going to open my envelop, and they're going to see I voted 'no' and the next day I'm going to be out of work!"

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: So I think it probably was an honest vote. Probably everybody voted. But I think the fear. . . We got this from members later on as we were trying to get some of our members back; we found out that that was their feeling, that the folio number was Swayduck's way of tracking your vote. And he did have absolute job control; Swayduck placed the foremen. And as we got into the fight more and more, we found, for example, he was really clever--if an old, retired member would get up and yell at him at a meeting and say he was wrong, on several occasions, his son or son-in-law would be discharged the next day. He really was cruel in the way he got at people. He didn't always get at you directly, but he got at somebody in your family or something like that. I think it was all based on fear.

INTERVIEWER: Well, this is sort of a simple-minded question, I guess. But was there any way, as you look back on it, of keeping Local One in the organization?

WICKERSHAM: No, I really don't think so. We tried, we really did. I talked to Swayduck. For some strange reason, I had some sort of a relationship with him, and I tried to explain to him that instead of becoming a smaller fish in a bigger pond that he really could become the spokesman for the Graphic Arts in New York City because obviously at that time the Photoengravers' leadership was not

good; Nyegaard, in that period of time, had passed away, and they were going through a series of presidents in the Photoengravers' local. We tried things like that, you know, to say, "Look Eddie, your pension fund is okay; it's not going to be touched. You can be a power in New York (we were sort of playing on his ego there), and you'll be bigger than Bert Powers and all those from the ITU, and all those sorts of things. But I think he had his own game there and Swayduck had his own game. They were doing well financially (both of them), and I don't think they wanted to change that.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. What then is behind his moving to some kind of relationship with the ITU?

WICKERSHAM: Oh, well, very quickly he found out that we waved some massive campaign against his label. He retained, you know, basically the same ALA label.

(End of Tape IV, side 5)

WICKERSHAM: . . . . (starting in mid-sentence) Vice president Walter Risdon, who came from the Photoengravers, was in charge of our Union Label Department and stationed in Washington. We had an office then, you know, a branch office in Washington, and Walter was stationed in that office and took to it with a vengeance. He had a very close relationship with the Union Label Department and with other people in Washington. For example, he went to the Community Services Department, and everytime the Community Fund or the REd Cross or TB or whatever would come out with a brochure with Swayduck's label on it, we would nail it down. Then very quickly we got to the point where we were meeting with them even before they had their printing done, and millions of dollars worth of work literally were being taken out of New York--union label work.

So that's what led him quickly to have some kind of an affiliation; it was a paper affiliation. I think they paid a dollar a month, and they got no benefits out of that except that they could put on their letterhead "affiliated with the ITU."

But that did give us problems because even then the AFL-CIO, and George Meany particularly, said that they're a bonafide union; we can't go against them. We had a lot of discussion with the AFL-CIO and got some support; but when it finally got up to George Meany, he really didn't help us at all.

We still have managed to keep a lot of this national charitable work out of New York, though, in spite of his affiliation.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Okay. Well, almost as soon as the merger becomes official, apparently you now move with considerable speed in your discussions with the Stereotypers.

WICKERSHAM: Right. And they went along very well because we used the LPIU constitution with virtually no changes. Where it took us a year or so to work out the details--and many, many meetings with increasingly larger committees of Lithographers and Photoengravers--when we got to the IS & EU, we just used the LPIU constitution, the argument being, "Look, we've argued all of these issues." And they agreed--some minor changes, but very, very few. I think, you know, that the success was almost there. They were very close to the two-thirds majority, and probably the New York and Chicago votes would have been the ones that would have--maybe even the New York vote--would have been enough to swing it. But it all took place so quickly, so quickly that my recollection of the whole period of time is very slim.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that Swayduck might have been playing some kind of a role insofar as the New York local of the Stereotypers is concerned?

