

Oral history of:

Harley Kraehnke

Interviewed by: Ronee L. Francis

June 07, 2005

Monroe, Michigan

Harley Kraehnke

Date of birth
June 22, 1920

Graduated from Monroe High School
1937, 5th in class

Married Betty Jane Brown
June 20, 1942

Overseas – North Africa, Italy, Battle of the Bulge
July 11, 1942

Delegate to Monroe County Industrial Union Council
1947–1949, 1960–1965

Delegate to the CIO, Social Welfare Association
1960 – 1965

Vice President of the Social Welfare Association
1963 – 1964

Recording Secretary of the Social Welfare Association
1964 – 1965

Delegate to Michigan AFL-CIO Convention in Grand Rapid
1961, 1962 and 1963

Delegate to 2nd & 3rd Continental Committee UPP–AFL–CIO
in Washington D.C.
1960

Delegate to 2nd and 3rd Continental Committee UPP–AFL–CIO
in Miami Beach
1963

President of Local 1006, United Papermakers and Paperworkers of America
[UPP], CIO
1950 – 1963, 1966, 1969 and 1972

Finishing Room Steward
1963

Interview of: Harley Kraehnke
Interviewed by: Ronee Francis
Date of interview: June 12, 2005
Location of interview: Monroe, Michigan
Subject matter: Unions in Monroe, "Wildcat" strike of 1945
Harley Kraehnke, Herman Kraehnke
CIO, United Papermakers and Paperworkers
of America [UPP]

Track 1 begins

Ronee Francis: Hold on, let me just say, this is June 14th right? My name is Ronee Francis

Harley Kraehnke: No, June 22nd...

Francis: Is it?

Kraehnke: Yeah, my birthday.

Francis: Is that your birthday?

Kraehnke: I'll be eighty-five.

Francis: You'll be eighty-five.

Kraehnke: Yeah.

Francis: Well, happy birthday in advance. [laughs] I'm speaking with Harley Kraehnke today and I hope to find out about Harley's life and how he and his family both affected the union and how the union affected them. This interview is being done for Wayne State Oral History Methodology class and copies of this interview will be given to the Monroe Labor History Museum as well. We are in his home in Monroe, Michigan and this is my recording device.

Ok, good morning.

Kraehnke: Good morning.

Francis: Thank you for having me.

Kraehnke: Yep, you're welcome.

Francis: And, I just want to put this on tape, are you comfortable with where the transcripts will be going and the uses that we discussed?

T1-1 min.

Kraehnke: Whatever you want, whatever you need just take and send em.

Kraehnke: Because, it makes nothing different. None of it. It'll all be what I know and have to be true, so. I'm not worried about it.

Francis: Alright, well. I thought maybe we would start out with you telling me a little bit about your childhood.

T1-2 min

Kraehnke: My childhood? Ah, well, I was born on East First Street, 606 East First Street, June 22, 1920. I am currently waiting for my birthday June, 22nd for my eighty-fifth birthday. I grew up and I used to ice skate on the River Raisin in the winter time. In the summer time I used to play baseball, softball. I don't know how many years I played softball but then I had a heart attack in 1950...um, then I come back from the service, yeah, about 1952 I had a heart attack. I don't have a copy of it now. I went to the hospital. I come home. And then after eleven days in the hospital, I went to see my doctor and I said I guess I'll go back to playing softball. He said, no you can't play softball no more. So I said, how come? He said, because you can't. So I said, Ok. So then, uh, what sport can I do? He said, well why don't you take up bowling? I said, who wants to throw a ball at ten pins down an alley? So but, that's what I told him. But it looks like I took to it because I've been a pretty good bowler.

Francis: Pretty good? I just want to say for the record, walking into his house back there...how many trophies do you have back there?

Kraehnke: About a hundred n' ten, twelve.

Francis: I've heard from all accounts, Harley is the best bowler.

T1-3 min.

Kraehnke: Yeah, I was once. I am a Past President of the Michigan State Bowling Association. I was President back in 1982, I enjoyed that. I was Executive Director for 23 years. The second year I bowled, I bowled a 300. It used to be five years apart.

Now a days you see it's just like every day in the paper. And, I also bowled the first 800 series in Monroe June 22nd, I think 19... oh, I don't know...I know it's on here I can't see....[reading] I bowled an 811 on June the 22nd, 1974. On my birthday.

