THE 20th CENTURY TRADE UNION WOMAN: VEHICLE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

with

PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Oral History Project

with

MARGARET SCATTERGOOD

American Federation of Labor

by

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Program on Women and Work

Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations

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Ann Arbor, Michigan

VITAE

MARGARET SCATTERGOOD

Margaret Scattergood was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on October 1, 1894,and came from a strong Quaker background. She attended Bryn Mawr College and she received her Bachelor of Arts in 1917.

After her college graduation, Scattergood served in France with the American Friends Service Committee, doing refugee aid work. She then worked in New York City with the National Council for the Prevention of War.

In April 1926, Scattergood joined the staff of the American Federation of Labor. She was instrumental in developing the first national unemployment reports, and the cost of living and consumer price indexes with the cooperation of the staffs of the Department of Labor and Commerce.

Oral History Interview

with

MARGARET SCATTERGOOD

December 3, 1976
McLean, Virginia

By Alice Hoffman

INTERVIEWER: This is Alice Hoffman recording for the University of Michigan project, "The Trade Union Woman: Vehicle of Social Change," interviewing Margaret Scattergood in her home on the 3rd of December, 1976.

Margaret, could you just give me your full name and your date and place of birth?

SCATTERGOOD: I'm Margaret Scattergood. I was born in Philadelphia on October 1, 1894.

INTERVIEWER: All right. You joined the staff of the AF of L when?

SCATTERGOOD: April, 1926.

INTERVIEWER: And what was your position, Margaret?

SCATTERGOOD: I was a member of President Green's research staff under Florence Calvert Thorne who was Director of Research.

INTERVIEWER: And you retired?

SCATTERGOOD: I resigned in January of 1953.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I think it's important as a kind of introduction to this interview to observe that you worked very closely with Miss Thorne during that period of time and that she has given a memoir to the Columbia University Oral History Research Office and that one of the things that you would like to do would be to comment on Miss Thorne's role in the AF of L as a codicil, if you will, on that interview that she gave to Columbia. So do you want to say something about your thoughts on a kind of perspective on Miss Thorne?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, I began to look at our work in the Federation in perspective about a year and a half ago when I was developing a very brief biography on Miss Thorne for a bookplate. This task made me see the significance of her work there.

When Mr. Gompers came to the United States, he was very impressed with the kind of government he found here. The protection of individual rights and freedoms seemed to him to give workers what they needed to get fair and just working conditions through collective bargaining. So he was always in favor of workers bettering themselves through bargaining with their own employers rather than through a socialist program, which depended on a faraway federal bureaucracy to improve workers' conditions. Mr. Gompers felt that workers and employers knew the circumstances of their own plant and could develop rules and regulations covering working conditions which were suitable for that plant. Therefore, he was always opposed to socialism, always in favor of union organization through a democratic local trade union where the membership elected their officers and where the membership made plain to the officers the kinds of things that they wanted to accomplish in bettering their conditions.

Miss Thorne believed also wholeheartedly in the Gompers philosophy. Mr. Gompers resisted the efforts of socialists to get the American Federation of Labor to sponsor socialism or socialist ideas. He was always so vigorously opposed to this that the socialists never had an opportunity to penetrate the American labor movement.

As time went on and we went through the serious business depression of the 1930's and President Roosevelt, coming in in 1933, began to establish codes for labor conditions in industry, it became plain that labor needed college-trained people to help them get the information needed for their new responsibilities. Roosevelt insisted that these codes be developed by committees consisting of a representative of management, a representative of the government, and a representative of labor meeting together. Miss Thorne saw the need for developing information for the labor representatives. So in the Federation we began employing students who had recently graduated from colleges and universities to help search out and develop the information needed. Of course these students felt that their education had given them superior knowledge and were eager to guide labor along the lines of their own thinking.

This is where Miss Thorne gave one of her most important services because she made it plain to every student who became a labor researcher that they were the servants of labor and that they were there to provide information which the trade union leaders wanted and needed but the labor leaders themselves were always the ones to make policy. In her own work with labor, Miss Thorne

SCATTERGOOD: always made it a point to give labor information but never to tell them what to do. She would use this method: she would gather information and then she would say to a labor leader, 'Now, you might do this or you might do that or you might do....(another suggestion).

Labor leaders had complete confidence in Miss Thorne because they knew that she had their cause so completely at heart, that she was never self-seeking, that she was always completely honest and they could trust her. So that, with her guidance, the labor leaders were willing to accept these college-educated research directors, and Miss Thorne's influence helped the research directors to adjust themselves so that they could give a service to the labor leaders without trying to intervene in the making of policy.

Through Miss Thorne's work as director of research and the large group of labor research directors employed by international unions and by the Federation, labor became very well versed in the industrial conditions of our times. They had information about the positions of their own companies, about the condition of their industry, about the earnings of workers in similar kinds of work, about costs of living, and about industrial conditions generally so that they sometimes in collective bargaining even knew more than their employers.

The result of this also was that, in addition to being very wise and often very tough and constructive in their collective bargaining, winning important gains for labor, they also took great interest in their communities and in national legislation and were well informed in these fields as well. Locally they participated in local problems, in such things as improving their libraries, their schools, getting adequate local housing, and so forth. Nationally they made their views known in Congress and state-wide in state legislatures. So that in many fields they had an important influence in developing the institutions of our country.

Also when the proposal for social security came along, Miss Thorne had research directors who concentrated on this problem and helped to develop the social security proposals into law.

The result of Mr. Gompers' policy and of its implementation by Miss Thorne and the labor leaders with the help of the research staff, was that communism never was able to get a foothold in the American labor movement. In foreign countries, where the unions were sponsoring socialism and trying to get a socialist government into power, the Communists found it quite easy to penetrate the unions and to substitute communism for socialism and in this way get control in various countries, as for instance in Italy and France. In England they had a very serious control in the Mineworkers Union and, I believe, in others. Here in this country President Meany's great reception for Solzenhitsin is a good example of the feeling of American labor.

INTERVIEWER: Sometimes a little information about the interviewer makes some sense. In this case, Margaret, it's perhaps not entirely unreasonable for future historians to know that one dimension of our talking together is that these are two Quaker women talking to each other, and consequently I know something of what it meant to be born into a Quaker family in Philadelphia at the time that you were. And you went to Westtown School. Isn't that correct?

SCATTERGOOD: Yes, I did.

INTERVIEWER: So did I. But I wonder if you could just describe a little bit your family circumstances and how you felt as a young girl at Westtown and about your life and your ambitions and what your family was like.

SCATTERGOOD: My father died in 1907 when I was thirteen years old. I had an older half sister who was twenty-one years older than I and two half brothers, eighteen and sixteen years older than I. The two brothers took Father's place and were very interested in bringing up their younger half sister. They emphasized to me the fact that I should try in my lifetime to make the world a little bit better because I had lived in it. In my naiveté I took hold of that idea deeply and vigorously. This was during my teen years before college and during college so that I began thinking: what could I do that might possibly help the world along even a wee bit? Of course, at that time we were not thinking about foreign countries, and I began to think about the United States. I had done settlement work during my college years but felt that a movement of low income people to help themselves would bring more progress.