WICKERSHAM: Oh, no question! You know, he had their whole committee down to his health clinic and gave them all glasses. They all came into our meetings with Local One glasses. He did everything that he could--took them out to lunch--and everything he could to convince them that we were a bunch of bad people that they shouldn't associate with.

INTERVIEWER II: What would his issue have been at that point, that they would lose their identity and that there. . . ?

WICKERSHAM: Yeah, yeah. We didn't have any jobs for them; we'd be taking their jobs. We wouldn't be giving them ours; we'd be taking theirs. Everything you could think of. You know, it's easy to be against merger. You really don't need many arguments to be against merger, but to be <u>for</u> merger you have to look a little bit beyond what's happening <u>today</u>. So it's not too hard for somebody to put all kinds of doubts in somebody's mind when they start out with doubts.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I'm interested that not too long after that you also opened merger talks with the Printing Pressmen. And frankly, that surprises me because your relationships in various places were not the happiest with the Printing Pressmen. (Chuckle)

WICKERSHAM: No. Well, that was when DeAndrade, Boyd DeAndrade, was president, and he was an old gentleman, he really was.

Our talks were very, very serious for awhile with the Pressmen. We started with them on the same way that we did with the Photoengravers, in other words, informal meetings at rather nice places where we could play golf and have drinks and talk informally and get to know each other; and we had a series of those meetings.

They had the break, you might recall, and they still have it in their own union, where the Specialty Workers represented a little bit more than half, at that time, of their total union. They were a different class of members. They had different benefits, paid different dues, and were constantly struggling for recognition within their own union. They had gotten to the point where they had two international vice presidents, Sol Fishcoe and a fellow from the West Coast, Don McCaugh.

INTERVIEWER: Don what?

WICKERSHAM: McCaugh. I think its M-c-C-A-U-G-H, something like that. He's from Los Angeles. They were the Specialty Workers vice presidents. All of a sudden it became clear. We would have a meeting, when we started getting more formal, working out structure, for example, that DeAndrade would come in, read a written opening to the meeting, and Fishcoe would take over. The last meeting we had with them Fishcoe did a blackboard talk on what the structure was going to be.

It would have wiped us out! Seven officers of the LPIU would very, very quickly disappear, I think, at the point of merger, not attrition, but they'd just go. I don't have the records of what that structure was. I'm not even sure that anybody took the time to write it down it was so utterly ridiculous! They were working out a merger agreement that would absorb the LPIU, and that broke it off. I think that was the last time we ever had a meeting with them.

Since that time, there have been meetings, not with Fishcoe, but prior to Rowan's retirement last year. We had a

meeting at the AFL-CIO convention in Miami--several of our officers and just Rowan, strangely enough, by himself. He wanted to pursue merger talks, and he said that he didn't even care who the president would be, so we got some quick hope again that we were going to be able to talk. Then right on the heels of that, Rowan retired, and Fishcoe came in.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: The relationship with Fishcoe, you know, obviously we felt that he destroyed the first talks, or the success of the first talks, and there hasn't been anything other than an occasional nod when you see him in a crowd, and that's about it as far as Fishcoe. So as of this moment there's no thought of even talking to them--as of this moment.

INTERVIEWER: Well, what in your view have been some of the problems with respect to the merger with the Photoengravers?

WICKERSHAM: Well, there were some problems getting the officers on the same page. We started out, you know, with the secretary-treasurer of the Photoengravers operating their existing office in St. Louis. That gave us some problems at first because we were running a split operation, which made no sense except to be convenient for their secretary-treasurer. Unfortunately, he passed away shortly after merger. Unfortunately for him, (he) had a heart attack in our office as a matter of fact and passed away. We then moved the office to New York. We closed down the St. Louis office.

There was some problem in merger with direction of staff because the executive vice president. . . . First of all, the staff, as far as Brown is concerned, is directed. . . meaning the international representative staff, not the office staff, but the field representatives. The direction of that has historically been out of Brown's office, usually through me, and we had some degree of problem in the early stages of merger with Bill Hall making direct assignments and sort of fouling up the orderly routine, you know. I'd have a representative working on a project and Bill would call him up, take him off, and put him on one. We understood that; that just was making life a little difficult, but we could manage that, you know.