T1-4 min

That was the first 800 in Monroe County.

Francis: Very impressive.

Kraehnke: Yep. I'm very proud of that?

Francis: Where were you during your service time?

Kraehnke: I started off in North Africa. We went clean across Africa. And we came back. And then we got involved with, I landed over and we made an invasion of Italy. And then went clean up through Italy. Then, we made an invasion of southern France. And, I went up to southern France, I was in the Battle of the Bulge. I got shot three times. Then I then wanted, then we were wanted down in Austria at the [remembering].... I was in charge of all the medical hospitals. And, um, my mind's a blank.

Track 2 begins

Kraehnke: Wells, Austria, I was there a year and then finally get to come home.

Francis: Wow, how long were you gone altogether?

Kraehnke: That was...I was there about almost four years. Yep, I went to the draft board about four times. Every time I went there they told me I was 4F. So, then uh.

Francis: What's that?

Kraehnke: They told me I wasn't eligible to go. I wasn't right fit to go into the service, four times. And then I said, to my, at the time I was going with my wife, well, it looks like I will be able to get married. They won't take me up in the army. I got married June 20th and July 11th I was already over in Africa. [See photograph A]

Francis: Why didn't they want to take you?

Kraehnke: I don't know, just said I wasn't fit for the draft. I wound up, eventually, as a Staff Sargent, a Tech Sargent.

Francis: And how old were you then?

T2-1 min

Kraehnke: [calculating] I was 27 when I finally got home.

Kraehnke: But I was only home eleven days before they sent me over there, after I got married.

Francis: So, is your family from the Monroe area?

Kraehnke: My mother was from Monroe but my Dad was in service and when he came home he met my mother and they got married but she was [from] here and my Dad was from Wisconsin. He was a sailor on the

Great Lakes and he met my Ma and they got married. All my family is right now, we got...

T2-2 min

I have, I have one brother left and I got one sister left. All the rest of my brothers...there was nine of us.

Kraehnke: Two of us left, no three, we got Donna, Orville and myself. There's three of us left.

Francis: So what schools did you got to?

Kraehnke: I went to Lincoln school and I graduated from Monroe High School, I was fifth in my class. I was half-way decent with ah....

Francis: Well, why don't we talk about when you first became involved in the union yourself.

Kraehnke: When I first got involved with the union is when I was, I was still young yet. It was when my father was, started when he was having the union and I used to be what was known as a "lookout". I would stand by the house when the Sheriff would come by the house and I would knock on the window so they could turn the lights out. They wouldn't know they were down there. Then they would leave then I'd knock again and they could turn the lights back on and have the meetings. Yeah, they was Shysters.

T2-3 min

Francis: They were what?

Kraehnke: I said they were shysters at that time, the cops. Joe Bairley was the Sheriff at the time.

Francis: So how old were you at that time?

Kraehnke: The first time when Dad first started was 19...1937.

I graduated in 1937. I used to be their lookout.

Francis: Was that scary for you?

Kraehnke: No, not really. Probably could have been but it never bothered me. I'd see a cop and I'd just go knock on the window.

Francis: What was the atmosphere like at that time?

Kraehnke: It wasn't [bad] after that. After the steel strike was over everything calmed down.

T2-4 min

Francis: During the Steele Strike?

Kraehnke: Oh, then that was terrible because they had the Sheriff down there and all them deputies. They used to dump the cars in the river. Pick them up, sideways, then thrown them down in the river.

Kraehnke: Yeah, I thought I had something in here about all that stuff.

Francis: Well, we'll look at it.

Kraehnke: Joe Bairley, well most of it you should have. Funny he didn't tell ya. No, it, ah, I've always been, I've always been some sort of leader, so but.

Francis: So, 1937, it was around the time where you were the lookout and things were going on.

Kraehnke: Yeah, I was more like a stoolpidgeon [laughs].

Francis: [laughs] So, what, after being the lookout, what was your next experience with the union? Like direct experience?

Track 3 begins

Kraehnke: When I come back from Service I went over to Consolidated Paper Company, I walked into the building and they said, how about coming to work here? I said, if I can go down where Dad's at, I said, I'll come work for you but if you're going to send me someplace else I won't stay. So the next day, I went to go to work and they sent me over to Northside. I went into the office and I told them...it was Ervin Faulkenburg who was there. He was the head and the person we bargained with. I said, I was told my Mr. Newcomer down at Number One I could work at Number One. And I said if I have to work over there [Northside] you won't see me tomorrow in there. I won't do nothin'.