INTERVIEWER: You went to Bryn Mawr College, right?

SCATTERGOOD: I went to Bryn Mawr College from 1913 and graduated in 1917 just after the United States had gone into World War I.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of an atmosphere was there at Bryn Mawr at that time? Was there a lot of thought about.... Now, of course I know that Jane Smith went to Bryn Mawr in the Class of . . .

SCATTERGOOD: Jane Smith graduated in 1910. She was warden of Rockefeller Hall when we were freshmen, and some of my very best friends were in Rockefeller Hall.

INTERVIEWER: You knew her then?

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, yes!

INTERVIEWER: Did she have any influence on you at that time?

SCATTERGOOD: Not at that time because I did not know her intimately.

INTERVIEWER: Were you active in the Society of Friends at that time?

SCATTERGOOD: No.

INTERVIEWER: No. I believe at Bryn Mawr there was a Christian . . .

SCATTERGOOD: There was a Christian Association, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Were you active in that?

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, very, very little I attended the meetings, and I was interested in it.

INTERVIEWER: What did you major in, Margaret?

SCATTERGOOD: Economics.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, you did major in economics. Was there a particularly strong teacher of economics at Bryn Mawr at that time?

SCATTERGOOD: I don't think so because I did not have very much of incentive from the teacher in the study of economics. I skipped minor economics because it didn't fit in with my program, and I read up about it from Tawney so that maybe that had something to do with my not getting quite as much out of the economics course as I should have.

INTERVIEWER: How did you happen to choose economics?

SCATTERGOOD: I don't remember.

INTERVIEWER: (Laughing) Well, it was certainly a very powerful choice in terms of your future career!

SCATTERGOOD: Well, it's quite likely that even at the time in college I was beginning to feel that my work to help people could best be given to the labor groups that were organizing to improve their own conditions. This gave more promise of permanent betterment than for people to accept help from social workers to get them out of their troubles.

INTERVIEWER: Right, so you were already interested in the labor movement?

SCATTERGOOD: I'm not too sure when my interest began because Eleanor Dulles was also a classmate, the sister of John Foster Dulles, and we had contact after college because we both worked in France during and after the war, and she had gone into a factory to learn what factory conditions were like. I talked over various workers' problems with her, and she had quite an influence in

SCATTERGOOD: showing me how I could learn and begin to develop myself for work and also in interesting me in helping the workers to help themselves.

INTERVIEWER: Well, this was certainly a rather unusual interest for a young girl brought up in a middle-class Quaker family. How did your half brothers respond to your interest in the labor movement?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, I don't think that I was aware very much of their response. They didn't say much about it. I had thought at times that my father would probably turn over in his grave if he knew that I was interested in trade unions, but they didn't do or say much about it.

INTERVIEWER: Your father was a businessman?

SCATTERGOOD: My father was a small manufacturer who was president of a dyewood company located in Chester, which brought in dyewoods from Jamaica and made them into dyes, largely black.

INTERVIEWER: Was your mother alive through your girlhood?

SCATTERGOOD: My mother died in 1946 so I was at that time fifty-two years old.

INTERVIEWER: Did she had a very strong influence on you? Or how did she respond to your career interest?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, she was always very loving and always glad to support me in whatever I wanted to do.

INTERVIEWER: Well, now, I gather, Margaret, that in this period of time--1915, 1916--when you were at Bryn Mawr, there was quite a lot of feminist discussion at Bryn Mawr; that is, there were a lot of talks about the vote for women, and there was some suffragette activity at Bryn Mawr. Were you a part of that?

SCATTERGOOD: No, I wasn't, but there was that activity. It came into plays that we developed, and of course we had dramas that we participated in, some of the plays which we wrote ourselves; and this came into it. But I was never interested in women's problems as such. I was interested in the problems of people, men and women.

INTERVIEWER: That's interesting. All right. So you graduated from Bryn Mawr and went . . .

SCATTERGOOD: I graduated in June 1917. As soon as I was old enough--age 23--I went over to work with the American Friends' Service Committee in France. This was in late October or November of 1917.

INTERVIEWER: This was the food relief program? Is that what this was?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, at the time that I went over, the war was still on, and the Friends were helping the refugees who had come down from the devastated regions to live until the war was over in safer places. They sent me first to Bar-Le-Duc, and there we had a small unit who helped the refugees by developing work projects of sewing for the women and helping them to a cheerful atmosphere where they got together and embroidered various linens. Then these linens were sold in the United States, and the women were paid for their work. We also had a small store where we sold, at below the retail price, articles which they needed in their homes.

INTERVIEWER: Was this a team of both American and British Quakers?

SCATTERGOOD: Yes, in my particular "equipe" as we called our teams, using the French term, there were two British women who directed the work, and I was the third, to start with. They were very much older than I. Later a younger British girl came into the group, and there were four of us working in Bar-Le-Duc until the end of the war.

INTERVIEWER: Were you a pacifist at this time?

SCATTERGOOD: No, I never espoused the pacifist cause because I felt that to stop a ruler like Kaiser Wilhelm, who wanted to dominate by military force large areas of the world, was exceedingly important, and I did not espouse the pacifist cause.

INTERVIEWER: Did that cause you to have a number of heated discussions with your fellows in France?

SCATTERGOOD: In France?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, your fellow Quakers I mean.

SCATTERGOOD: No, I never bothered about it. I didn't argue, and they didn't either! (Laughing) I just went ahead and did my work!

INTERVIEWER: Well, I would imagine that this was kind of a good time in spite of . . .

SCATTERGOOD: You mean a time that I enjoyed?

INTERVIEWED: Yes.

SCATTERGOOD. Well, I suppose I did. I enjoyed the work with the French people and with the Americans and English who were allied with it.

(End of Tape I, Side I)

INTERVIEWER: What precipitated your return from France? The work the Quakers were doing ran out? Or what?

SCATTERGOOD: I was there from 1917 to the fall of 1919, and by that time, the war was over, the work was well established to help the refugees re-establish themselves as was needed, and I was anxious to get back home.

INTERVIEWER: So you came back. What opportunities presented themselves to you at that time?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, for a couple of years I stayed home, and then I went up to New York to undertake a small project, which Frederick Libbey was arranging, to sell calendars to teachers in schools, trying to give their pupils a broader world outlook by selling pictures of children in other lands. Then I began to think . . .

INTERVIEWER: I guess we'd better say who Fred Libbey was.

SCATTERGOOD: Well, Fred Libbey was a rather prominent member of the Society of Friends, who was directing an organization which he called the National Council for Prevention of War.