The biggest problem that we had, shortly after merger, was the Photoengravers' pension fund. Probably a number of the people that you've interviewed have or will tell you about that because so many people were involved. The investment practices of

the Photoengraving pension fund gave us fits, really, because they had one investment counselor who gave advice. The great preponderance of Photoengraver investments was in mutual funds, and our financial advisors were telling us--and it's since proved to be so--that the mutual funds just didn't go anywhere; in fact, they went down.

We had a big political battle, frankly, about the investment counselor. Some of the officers were using him as their own investment counselor--Hall particularly--which, as a matter of fact, led to the Code of Ethics Resolution; it was designed primarily to try to prevent people from using our service people for their own use.

Then our actuaries got into the Photoengravers' pension fund and found out that it was just going down the drain and was heading for oblivion. They were paying pensions to people who hadn't really paid more than a few dollars into the fund, and we could project that within seven or eight years it would be completely broke.

So one of Brown's first jobs as president of the merged organization was to slash the hell out of the pension fund, and that's not the most. . .

INTERVIEWER: Popular move.

WICKERSHAM: Politically popular move to make. I believe then that was the first time when Brown had opposition as a president, and that was Jim O'Neill who's now with the ITU. He was an in-international rep, and he was international vice president and resigned.

INTERVIEWER: When was this?

WICKERSHAM: Right after merger; at the time of merger. . . .

INTERVIEWER: In '65?

WICKERSHAM: In '64, at that time of merger, Jim O'Neill was a vice president, defeated Teddy Brandt, and he didn't make it. He was there for a few months and resigned and went back to the trade. And then he came out of the woodwork again and at the first convention was nominated to run against Brown because of the pension issue. I think he got something like ten thousand votes! I don't think they

were voting against Brown; they were voting against the pension.

INTERVIEWER: And you feel that these were largely Photoengraver votes?

WICKERSHAM: Yeah. Yeah. But the pension was slashed, and the people who were getting thirty-five or fifty dollars a month, I think, went down to about twelve, which was really disastrous! It's as actuarially sound as it can be, but the pension rolls keep getting smaller and smaller, and I don't think we're over the hill yet!

And then as part of the political problems, we tried to merge the pension with the Inter Local, and there was no question in our mind that Bill Hall was fighting that for whatever reason, maybe the fact that he thought they would lose their identity, I don't know. There was no question in our mind _either_ that, if it had merged, it would have had an effect on the Inter Local. Some of the Inter Local trustees were concerned about that because they were going to be. . . .

INTERVIEWER II: That was a difficult moment; you actually had two groups opposed to that.

INTERVIEWER: Well, it sounds like they were for it, but not very, themselves.

WICKERSHAM: Right. There were a number of trustees of the Inter Local that were, you know, looking at it with a jaundiced eye because there was no question at all that, if they did merge, rather than improving the benefits for the. . . They wouldn't have had to cut the benefits for the Lithographers, but they might have had to go for awhile before they could improve them again because they were going to take on a tremendous liability.

INTERVIEWER: Well, at the present time what's the situation with respect to merged locals? How many merged locals are there, and how much movement is there?

WICKERSHAM: Well, I can't really give you the numbers, but I'd say probably seven or eight locals are not merged. The Photoengravers and the Lithographers have done a fantastic job of merging. We have some die-hards; Cleveland is one, Toronto is another one. Montreal will be merged; their Executive Boards have voted that. When Montreal merges, the only local in Canada that won't be merged will be Toronto.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: So around the country most of the locals now are merged.

INTERVIEWER: Well, Philadelphia is not merged; that's a big one.

WICKERSHAM: Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cleveland.

INTERVIEWER: Pittsburgh.

WICKERSHAM: Pittsburgh.

INTERVIEWER: Do you see a pattern with respect to non-merged locals, or is each individual case different?