So, I went home and told Dad. I said, they told me I had to go over to Northside. I said, I told them I wasn't going. He said, [you] do what you want. So I waited for a while. Pretty soon a knock came on the door and it was Folkenburg, come up there, and he said, you can go down to Number One in the morning.

T3-1 min

Francis: Number One is where Local 1006 was...

Kraehnke: Binder Board, 1006, yeah. [then very quietly] So dad....

Francis: Why, why did you want to be at Number One?

Kraehnke: Why? Why it was, it was different things a couple, I did work before. I worked at Stoner & Maurer in the shipping and receiving department and they sold it to Monroe Auto Equipment. When I come back Auto Equipment was on strike. So I went over to Binder, I went over to the Northside office. I thought I might as well get a job. So I went there and he give me the job.

Kraehnke: Let's see, sixty-three, that was...

T3-2 min

Francis: So how soon after you started working for Number One did you become the Delegate? You were the Delegate to the Monroe County....

Kraehnke: [reading] I was the Delegate to Monroe County Council from forty-seven to forty-nine and then again in sixty to sixty-five. I also, I held a Delegate to Monroe County Social and Welfare Council which is another thing, I was on there from sixty to sixty-five. I was also the Vice-President of the building association. And, I was the Recording Secretary of the building association [CIO, Social Welfare Association]. I was a member of the Joint Bargaining Committee sixty to sixty-three and sixty-four to sixty-five. I was the Bargaining Committee member of Local 1006, sixty to sixty-three and sixty-five. I was a Delegate to the 2nd and 3rd Continental Convention, United Papermakers and Paperworkers AFL-CIO. We went up to Washington

T3-3 min

D.C. in 1960, my wife and I. And, in 1963, my wife and I went down to Miami Beach as a Delegate. I was also a Delegate to the AFL-CIO Michigan delegation [convention] sixty-one, sixty-two and sixty-three in Grand Rapids. I was a member of the Executive Board of the Monroe County Council sixty-five to, I think it was, sixty-nine. I became Local, President of a Local in 1950 and I served until 1963. Then I decided a couple of year not to run. Then I was again in 1966 and then I was elected again as President in sixty-nine and seventy-two. I was Finishing Room Steward in 1963. I was the Chief Steward of Local 1006 from sixty-four through sixty-five.

T3-4 min

Francis: You have an impressive experience, I must say. Harley, what made you feel so strongly about being involved in the union?

Kraehnke: I've always been a leader. I'm not a follower. I'm a leader. I don't want to be a follower. I've never been a follower. I been on the Bowling Association now as Recording Secretary, I've served, what does this make me now, I've served 29 consecutive years on the local bowling association...I'll try and get it down. [Harley gets up] You can come in here and look.

Francis: We'll look at it after, how about that, well OK.
[Ronee gets up to see bowling association certificate]

Track 4 begins

Francis: OK, we're back. Could you tell me more about the CIO-Social Welfare Association and why it was put together and what function it served?

Kraehnke: I just, think they just had to have a heading to be named something that was going on. Most of this was just some things that the union would do, so they had to have a place to put it in.

Francis: Do you mean...

Kraehnke: They had different Locals in there that would send theirself a man. Each Local would send a man. There was River Raisin [Union Camp belonged to River Raisin], Consolidated [Paper Co.], uh, Paper Products and...[Modern Packaging, Mitchell Paper, Weiss and Woodall which was located behind Paper Products].

T4-1 min

Francis: So, they all sent their representatives?

Kraehnke: Yes, each one sent their representatives, that way there was unity in what they were doing.

Francis: And they met, now you're talking about, when they sent their representatives, to the building downtown in Monroe on Front Street [Murray Building No. 37 and No. 41].

Kraehnke: That was the building council, set up just to buy the building, get the building set and buy the building.

Francis: OK, so the association was to run the building?

Kraehnke: Right, yeah, take care of it. It didn't make no difference who, you know who, the President was.

Francis: And, why, was that, why did you need a non-profit organization to run...