So then, while I was in New York, I began thinking ahead to what I might possibly do as a college trained person in connection with labor unions. I interviewed Edward Corsey, who was at that time an organizer for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and asked him quite plainly: Is there anything that an intellectual can do to be useful to labor? And he said, "It depends on the intellectual." So then I went to Robert Bruere, who was with the Survey Graphic magazine at that time and told him that I would like to be helpful to labor in some way. He knew Florence Thorne in Washington. He said, "I know a little woman working in the American Federation of Labor. She's no bigger than a wisp of dust that you might find under your bed, but she's doing three men's work; and I think she would find help useful." So then he called her up and made an appointment for me, and I went down and had lunch with Miss Thorne, and she arranged for me to come to the Federation. By that time, the time I came to the Federation, it was April, 1926.

But I left out a bit of the story because before that period I had wanted to learn something about what it was to work in industry, so I took a job with the Eveready Battery Company among their production workers and became a straw boss over a small section of some eight girls who were assembling radio batteries. I was there about a year and decided then that I had learned what I needed to learn. A friend came along suggesting that we take a trip in her Model T Ford across the country to California. So I quit and went with my friend from Denver to the Pacific Coast in her Ford.

INTERVIEWER: Where was this plant?

SCATTERGOOD: In Long Island City. I lived in New York and went over there by subway in the morning, and that was a terrific experience, of course. It was just at the time when everybody else was rushing to their job. We had to be there by eight o'clock in the morning.

INTERVIEWER: Did you like the job? Or did you find it boring?

SCATTERGOOD: No, I liked the job, but I found myself a bit inadequate to supervise a section of some eight girls, one of whom was determined to cheat. I was not smart enough to catch her when she was cheating. This troubled me a great deal!

INTERVIEWER: What were the job conditions like for these women in this battery plant?

SCATTERGOOD: The conditions were in general good. The room and air were clean, and the work was not too driving. But there was one girl who put the finished batteries into cartons, and these batteries were quite heavy to lift. So that that girl, in cartoning the batteries, we figured, would lift a weight, if you added them all together during the day, about equivalent to a small automobile. And it seemed to me that this was heavier work than a girl ought to be doing. I didn't know what to do about it. I did not do anything about it, but it stayed in my mind.

INTERVIEWER: How did these working-class girls receive you? Did they . . . ?

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, well, I liked them, and they liked me. We were just man to man. They didn't know that I had a college education or that I was out of a middle-class family. I was impressed with their attitude. We used to have lunch together. I remember one time a girl brought some food that she found that she didn't like very well, and she said, "Well, I paid for it. I'd better eat it!" The whole experience gave me a feeling of what money means when every penny counts toward the things you have to buy for a living. I remember going by a hat store and seeing a hat marked five dollars and saying to myself, "Imagine paying that much for a hat!"

INTERVIEWER: So it changed your perspective about....

SCATTERGOOD: Well, it gave me the feel of what it was like to live on your income when your income was so small.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Okay. So anyway, you had this wonderful opportunity to go with a friend driving from Denver to the West Coast....

SCATTERGOOD: A friend, yes. It was when I came back that I contacted Robert Bruere.

INTERVIEWER: How did you know him?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, I think he was just one of the people that it was suggested that I go see. I had talked about this interest of working with labor unions, and people suggested I see him.

INTERVIEWER: I see. By the way, was there any union in this battery plant?

SCATTERGOOD: No, no. No, they were not unionized.

INTERVIEWER: All right. And he then suggested that you come down to Washington and meet with Florence Thorne.

SCATTERGOOD: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: What was your impression of her upon first meeting her? Or did you have any impressions particularly?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, she was a person who immediately inspired confidence. She was sympathetic, easy to talk to, obviously very wise and clever and had a great deal of savoir faire.

INTERVIEWER: And she decided, I suppose, to hire you?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, she took me on first as a volunteer, and for the first six months I worked as a volunteer. It took her quite a bit of time to get me to where I was much use, but finally after six months she decided I was worthy of being put on the payroll.

INTERVIEWER: (Laughing) Well, that doesn't seem like a very long apprenticeship, Margaret! All right. So this was in 1926, after Bill Green was already president of the AF of L.

SCATTERGOOD: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: So you never had an opportunity to know Gompers.

SCATTERGOOD: President Gompers had died at the end of 1924, and so this meant that for a year and a quarter Mr. Green had been depending heavily on Miss Thorne to help him carry forward the policies of Mr. Gompers.

INTERVIEWER: What did that mean in terms of depending on her to carry forward. I mean, was he consulting her as far as advice as to what he should do? Or was he simply asking her to implement various policies that had already been initiated? Or what?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, she was supplying him with information that he needed. Of course, she was the first research director.

INTERVIEWER: The first and only, I guess.

SCATTERGOOD: The first and only. She was also helping him to make contacts with important people whom she had come to know through Mr. Gompers, and she was particularly interested in making contacts between labor and the industrial engineers because she felt that, if the industrial engineers understood more about labor and their very legitimate desires for the right working conditions, that a great deal of progress could be made. This turned out to be a very correct idea.

INTERVIEWER: Who were some of these industrial engineers, Margaret?

SCATTERGOOD: Who?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, who.

SCATTERGOOD: Well, Morris Llewellyn Cook was one, and Robert Wolf was another that we knew real well.

INTERVIEWER: How about George W. Taylor?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, he was the . . .

INTERVIEWER: He wasn't an industrial engineer exactly.

SCATTERGOOD: No, but he was the one who tried to speed up the workers by making special incentive plans, and we thought that he was doing very destructive work.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, did you?

SCATTERGOOD: That is, if I have the right Mr. Taylor in mind. I'm sure I do.

INTERVIEWER: Well, this was the Taylor who was at the Wharton School in Pennsylvania.

SCATTERGOOD: Tell me more about him.

INTERVIEWER: He worked on developing collective bargaining and a system of arbitration in the hosiery workers.

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, no, no, that's not the same man at all. No I'm sorry.

INTERVIEWER: You're talking about the scientific Taylorism that was prominent then.

SCATTERGOOD: That's right. That's what I'm talking about.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. That was Frederick W. Taylor. Well, I notice that in 1927, the AF of L published its first survey of unemployment covering twenty-three cities. Since I know that you had something to do with that monthly report or survey of unemployment, it seems to me that it's no accident that that came out not too long after you came to work at the AF of L. Is my hunch right that you were involved in that survey of unemployment?

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, yes, I was helping with that. We started it first by sending out cards to our directly-affiliated unions to ask them the number of employed and the number of unemployed in their unions. Then we combined these cards to make a crude index of unemployment. It was helpful, but of course it had such small coverage that it was not what we really needed.

Then I got to know Frederick Dewhurst who was working with The Twentieth Century Fund. He and I both thought we could develop figures on employment for most of industry because at that time the Commerce and Labor Departments had figures on employment in most of manufacturing industries and some service industries. So we began putting these together to find the total number of employed persons in the United States, and then the only thing we needed was to get an estimate of the total labor force so that we could subtract the employed from the total labor force. We finally got a figure on labor force through the work of the Census Bureau. Eventually they made estimates of the number in the labor force during the periods between censuses when they had no actual figures. So that, in this way, the government's series of unemployment figures was developed.