WICKERSHAM: I think you can safely say that in every case it's a personality clash--in every case! Philadelphia. . . well, in every case.

Cleveland, the two local officers don't even talk to each other; they're in the same building, you know, they're right across the hall.

INTERVIEWER: It must make elevator rides difficult. (Laughter)

WICKERSHAM: Yeah. Philadelphia, it's about the same. There's just a "Good morning. How are you?", and that's the extent of their conversation. Toronto, we were heading for merger in Toronto. Les Young was one of the dyed-in-the-wool Photoengravers. He retired; and right after he retired, the new president started merger talks with the Lithographers local, and they were moving right along. The president decided he didn't like to be a union president, resigned, and Les Young came back out of retirement, and merger talks came to a screeching halt.

So I think you can safely say in every case it's personality. Some locals have merged; Washington's a prime example. Jack Greer, the president of the Lithographers' local, felt that it was correct to merge, but he didn't want to merge. And as it's turned out, he merged, but he really took on a liability. All the

per capita tax that the Photoengravers pay to his local doesn't pay for the salary of the full-time man that he got with the merger.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: So he says it's a losing venture for him except he has control of negotiations, which is really the. . . . But financially, it was a disaster!

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER II: Could we talk a little bit about some of the results of the merger, some things such as interchangeability of work, new school, early retirement, these kinds of things? Can you look at these things and make some judgments about the results of merger?

WICKERSHAM: Well, without citing specific examples, you've mentioned some of them yourself, but without citing specific examples, there's city after city after city where the contract conditions have leveled off--where we've taken the best of both contracts. And I can give you an example; you know, we have examples both ways, where in some cities the photoengraver rate was higher and we got the lithographer rate up to that. And in some cities the lithographer rate was higher and we brought the photoengraver rate up to that.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: Chicago is an example of that. Seattle, I think, was another one. But, you know, city after city, we could dig into our files and show you where the collective bargaining has really, you know, been brought together.

We've had health and welfare programs, Chicago's another example there, where the entire city now has the same health and welfare benefits. Education programs, the entire city has the availability of the schools. And the early retirement program, as you mentioned, Greg, where we've gotten the early retirement program in the entire city.

Chicago, and there are a couple of other cities, have what they refer to as a "photo plate-making contract", which is the highest rate, you know, of any rate in the city, and any employer who signs that will be allowed to have his lithographers do photoengraving or gravure and his gravure and photengraving people. . . . in other words, complete interchange.

And years ago, if they made a set of color separations, for example, in the litho department and, as happens in many cases, there's also a gravure job using the same color separations, they would make another set in the gravure department. You know, there was no interchange, which was really ridiculous! The employer was making in some cases three sets of color separations, one for the litho department, one for the gravure, and one for the commercial photoengraving.

As an example in Chicago now, a company that has all three, or two, processes can have complete interchange of help and work. Harry Conlon, who was the Photoengraver officer in Chicago, has said many times that he has less unemployment amongst the photoengravers than any city in the country because they're doing litho work rather than lay them off. So that's a tremendous advantage of merger.

Administration is. . . . I gave you the worst example, Washington, because it happens in Washington that the Photoengraver full-time officer that they have is not an effective officer. In fact, he's in an election campaign right now, and the odds are that he'll be replaced. But in many, many cities joining the officers together has given them, you know, another full-time man that they might not have been able to have otherwise and allowed them to do organizing and servicing much more efficiently. Minor things, such as only paying one rent, only paying one phone bill, that type of thing, are savings we know are there, but we haven't even made any effort to document them.

I think the strongest point is central control of negotiations; that's even true now with the Bookbinder merger.

INTERVIEWER II: Is that an advantage also to employers in the sense that they're negotiating with one group and prevent some of the leapfrogging that they claim was so harmful to them--they'd just get out of one settlement, and then they'd have to go back in with another group who would look at that settlement and want a little bit more?