INTERVIEWER: But as I understand it, when you first began to do this work, the government was not keeping statistics on unemployment.

SCATTERGOOD: Not at all, there was nothing on unemployment.

INTERVIEWER: So that, um, your figures were really the only figures they had until sometime in the thirties, right?

SCATTERGOOD: Yes. I don't remember when they finally developed their own series of unemployment figures.

INTERVIEWER: Well this sounds very simple, the way you describe it. Simply to go to the Bureau of the Census and get the manpower figures and then subtract the employed figures from that. But it must have been quite a job. A painstaking job.

SCATTERGOOD: Yes, it was. And Frederick Dewhurst was very helpful in that and Robert Nathan, later, in the Commerce Department picked it up.

INTERVIEWER: So you really were breaking new ground in terms of labor statistics. Did you have any sense that that's what you were doing? Or did you just think ...

SCATTERGOOD: Well, I thought that this is what's needed. So go out and get it.

INTERVIEWER: And you continued

INTERVIEWER: that survey then for twelve years, right? From 1927 to 1939?

SCATTERGOOD: The unemployment figures?

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm.

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, no. We very soon handed it over to the Commerce Department, and they did it.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I see.

SCATTERGOOD: No, when we got really good figures on employment, then we gave up the postal card reports from our local unions.

INTERVIEWER: You got them from other sources?

SCATTERGOOD: No, we developed the figures by getting the employment figures which the government had and subtracting the total employment from the total labor force.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

SCATTERGOOD: This was entirely different. You see, the postal cards we sent out to the unions were only to our directly-affiliated unions, those directly affiliated to the American Federation of Labor. It did not include the local unions of any of the international unions. So it was a very, very small sample, and it was not worthwhile continuing that at all as soon as we got more comprehensive figures. But we didn't do this work in the Federation itself. It was very soon taken over by the Commerce Department and developed there.

INTERVIEWER: No, but you did publish a monthly survey for about twelve years.

SCATTERGOOD: Well, I....yes, I got together infomation about business conditions, and we called it at first "The Monthly Survey of Business", and then one of our organizers said that, when a union official looked at that title, he would put it in the scrap basket immediately. So we changed the title to "Labor's Monthly Survey", and we covered industrial problems and also labor conditions. But it never took hold with the labor people very much.

INTERVIEWER: Why not?

SCATTERGOOD: I think it was too academic for them probably.

INTERVIEWER: Well, one thing that I . . .

SCATTERGOOD: I think I should say further about why the survey didn't take on was that each union had its own problems in its own industry, and they were not so interested in the more general picture that we got out in the survey for the country as a whole.

INTERVIEWER: But, now they've learned to be . . .

SCATTERGOOD: I don't know what the situation is now, but the survey was discontinued in the summer of 1952.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Well, one of the things I would be interested in your comments about is that I know that for quite some period of time--well, until 1933, I guess--President Green opposed unemployment insurance. The AF of L Executive Council, in their minutes that I've looked at, 1929, 1930, 1931, they feared unemployment insurance as a dole. You were there at that time collecting these figures on unemployment, and I wonder if you had any feeling about how these attitudes changed--how Miss Thorne's attitudes changed, how Mr. Green's attitudes changed, the AF of L Executive Council members. Because obviously by the time you get to 1933, the Council is endorsing unemployment compensation.

SCATTERGOOD: Well, I remember very keenly the fact that they felt that workers should earn what they were paid. The things they wanted to see was jobs for workers and they worked first for a nationwide employment service to place workers in jobs, but the problem simply got too colossal. (INTERRUPTION)

INTERVIEWER: I had just been asking you about the change in AFL policy with respect to unemployment insurance, and you were saying that things became so catastrophic that it really necessitated some kind of change.

SCATTERGOOD: It was clear that they were not able to create enough jobs.

INTERVIEWER: Right. What was Miss Thorne's attitude with respect to this change?

SCATTERGOOD: I do not remember her attitude as being any different from the attitude of the labor leaders.

INTERVIEWER: In other words, while she preferred jobs, she was opposed to the dole, but she recognized that there was a crisis.

SCATTERGOOD: That it had to be, yes.

INTERVIEWER: I noticed an interesting little sideline in what I was reading at Columbia, and that was apparently Miss Thorne's contact with Elizabeth Brandeis was important in terms of the legislation that was finally drawn up. There was just a little note in some research that I did that indicated that Miss Thorne was the go-between between Justice Brandeis and President Green in that she apparently knew Justice Brandeis' daughter. Did you know Elizabeth Brandeis?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, she was in college with me. I mean she was in Bryn Mawr 1915, and I was 1917. So we were two years in college together, but I had no contact with her in this connection at all; and if Mr. Green wanted to see Justice Brandeis or if Miss Thorne thought that it would be helpful for him to see him, she would have made contact directly between Mr. Green and Justice Brandeis. So I don't see why Elizabeth would have come in.

INTERVIEWER: Well, this was in Phil Taft's book.* Apparently there was a letter that went between Elizabeth Brandeis and Miss Thorne . . .

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, well, maybe Elizabeth Brandeis was trying to arrange something. I don't know. But anyway, I don't know anything about that contact at all. My relationship with Elizabeth Brandeis did not enter into it at all. I mean I didn't see her at any time when I was with the Federation. I was not a particular friend of hers at college, either.

INTERVIEWER: Well, when they began to draw this legislation up state by state, were you involved in staying on top of that?

SCATTERGOOD: No, I was not involved in that at all but Miss Thorne did have research directors who were helpful. I don't remember in that case particularly, but I do remember that Lane Kirkland helped in social security problems. I believe Bert Seidman did, too. He helped with housing, I know.

INTERVIEWER: What was your job, then, during the thirties at the AF of L?

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, my job was principally finding information that unions needed for their collective bargaining. Of course, in that connection we research workers together used to determine the figures and statistics we needed from the government, and also we used to go together to meetings with the government statistical officers to explain our problems and what we needed so that some very good collections of figures were developed. And we had very capable help too, of course, in the Labor Department. They worked very hard in getting a cost-of-living or consumer-price index, which would be above reproach.

INTERVIEWER: Who were the people in the Department of Labor that you were working with?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, principally Ewan Clague, who was at the time head of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Aryness Wickens, who was working with him. Those are the ones that I remember best.

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*The AF of L in the Time of Gompers. Harper Publishing Co.; 1957.

INTERVIEWER: And you met with them on a pretty regular basis?

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, yes.

(End of Tape I, Side 2)

INTERVIEWER: Okay, well, we were talking about your meeting with Ewan Clague and Aryness Wickens. What was the nature of your discussions? I'd just like to know how you went about your work because the whole business of collecting these statistics seems absolutely appalling to me, Margaret, such a tremendous job. I can't imagine, when you were just beginning, how you attacked it.

SCATTERGOOD: Well, one thing that we got the Labor Department to do for us was to collect union wage scales in a great many different industries. These were especially helpful because, if you went into negotiations with an employer, you told him what the unions were getting in this and this job. And of course the development of the consumer price index was very important. The Labor Department explained to us that this was not a cost-of-living index; it was a series of prices weighted according to what an average family would probably buy and use. There was quite a lot of detail about that. It had to be very, very carefully done, and was. We had great confidence in both Ewan Clague and Aryness Wickens in the development of those figures.

I don't at the moment think of anything else for an example. We went over to the U.S. Census Department and talked with them about the unemployment figures. I used to go personally to a man named Mr. Paradiso in the Commerce Department, who was on Robert Nathan's staff, to get information about production and the Gross National Product. That index was developed in those years, too, and it was really to me quite thrilling to think that the total production and service value for the whole United States could be assembled into one figure for Gross National Product. It was quite exciting when that first happened in, I should say, the mid-1930's.

INTERVIEWER: How did you keep up with all of the statistical preparation that I doubt that you had had at Bryn Mawr?

SCATTERGOOD: I had one course of one lesson a week in statistics for a year while I was in Bryn Mawr. I knew what an index number was, and that's pretty well all I did know, I guess.

INTERVIEWER: So did you just teach yourself?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, it was very simple. I mean anybody that knew arithmetic and knew index numbers and how they were developed, that was really all you needed to know. You learned how to use the government index numbers.

INTERVIEWER: Well, it sounds simple to you, but it doesn't sound simple to me! (Laughing)

SCATTERGOOD: Well, there were a great many different branches, of course, and of course you didn't use index numbers for employment or for wages. You got the real figures there, but the index was because you were combining a great many different kinds of things. You were combining the sweeper on a restaurant floor with the production worker in a shoe factory and that kind of thing.

INTERVIEWER: Well, of course right in the midst of all of this activity comes the split between the AF of L and CIO in 1935 and '36. Did that affect you at all?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, of course, we research directors worked together regardless of whether we were AF of L or CIO. We all worked together. So this did not split us.

INTERVIEWER: That's interesting. You continued . . .

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, yes. We had meetings out here, you see (at our residence in McLean, Virginia). This is a wonderful room for meetings, and we would have as many as twenty or thirty of us get together out here and discuss our problems, what we needed from the government and so on, and always AF of L and CIO meeting together, representatives.

INTERVIEWER: At no point did you experience a split, then, in this group?

SCATTERGOOD: I don't remember any.

INTERVIEWER: What about....now, here I realize that we're talking about hearsay except that, since the principals are no longer around, we can't really ask them; but obviously Miss Thorne had known John L. Lewis for a long time. In 1921, when he first ran against Samuel Gompers, and now in 1935 he emerges as the leader for the Committee for Industrial Organization. Do you remember her feelings about industrial organization versus craft organization?

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, well, she knew, and we all knew of course, that industrial organization had to come. We saw the obstacles in the AF of L because of their craft unions. The Federations started organizing the workers in mass production industries, in steel, rubber, autos, etc., in 1934, placing them in unions directly affiliated with the AF of L. Then John L. Lewis took over in 1935. He was in an industrial union himself, the Mine Workers.

INTERVIEWER: Miss Thorne didn't have negative feelings towards him because he had run against Samuel Gompers?

SCATTERGOOD: No, she always admired John L. Lewis very much.

INTERVIEWER: Well, you were saying that, when Mr. Green first became president of the AF of L and you joined the staff very shortly thereafter . . .

SCATTERGOOD: A year and a quarter.

INTERVIEWER: That's right.... (continuing) that he was--well, I think it might be quite fair to say--quite dependent on Miss Thorne for her knowledge of what had occurred in the office before and so forth. Did that change? Did he become less dependent upon her? Or did he continue to rely on her to about the same degree as he had when he first came there?

SCATTERGOOD: I don't like that word "dependent". Of course, Mr. Green had to depend on Miss Thorne at first for information about the Federation and the Gompers policies. But he was an experienced labor leader, and experienced too as a legislator in Ohio. He had his own ideas, which were wise and forward looking. Miss Thorne helped him to carry them out. Of course, she contributed her ideas, too. They worked well together. He was interested in explaining labor's viewpoint to people outside the labor movement and also in getting information from them. She helped him to make contacts with university professors, business men, industrial engineers, and various others.

INTERVIEWER: Now, these people that you mentioned....like, for instance, Felix Frankfurter? People of that sort you mean?

SCATTERGOOD: I don't know that I could cite very many instances. If Mr. Green had a particular problem and some college professor knew a lot about it, then she'd get that college professor and get him to talk to Mr. Green about it. If Felix Frankfurter wanted to see Mr. Green, chances were he might call up and make his appointment. Often there were people in high places who came through and wanted to

SCATTERGOOD: know something about labor, and Mr. Green would frequently refer those people to Miss Thorne. He had other things to do, and Miss Thorne was very well versed in the background and development of labor and their policies and their problems. Is that about it?

INTERVIEWER: I think so. She talks in her memoir about the fact that she really wrote the autobiography of Samuel Gompers, that he checked it very carefully and made changes in it but that she had for many years, she states, copied his style so that she could write as he wrote. She must have spent a considerable amount of time researching that.

SCATTERGOOD: Yes, she did.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel that this was important in her understanding of Gompers' philosophy?

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, I would think it must have been, yes, because she dug up enormous amounts of information and she checked everything with him and wrote the book on the basis of what his own ideas were.

INTERVIEWER: Were his ideas her ideas? Or did she differ from him substantially?

SCATTERGOOD: Basically, I don't think there was any difference in their philosophy of what would help labor and what seemed the constructive way forward.

INTERVIEWER: Well, for instance, one question that occurred to me in reading her memoir: she states in her memoir--and I think this is one of the places where it needs a little clarification--that she was not entirely approving of his switch from being a pacifist to advocating entrance into World War I. Then she states that at that time she left the AF of L and went to work for the Department of Labor, I believe, for awhile.

SCATTERGOOD: Yes, she was head of the Working Conditions Department in the Department of Labor.

INTERVIEWER: Well, am I right or wrong, but I detect there a small hint in her memoir that she may not have been entirely approving of that sudden switch in Mr. Gompers' policy.

SCATTERGOOD: Well, I knew that she got somewhat fed up with the work in the American Federation of Labor, and that was why she switched. But just what it was that made her fed up with it, I don't know. I never tried to boil it down as closely as you have! (Laughter)

INTERVIEWER: Well, what was her attitude as far as World War I was concerned?

SCATTERGOOD: What do you mean? Did she not want to see the United States go in?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

SCATTERGOOD: She never gave me any hint of what she herself felt. She only talked in terms of what Mr. Gompers felt, and I guess she brought that out in her book about Mr. Gompers probably.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, she did. I mean, in other words, her memoir is different....I mean, if you read Gompers' autobiography . . .