WICKERSHAM: Well, very rarely do they negotiate one contract. Like in Chicago, they negotiate a photoengraving contract, except for this photo-platemaking contract. But they negotiate a gravure contract,

and they negotiate a commercial engraving and a litho. About the best they've been able to do is maybe coordinate the date so the termination date is the same. I don't know of any city where we just negotiate a city-wide contract that covers everybody.

But I think that the advantage to the employers, and some of them might not want to admit it because we think it gives us more bargaining strength, but certainly the advantage to the employer is that they know what the policy of the organization is and they're not going to get one policy in their photoengraving contract and a different policy in their litho contract. At least they'll be dealing with the same issues, usually with the same people, maybe at different times.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Would you envision a day when you would be looking towards negotiating city-wide contracts?

WICKERSHAM: I doubt it. I doubt it because of the fact that the industry itself hasn't merged that much yet.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: You know, you still have photoengraving shops and you still have litho shops. Some of your larger companies will have all three processes, but by and large the industry hasn't really merged. You have a Photoengraver's Employer Association and you have a Lithographer's Employer Association, and so on.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Well, you were talking about the Bookbinder merger, and maybe the time has come to trace that through from its beginnings.

WICKERSHAM: Yeah, I think I've pretty much covered most aspects of the LPIU merger in the other talks we've had.

The Bookbinder merger has been one of those mergers that has been sort of on the back of the griddle, going all the way back to the meetings in the Newspaper Guild headquarters when at that time John Connolly was a vice president. But he attended those meetings. And John has always been a spokesman for the "one big union" concept.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: So that when we knew that the negotiations with the Pressmen had fallen through and the Stereotypers had fallen through--and we hadn't even given any consideration to the ITU--we started to have meetings with the Bookbinders. We've always had a good relationship with the Bookbinders.

Jack Wallace has--in fact, I think his father was probably a bookbinder--always had fairly close contact with the Bookbinders. So I couldn't even tell you when that started, really; it just was one of those things that sort of evolved, and finally it got more serious and more serious. When we sat down and really started talking with the Bookbinders, there again, I don't think you'd find many changes in the LPIU constitution. I haven't really checked it, but I think you'd find it was probably almost word for word what the LPIU constitution was, once we worked out the officer structure. The biggest issue, which frankly hasn't even been completely worked out yet because the fur will fly at the next convention, we worked out a system of attrition where we started out with everybody being an officer, including the councilors. Then we worked out that certain jobs, when they were vacated, would be abolished; for example, the Executive Vice President for the Photoengravers, Bill Hall, when he retires or when his job is vacated, that job ends. And either one of the financial officers, either Stone or Streeter, whichever office is vacated first, it becomes one office. And the first vice president that retires, that job ends. That we understand and the officers understand, and that's no problem. The problem that we see that's going to shape up is that for each full-time officer's job that is abolished, four. . . or two. . . Let's see. For each full-time officer, one part-time vice president's office is abolished and two councilor positions are abolished, I believe.

So without going into the formula in detail, we end up with a total council of about twenty-eight people, I think, instead of fifty. So that at this convention all of the councilors are going to be running. It's going to be like the old days of the Photoengravers convention when everybody's going to be running for office.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: So we're sort of keeping our fingers crossed that there's no bloodshed at that convention.

INTERVIEWER: (Laughter)

WICKERSHAM: Nobody wants to give that job up.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I'm under the impression, I may be wrong, but the Bookbinders, like the Pressmen, had two categories of membership.

WICKERSHAM: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Right? Now, has that created problems?

WICKERSHAM: Yeah. Because the Bookbinders' category of membership which goes back into history, was men and women, which we can't have. We shudder to think that the old Bookbinders' magazine. . . Every time I would read it I would take a deep breath because on the back cover they had a little note that said: "All locals are urged to follow international policy and negotiate seventy percent of men's rates for women." If that's not discriminatory, nothing ever was.