SCATTERGOOD: No, no, I don't mean that. I mean Miss Thorne's book about Gompers. You know that, don't you?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I do know the book.

SCATTERGOOD: She called it Samuel Gompers, American Statesman.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I do remember that book. And I remember that there's a rather clear, consistent exposition of why he changed from advocating neutrality. But then there's just this little hint in her memoir that she may have felt that it was a little opportunistic on his part that he changed his attitude so quickly.

SCATTERGOOD: Well, I don't think she ever sat in judgment of what Mr. Gompers did. She was interested perhaps in why he did it and got the facts of the surrounding circumstances, but I never felt that she sat in judgment of him at all. So I don't know whether his change could have had anything at all to do with her leaving the Federation and going to the Labor Department.

INTERVIEWER: But you say she was a little bit fed up with....well, I don't know, there's a lot of reasons why a person can get fed up with a job. Just tired of it, for one thing.

SCATTERGOOD: And the U.S. Labor Department was a different type of job. There she was a professional collector of information, and in the labor movement in the AF of L she had a great many other kinds of jobs that were helping Mr. Gompers one way or another.

(INTERRUPTION)

INTERVIEWER: [How long did she have her] job in the Department of Labor?

SCATTERGOOD: Only one year.

INTERVIEWER: Only one year?

SCATTERGOOD: Hm-hm.

INTERVIEWER: And then she came back.

SCATTERGOOD: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Were you at all involved in The Federationist, in the job of editing The Federationist?

SCATTERGOOD: No, that was Miss Thorne's job.

(INTERRUPTION)

INTERVIEWER: I had asked you the question as to how Miss Thorne came back to work at the Federation.

SCATTERGOOD: Well, to be perfectly honest, Miss Thorne did not want to come back to work at the Federation. She refused at first, I believe, to do so. Mr. Gompers interested her in returning to the Federation on the basis of her responsibility for his autobiography.

INTERVIEWER: How did you both, you and Florence Thorne, feel about the women's movement and suffrage and equal pay for equal work and these kinds of issues?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, Miss Thorne particularly was very strong for equal pay for equal work. She was a very good friend of Alice Paul of the National Women's Party, and helped her to meet labor leaders.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I notice in her own memoir she talks about the fact that she favored the Equal Rights Amendment that was being considered in the forties, even though there were labor people who opposed this.

SCATTERGOOD: And she certainly favored women's suffrage.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, right. In other words, she was not afraid of the Equal Rights Amendment.

SCATTERGOOD: No, I don't think so. Well, I don't remember exactly her attitude on that one particular thing, but she felt strongly that a woman should have rights and that she should not be placed in a position inferior to men.

INTERVIEWER: That leads me to ask you another question, and this is a question that I certainly have had to face. If I've had to face it, I'm sure you had to face it, going to work at the Federation a whole generation before me. That was the attitude of the men in the labor movement towards the women. How did you feel....I mean, did they just tolerate you? Did you feel that they respected you for your knowledge? Or were their feelings, you know, "What's this women doing here?"

SCATTERGOOD: Of all the cases I know where a woman in the research field was providing information for labor leaders, they respected her just the same as if it had been a man, it seemed to me. At least Marjorie Egloff--she was then Marjorie Clark--was a research director for the building trades unions, and the way her mind tackled their problems, the information that she brought for them was greatly appreciated and accepted. I never had any problems dealing with them that would have made me feel they treated me as inferior because I was a woman. I remember Santiago Iglesius saying of Miss Thorne that he regarded her as a very unique woman because he could talk with her just as he would talk with a man and ask her information about all the things he was interested in and discuss them as he would with a man, and he had never met any other woman that he could do that with. He was, of course, as you know, a Puerto Rican, and I guess the women that he had known had been in the position of wives, and the relationship had been very different.

INTERVIEWER: Well, what about the pay for the people in the research department? Do you think that the women got paid commensurate with the . . .

SCATTERGOOD: I frankly do not know at all.

INTERVIEWER: I know, for instance, I have friends in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers who were dedicated trade unionists, no doubt about it; but when you ask them this question, they will say, well, it's true: women organizers did not get paid what men organizers got paid, or they didn't get certain kinds of advantages in terms of their expense accounts and things like this that the men got. And I wonder if that was true in the old AF of L building as well.

SCATTERGOOD: Well, I frankly simply do not know because I never asked any of them.

INTERVIEWER: I'm wondering if you have comments to make about Mr. Green's presidency. There is a great deal in the labor literature about Mr. Green having been a bumbling incompetent, Mr. Green

INTERVIEWER: as having been.... For instance, I think that Schlesinger, in his study of the history of the New Deal, makes the statement that Bill Green brought the Harding virtues to the AF of L. That's his statement, unquote. And there is a lot of material, particularly after the break with the CIO, written to make Bill Green out to be a kind of a kindly but ineffectual sort of Rotarian type. Now, that's what's in the history books. I wonder....you saw him on a daily basis in the old days . . .

SCATTERGOOD: Such statements, I feel, are very unfair to Mr. Green and completely ignore the very important contribution he made to the labor movement. He broadened labor's influence in national life, on social and economic problems. While Mr. Gompers opposed social security legislation because he feared it would put unions at the mercy of government control, Mr. Green had no such fear because he felt labor could have a voice in the formation of such legislation and in directing its administration. He served on the committee which drafted the bill which became the Social Security Act. And he set up in the Federation a service to unions in applying its provisions to meet their needs. He sponsored other social legislation such as a nationwide employment service and unemployment compensation. He felt that political action was an aid to collective bargaining, although secondary to it. He was active in the struggle to outlaw the injunction evil, and the yellow dog contract, and to do away with company unions. The Norris LaGuardia Act in 1932, and the National Labor Relations Act in 1935, finally established labor's right to organize and bargain collectively. Mr. Green insisted that labor be represented in all agencies and commissions whose decisions affected workers. He urged local unions to have representatives on school boards, university trustee boards, in legislatures and government commissions. He saw the labor movement as an organization to promote the welfare of all workers. He spoke to chambers of commerce, universities, church groups and many others to explain labor's viewpoint. In 1929, when our organizer was expelled from Elizabethton, Tennessee at gun point*, he went there at once and rallied the workers in mass meetings, then made a trip through the South speaking to meetings of workers, to legislatures and others. In 1934, he started organization in mass production industries - rubber, steel, autos, and others. Under his leadership, labor's influence spread widely throughout our social and economic life with great benefit.

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* during the 1929 textile strikes in Elizabethton, Tennessee.

INTERVIEWER: Well, at one point I know that Mr. Green appointed or asked Miss Thorne to kind of be the conduit of all information to him. That is, he . . .

SCATTERGOOD: Made her Director of [AFL] Research [Department].

INTERVIEWER: Well, made her Director of Research, but also suggested to other people that they should approach her and then, if she thought it was important, she would take it to him. I suspect that that must have created certain kinds of political strains because there may have been people who felt that they wanted to go directly to him.

SCATTERGOOD: I don't know. I didn't come into that part of it.

INTERVIEWER: Well, the reason I asked that question is because I would imagine that perhaps one of the people who felt that way was George Meany, and that may have had something.... You see what I was leading to! (Laughter)

SCATTERGOOD: I see. Well, there's something else again that I just can't give you any information on. I feel sure, however, that a labor man like George Meany would never have difficulty in going directly to Mr. Green.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. But at any rate, Miss Thorne did leave the Federation and you also left the Federation because Mr. Meany had kind of....well, what would be the word you would use . . .

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, put her on the shelf, would you say?

INTERVIEWER: Put her on the shelf, told her she could have an office in the library . . .

SCATTERGOOD: Well, made it very plain that she was to be in a very inferior position and that she was no longer to be able to act independently or have relations with the other labor leaders or with outside persons in the same capacity as she had done under Mr. Green.

INTERVIEWER: Who were the principal people that she was in contact with as far as the [AFL] Executive Council was concerned?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, she always thought very highly of Mr. [Mathew] Woll and he thought very highly of her, and they worked together on many of the important jobs that he had in his important committees. And she worked closely with John Frey.

INTERVIEWER: From the Metal Trades Department.

SCATTERGOOD: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Well, I know Mr. Woll was chairman of the Social Security Committee, but he was chairman of a great many committees, wasn't he?

SCATTERGOOD: Yes, he was. And at the time of the AFL conventions, he was always chairman of the committee on resolutions, which was the most important committee of all. He was very much interested in education; he took a prominent part in that, too.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I remember that he asked Miss Thorne, when they were having all the difficulties at Brookwood [Labor College], he asked Miss Thorne to go and visit Brookwood and make a report to him. She talks about that in her memoir and the fact that she wasn't terribly impressed with what was going on at Brookwood.

SCATTERGOOD: That's right. She was adversely impressed with it.

INTERVIEWER: Was she interested in workers' education? And if so, what kind....in other words, it wasn't the idea of Brookwood that she disapproved of.

SCATTERGOOD: Well, I think there was a good deal of communist influence in Brookwood, and I think that that was the thing she objected to. At least that's what I understood. I could be wrong.

(End of Tape II, Side 3)

SCATTERGOOD: She felt that workers should learn the way industry was run, the way their accounts were kept, the things that they could use in collective bargaining with the employers, and that sort of thing. A good deal of the workers' education that was going on was not very helpful.

INTERVIEWER: She wasn't wild about teaching the workers to appreciate poetry....

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, no! (Laughter)

INTERVIEWER: Well, the reason that I say that, of course, is because I remember being a little bit amused that that was one of the courses at the Bryn Mawr School for Women Workers.

SCATTERGOOD: Well, it's all right if you're giving a worker the kind of education that will help her to have cultural appreciation in her life. That's one thing, but we were concerned with collective bargaining; we were concerned with their getting ahead. We had not been able really to develop any very effective workers' education movement at that time.

INTERVIEWER: When did Spencer Miller come? Did he come about the same time as you did?

SCATTERGOOD: Yes, he was....I think she already knew Spencer Miller at the time that I came in, and he was in the field pretty much during the whole time that I was there. But Miss Thorne never felt too happy about the kinds of workers' education that were provided through his Workers Education Bureau.

INTERVIEWER: Now, he came in, did he, as Director of the Bureau of Education?

SCATTERGOOD: Yes, he developed the Workers' Education Bureau and was himself the director of it, and it was accepted by the Federation. And I guess it did some good work, but . . .

INTERVIEWER: It just never amounted to very much, did it?

SCATTERGOOD: No, the thing that began really to give workers what they needed were the colleges. Harvard, for instance, had a good program where they took trade unionists into the Harvard College courses and allowed them to take any course that would help them in understanding their industry or what. And there were a number of other colleges, and they still do it today, as you know. Now they have similar courses to that in their own AFL-CIO workers' college in the suburbs of Washington here.

INTERVIEWER: Right, the AFL-CIO Labor Studies Center.

SCATTERGOOD: Labor Studies Center, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Well, there have been some people who have written about the AF of L who have seen Miss Thorne as a kind of an eminence grise.

SCATTERGOOD: A what?

INTERVIEWER: Do you know the book about the cardinal who was kind of behind the throne? I gather from your statement that you feel that that's a very erroneous perception, that that was not what she was.

SCATTERGOOD: Well, she certainly was giving labor the kind of information which would help them to move forward in often very difficult circumstances, and of course this had an enormous influence because they depended on her for the information they had. It was not her wish to be a power behind the throne guiding them, but it was her wish to give them the information so that they could make wise decisions.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, but that's a very, very difficult role to play, isn't it?

SCATTERGOOD: Very. Very indeed.

INTERVIEWER: Because the distinctions on a daily basis between policy and its implementation, they're not just as clear cut all the time as you would like them to be.

SCATTERGOOD: No, and of course anyone supplying information is in a very powerful position.

INTERVIEWER: Right, but I think the statement that you wanted to make was that she certainly attempted to keep that distinction . . .

SCATTERGOOD: Well, she always left the decision up to them, but she showed them various possible alternatives and probably something of what the results of this decision or that decision might be. And then it was up to them to choose what they wanted to do.

INTERVIEWER: But as far as her instructions to the research staff were concerned, she tried very hard to teach you what this distinction was.

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, definitely, and to show us that we were servants to labor and that we were to provide the labor leaders with the information they needed but not tell them what to do.

INTERVIEWER: Who was on the research staff in those early days? Now, I know that you have mentioned Marjorie Clark. And Boris Shiskin came on the staff . . .

SCATTERGOOD: Boris Shiskin was with the [American] Federation [of Labor] for a very long time.

INTERVIEWER: Dave Kaplan?

SCATTERGOOD: Yes, and he later went to the Machinists Union.

INTERVIEWER: And didn't he then go to the Teamsters? Wasn't Dave Kaplan with the Teamsters?

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, yes, Dave was with the Teamsters. That's right. Ruth Rettinger helped us sometimes.

INTERVIEWER: And where did she go from being on the staff?

SCATTERGOOD: I do not remember.

INTERVIEWER: How large was this research staff at its largest?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, it wasn't very large really.

INTERVIEWER: So in other words, all these people whose names we've mentioned were not all on the staff at any one time.

SCATTERGOOD: That's about it. Oh, well, there was of course Bert Seidman; there was Pete Henry; there was Lane Kirkland.

INTERVIEWER: Now, when did Lane Kirkland come onto the research staff?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, it was sometime during the Roosevelt era.

INTERVIEWER: In the late thirties or early forties?

SCATTERGOOD: I would think late thirties. And there was another man--his first name was Glenn--who was very helpful. I can't at the moment remember his last name. He was on the research staff, too.