So most of our time now, most of our time in negotiations with the Bookbinders' employers has been in trying to eliminate discrimination. We've had a number of suits filed against us. I think at the time of merger we had twenty-two outstanding EEOC cases against us. One of them was with McCall Corporation where the company was forced to pay $500,000 in back pay, and it could have just as easily been cut down the middle--half paid by the union and half paid by the employer. That gave us some concern.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: The Bookbinders weren't as rigid as we were--as the Lithographers and Photoengravers were--about approving contracts. If the Lithographers and Photoengravers had a contract that was illegal, we wouldn't approve it so that in the event there was a lawsuit, or something against the local, or an equal-opportunity suit, it would be the local's problem. But we are still living with a number of Bookbinder contracts that we hope, you know, in time will have to be renewed. But we are still living with a number of contracts that are discriminatory and have discriminatory language; and if there were to be a lawsuit against us with a contract that John Connolly signed, it could be disastrous.

So we've changed the classification from men and women--it used to be journeymen and journeywomen. At least so that the record is clear, we have journeymen one and journeymen two. And we've instituted an affirmative action program where we

write into the contract that, if you move from journeymen to journeyman one, you get a certain amount of credit for your time in that category and that first of all you can move, because they couldn't before.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Yeah. Are we going to have to start talking about "journeypersons"?

WICKERSHAM: Journeypersons, I guess. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: (Chuckle)

WICKERSHAM: But that's been a problem. And the problem is that how do you, overnight, eliminate a practice that goes back to the days when the women came into the bindery as part-time help? You know, in the days when housewives didn't work, and they came in and they worked an hour or two a day or maybe two days a week. We still have some of those shops where people work a couple days a week.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: I've had as many women in negotiations tell me, "Well, that's not a man's job. Why should that man be doing it? That's a woman's job." I'd quickly come back and say, "There's no such thing as a woman's job." But it's firmly ingrained in their mind. And as I say, there are as many women that, if they see a man come over and do a helper's job, they'll be in there yelling at the union and saying, "That's a woman's job. Get him out of here." So we're working at it. It's an uphill battle, though; it really is.

Maternity leaves right now are something that are really giving us a fit! I have a contract on my desk, right here, that says that sick and out-of-work benefits do not apply in the case of pregnancy. Well, you know, you can't have that now.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: There've been some cases that said that, you know, under certain circumstances you can. But we're clear in our belief legally and morally,

really. In spite of whatever the law might say, we're clear in our belief that everybody should have the same opportunity.

(End of tape III, side 6)

WICKERSHAM: Right. In the Lithographers and Photoengravers it's almost like a religion. In other words, you're a union member first, then you have a job. So if a lithographer gets laid off, the last thing he does is give up his union membership. Either his local will carry him for a long period of time or, if his local won't carry him, he'll pay dues himself.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

WICKERSHAM: Now, in the bindery industry their identity is not. . . This is generally speaking, you know; obviously some bookbinders are Bookbinders forever. But particularly in your semiskilled and your unskilled categories, your first thought is your job and your second is, "Oh, yes, and I belong to the union." So what we found out is that, when there are layoffs, as there are now in this economy, the bookbinder is inclined to pick up his withdrawal card on the way out the door so that that's given us a problem in that our membership, which used to not fluctuate except to go up on a rather gradual steady basis, now goes up and down, up and down. And that gives us some problems because you really can't project what your budget is supposed to be and so on.

INTERVIEWER: Let me ask you another question which is really kind of a psychological question. As Greg and I move around doing interviews, we have been enormously impressed with the fact that members of the Graphic Arts Union talk about their skill; their skill is a very important commodity to them. Now, maybe I'm wrong, but it would seem to me that merger with the Bookbinders meant merger with a much larger unskilled work force, where there were jobs in the Bookbinders which most anybody could do. Nobody can walk in off the street and be a platemaker.

WICKERSHAM: Right.

INTERVIEWER: But you can walk in off the street and coat the sides of pages with glue. Has this created

certain problems and tensions in the sense that members of the union were unwilling to associate with, identify with, incorporate a group of people who really did not have a particular skill in the same sense?

WICKERSHAM: I don't really think it's created much of a problem on the shop level. It's created a problem for us as leaders of the union in that we have to approach the unskilled members on a different basis than we approach the skilled members.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: I've noticed it, for example, in negotiations, and then you go to a membership meeting; you have to be a little more blunt in getting your message across than you would with the higher skilled people; you can reason a little bit more. In some cases, some higher skilled people are pretty unreasonable, too.

But you find a different attitude on the part of the unskilled people towards their union. They look upon the union in many cases as somebody that, first of all, they have to pay dues to, and that's a terrible thing; and secondly, "why aren't you getting me more?"

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: Whereas the lithographer and photoengraver understand their industry. They know that they have to be competitive. They know that they should get high wages but that, if they get too high, they're liable to run their employer out of business. That's not so with the semiskilled people because, if they're making three dollars an hour in a bindery, which some of them are--some of them are making very, very low wages--but if they're making three dollars an hour in a bindery and they don't like it, they can go across the street and work in a shoe factory and make three dollars an hour.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Or start clerking in a store, or whatever.

WICKERSHAM: Right. So that's been a problem, and frankly, we really haven't adjusted to it yet. We talk

about it a lot, but we really haven't adjusted to how we approach that kind of bargaining.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Well, it seems to me that it was always kind of an anomaly that you were in the CIO when you were in the CIO because you never really were an industrial union.

WICKERSHAM: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Now for the first time you are an industrial union, and there's a whole change in philosophy and in bargaining postures and educational programs. For example, just to be very specific, one of the things that I notice in the field of workers' education, that education programs in craft unions tend to center around the craft. Your schools have tended to be very much oriented to how do you become a better stripper, what are the various kinds of opportunities in plate preparation, and so forth. Whereas education programs in industrial unions are more likely to have courses on consumerism, are more likely to have courses explaining the basic economic structure of this country, more likely to have courses that focus on politics, and this has not been a characteristic feature of your schools.

WICKERSHAM: No, no. Frankly, I don't think any of our schools, our litho and photoengraving schools, have adjusted yet to what are they going to do with the bindery when they integrate them into their schools.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: There's a tremendous amount of equipment, for example, in a bindery. In a normal bindery there's a tremendous amount of equipment that goes for weeks on end without being used. You have to have it because, when a certain job comes in that requires that machine, then it's called into play, you know, to teach how to run all of these types of machines. I don't think any of our schools have really adjusted their thinking to what they're going to do about it. I think probably they'll have to get down to maybe more general courses. I don't even know whether our Educational Department has spent much time on that yet, either.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER II: Let me ask you a question about the different needs for servicing. You directly involve yourself with the I R staff, and you inherited a whole group of people from the Bookbinders who were used to servicing people in one way and they were now integrated into your other I R staff that was used to servicing locals in another way. In some cases they were called on to service LPIU contracts. Has there been a problem of membership acceptance of Bookbinder staff people? Has there been a problem of getting LPIU staff people sensitive? How are you resolving these kinds of problems? It goes right to, I think, follow up Alice's concerns about two different philosophies.

WICKERSHAM: Well, there's been less of an acceptance on the part of Lithographer locals to have Bookbinder representatives come in. But there's been no problem at all, or virtually no problem at all, in having Lithographer or Photoengraver reps go into bookbinder situations.

INTERVIEWER: That makes sense.

WICKERSHAM: We inherited a staff from the Bookbinders, a rather large staff, and we've retired quite a few of them; they were, you know, up in their . . . . sixty-five or over. We're in the process now of rebuilding that. . . . slowly. You know, we've retired more than we're going to replace, but when we replace them. . . For example, we have two Bookbinder vice presidents who were reps, Gene Boerner and Murray McKenzie; there's no hesitation at all to send them into any situation. They've both been in lithographer situations and photoengraver situations as well as bookbinding so that, as we develop the staff, obviously we'll be putting people on who will not be identified just as a bookbinder; they'll be identified as a GAIU International rep.