INTERVIEWER: Margaret, I think I would have to say that, when you look at this list of names, she certainly knew how to pick them. Because look at the eminence that this research staff has achieved, where now Lane Kirkland is most prominently mentioned as possible President of the AFL-CIO . . .

SCATTERGOOD: Yes, but she wasn't picking people to take positions in the labor movement.

INTERVIEWER: No, but she was picking competent people.

SCATTERGOOD: Picking competent people, yes. And the fact that he [Lane Kirkland] has worked along and finally come into that kind of position was something far different from the research work.

INTERVIEWER: How did she pick these young people?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, she had some connections in Georgetown University who recommended people, and she had a number of people with whom she consulted about them to be sure that their records were such that they would probably fit in. That's all I remember at the moment.

INTERVIEWER: You know, it leads me to ask you a question that has always been of some interest to me, and that is that there's always a kind of a stress within the labor movement between wanting to hire people who come from the ranks who show some promise and a little bit of anti-intellectualism of saying, "Why should we hire some smart college kid?" Now, Florence Thorne seems to have done a pretty good job of resolving that conflict and hiring good college graduates in the research staff. Did she have any trouble kind of carrying that out?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, if she did, it didn't come to my attention. But she was so much trusted by the labor leaders that they were willing to take on these college people of whom they were suspicious because they knew what a person with a trained mind could do in arguing you around. Of course, I am sure she had a very great influence in persuading them to take people with college training because she must have made it clear to them that they were the only people who could supply the information that they needed. Labor leaders simply did not have the background or the training, and I would imagine that she would put it some way like this: "Well, you don't expect a greenhorn apprentice carpenter to have the skills and knowledge that a journeyman would have. These people are journeymen in their field." She could have used some kind of an explanation like that.

I don't know if she did, though.

INTERVIEWER: An explanation on their own terms.

SCATTERGOOD: On their own terms. I mean, she made it perfectly clear to them, anyway, and of course that's the reason they were so well accepted.

INTERVIEWER: Well, it's an interesting story. One of the questions that young women are asking now, some of the young women in the trade union movement, too, I think there's a lot of anger, almost anti-men feeling. In talking with you here this afternoon, I don't detect that, either in you or in what you are reflecting of Miss Thorne's attitudes. But I'm wondering if you yourself or in conversations with her as one of her closest friends, how did you feel, the young woman, about being a woman? I mean, did you say to yourself, "Oh, if I were a man, I could accomplish so much more"?

SCATTERGOOD: No, I just looked at the thing as jobs that were to be done and did them the best I could. It didn't bother me whether I was a man or a woman. I've always been interested in seeing people get ahead. If the problems were things that

SCATTERGOOD: men should handle, well, okay, let them handle them. I was glad to see women come forward. I was glad to see them having the ability to assume positions of leadership, too, but I was never one for the women's movement. And Miss Thorne, I think, was not, either, though she was a good friend of Alice Paul of the National Women's Party.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I know in her memoir she states that, as far as the Equal Rights Amendment was concerned, that [AFL President] Green opposed it but that she herself felt that she approved it. And she recognized that Green opposed it because he was afraid that equal rights would take away some of the special protective legislation for women. But Miss Thorne wasn't so afraid of that, and in that sense she was ahead of her time because that's a position which the AFL has only very recently come to. That is, her position has now finally been adopted by the AFL.

But let me try to get at this question a little different way. Sometimes when I speak to Bryn Mawr alumna of your age and your generation, they say, "Well, it's really too bad that Bryn Mawr had to have a man as the president." They express a certain amount of feeling that . . .

SCATTERGOOD: I've heard that from a lot of people.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. Well, how do you feel about that yourself?

SCATTERGOOD: Well, I'm delighted with him! I like Mr. Wofford; I like his work in the Peace Corps, and I think he's a good president of Bryn Mawr. I don't care whether it's a man or a woman as long as they are a good president.

Now, I should say that some of these people who are interested in helping women get ahead are helping, yes, I think even helping the women's movement. Miss Thorne helped them a great deal because she knew those people in the labor movement with whom they could talk and who would be likely to consider their proposition very reasonably, and she would refer them to such labor leaders.

INTERVIEWER: Right, I understand the role. In other words, she knew the labor movement well enough that she could say to people in the women's movement, "Well, if you go and see so-and-so, that's not going to do you any good at all; but if you go and see this person, then you may be able to accomplish something."

SCATTERGOOD: And he may make a proposition favoring your proposal in the AFL Executive Council meeting. Or something like that, see. Or she could tell the person who to go to to get their proposal made in the Executive Council meeting.

INTERVIEWER: Right. In other words, her role was kind of as a facilitator. Were there other outside groups--for instance, the consumers' movement or any other kind of group besides the women's movement--for whom she played this kind of role? Church groups? I mean, you know, there must have been all kinds of groups seeking her help in this way.

SCATTERGOOD: Yes, I would say that she would give that kind of help to any group that she felt would help to advance labor's cause or the cause of people who were trying to improve their conditions.

INTERVIEWER: Hm-hm. So she made these decisions on a kind of an individual basis in terms of how sincere she thought the thing was.

SCATTERGOOD: Yes. And how worthwhile she thought the proposition would be for labor.

INTERVIEWER: Can you think of a specific instance of where she....for instance, in international relations? Now, I know that the labor movement was beginning to move out at this period of time into taking an interest in what was going on in Mexico and South America and Europe.

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, yes, I know that she was giving a lot of help to labor in making the right contacts internationally. There was one of the English labor leaders that came over, and she was helpful in that connection. I can't remember . . .

INTERVIEWER: Was it Citrine?

SCATTERGOOD: Yes, it was Citrine. That's right.

INTERVIEWER: And she was always very interested in the International Labor Organization and in the Federation of Free Trade Unions, as I recall . . .

SCATTERGOOD: Yes, she was interested in those. I don't know how much she really did. I remember that she used to consult with Emil Rimensberger who was the social attaché of the Swiss Embassy and a very, very fine, bright and wise man. She invited him and Frank Fenton, the [AFL] Director of Organization, and their wives out here, and they had conferences and talks together. This kind of thing was rather typical.

INTERVIEWER: Right. She kind of played a role of facilitator by inviting people here to her beautiful home and giving them an opportunity to talk and get to know each other and discuss areas of mutual concern.

SCATTERGOOD: That's right, yes. And probably just giving them introductions to each other, not necessarily to bring them together in any special place, but to give a man an introduction and he could go and see the man in his office and that sort of thing. Oh, yes, she was very helpful in that way.

INTERVIEWER: Well, it's an important role.

SCATTERGOOD: Oh, very, intensely important, yes.

INTERVIEWER: And one that I think a woman is probably uniquely qualified to fill.

SCATTERGOOD: I think Miss Thorne was probably uniquely qualified to fill that, too.

INTERVIEWER: Well, okay, I think it's getting a little bit late . . .

(End of Interview)

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