But I don't know of more than one or two instances where we've assigned a bookbinder rep to go into a photoengraving set of negotiations, for example. But that will come. It took us awhile. . . It took us probably a couple of years in the LPIU merger to make them all-round reps. There was a period of time there. . . .

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. You were doing this through a process of staff training and. . .

WICKERSHAM: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

WICKERSHAM: And we still in some cases have two reps go into a situation together so that they learn from each other. But it will work out. In fact, I have on my desk here--or had on my desk; it's been taken out now--we're in the process now of assigning each rep to a series of cities. We're up to that point now where, instead of assigning them to a specific problem in a city, the next major project that I have to work on is to assign each city to a rep and then it will be his responsibility to handle everything in that city. Now, it doesn't mean that he'll be able to do it, but it will be his responsibility. . .

INTERVIEWER: Right.

WICKERSHAM: . . . to call me and say, "Look, I've got a set of negotiations; I just can't handle it. I either don't understand the issues or I don't have the time." But nevertheless, it will be his responsibility. When that local wants some help, they'll go to him and say, "I need help." As it is now, they're coming here, which, you know, puts a burden on this office.

INTERVIEWER: Well, do you have areas that you think we ought to think in terms of covering in another session? Or maybe these will occur to you. . . .

WICKERSHAM: Well, yeah, let's put it that way. I think I've covered as much involvement as I've been in, which has been quite a bit, but in the process of this interview there might develop some other things that I might want to talk about.

INTERVIEWER II: Well, I know you have to go, and I just want to ask one more question about the future of the industry and the forces that now confront the GAIU. Are there questions that you might want to comment on about your organizing potential, about the conglomerates, decentralization of printing into the South? What is the future, as you see it, the problems that you're going to have to address in order to be viable?

WICKERSHAM: Well, it all zeros right in on organizing. You know, we'll bargain as good as we've ever bar-

gained forever, you know. I don't see any change in our bargaining posture. We'll adjust to the pressures as we've adjusted to all the phases--the wage and price control; we adjusted to that very quickly and made the most of it. That doesn't bother me; we'll continue to do that.

But organizing is getting tougher and tougher; and if we don't organize, we're just going to get smaller and smaller. I don't know what the figure is that we have to organize. It's fantastic the number of people we have to organize just to maintain our membership. Somebody came up with a figure of 43 to 1. We don't like to say that, but it could be true with all of these withdrawals, you know, of particularly bookbinder members.

But in this economy today, and hopefully it'll change, but in this economy today organizing has just come to a screeching halt. Now, the economy might get so bad that. . . . You know, in the days of the start of the CIO it got so bad that unions just mushroomed. I hope it doesn't get that bad. But right now people are afraid. They see their neighbor laid off who belongs to a union and, you know, they say, "I better not rock the boat." And we're getting that kind of answer in our organizing all around the country: "Well, now, it's not the time. Come back next month" or "Come back in six months."

We've had some discussions at our recent Council meeting--a variety of recommendations; for example, stepping up our local education on bargaining and force the locals to do their own bargaining with some overall direction and take more of our representatives and put them on full-time organizing because what they're doing now is they're spending too much of their time on servicing.

We have International reps going into cities where there are full-time local officers and helping them in negotiations. Well, we can't do that. We've got to shift gears and put more people on organizing and stimulate the organizing because we're just not going to survive if we don't. And, you know, you can suffer for it.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. The whole labor movement's not going to survive if they don't! It's a precarious situation.

WICKERSHAM: Right. Plants are moving south out of Chicago faster than we can keep track of them, and we're not organizing them. They're taking these people out of the hills of Kentucky, putting them into an airconditioned plant, giving them a hot lunch, you know, for next to nothing, and an organizer goes in there and the guy says,

"I've never had it so good!" So that's a problem.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. Right.

(End of Interview)

LEON WICKERSHAM

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