Kraehnke: Well, 'cause you had to pay for the building

Each one of the Locals would give their share of the money towards....and when they had enough they paid the building off.

Francis: So, how much did each Local give? Do you know?

Kraehnke: I would have no idea what their total amount would be. I can't even remember what they paid for the hall.

T4-2 min

Francis: So, but, each person gave money themselves to pay off that building.

Kraehnke: No, no, each Local. Most of this stuff is you know...

Francis: Yeah, I do have some of the details and it's the stories I would really, you know, would like to hear.

Kraehnke: Yeah.

Francis: I don't know. Perhaps we could talk about your father now. Did your father...was he actually the person who brought the CIO to Monroe?

Kraehnke: Yes he was.

Francis: He was THE person.

T4-3 min

Kraehnke: He and Frank Grasso, and there's Harry Sayre, Walter Reuther...he dealt with all of them.

Francis: So, it's all of them working together, they brought the CIO...

Kraehnke: Right, and when they got the money, when they got the union into town, they [CIO] had a colored fellow who was a, who was an organizer. They [vigilantes] beat him, giving him a skull fracture and booted him out of Monroe.

I think it was one of these articles that tells about it.

Francis: Why?

Kraehnke: Because he didn't want the union in. The guys got him, in front of the...there used to be a Post Office now it's the Monroe Historical Society out there where the Post Office used to have been, Monroe Street. They got him on the steps and they beat him and they run him out of town

T4-4 min

I think it should be in here someplace.

Francis: I'm sure it will [be], we'll find it. I'll take a look at it after.

Kraehnke: There's a lot of stuff I can tell you....is in this.

Francis: That's OK, the details we can get later. So how about the Paperworkers....United Papermakers and Paperworkers [UPP] of America, how does that come into existence?

Kraehnke: Well, that was, that was on a national deal now with Harry Sayre, Frank Grasso and Walter Reuther... got together....[son walks in] and then, that's my son.

Track 5 begins

Francis: Um, what are some of the things he did when the United Papermakers and Paperworkers of America came to Monroe? Was your father directly involved? Did he become President at that time?

Kraehnke: Well, he was the first President of the Local.

Francis: Local 1006?

Kraehnke: Yeah, and that was the first Local in Monroe. Then was, Local 1000, Local 1000 was the Northside, Local 1004 was the Southside. Local 1006 was the Binder Board.

T5-1 min

[long pause]

Francis: Do you know where your father served in WWI?

Kraehnke: He was over in Europe.

[son says something, unintelligible]

Kraehnke: He was in like a laundry deal.

Francis: And that was before you were born. Oh, Ok, thank you. [son hands Herman's military discharge document and VFW card to Ronee]

T5-2 min

Carl [son]: And that's his VFW card.

Kraehnke: That's my Dad's discharge.

Francis: This is a document, Honorable discharge from the United States Army. Herman Kraehnke's document. [pause]

Ok, great. So, tell me about the day the strike happened with your Dad.

Kraehnke: When the strike happened I wasn't here...

Francis: You were...

Kraehnke: I was in service. I know when I came home I seen a tent, this stuff here. [pointing to a photograph]

Francis: So you came home and you actually saw tents?

Kraehnke: That was there. [indicating photograph 1]

Francis: We're looking at no. 1 here [photograph]

Kraehnke: I don't know which one that is.

T5-3 min

Francis: And it says, "One man brought the CIO here, 1,400 will keep it". That "One" man, did they mean your father?

Kraehnke: My Dad, yes.

Francis: This is photo no. 2.

Kraehnke: Well, I know somethin', most of the guys.

Francis: Can you tell me their names?

Kraehnke: Ray Moshers there. And Harley Wolfe.

Francis: Let's start, do you know this man here, any of those two guys? What's his name?

Kraehnke: Harley Wolfe. W-O-L-F-E

Francis: Harley Wolfe is the third from the right.

Kraehnke: You see these guys were all there before I went to work there.

Kraehnke: That's Ray Mosher.

T5-4 min

Francis: Ok, Ray Mosher is the third from the left.

Kraehnke: He, he worked in the finishing room by the time I got there

Kraehnke: I might know the... but I don't know their names.

Francis: And, do you know the location of this tent? [photograph 2]

Kraehnke: Yeah, it was down on Rosseler Street, right across the street from the Binder Board. Ervin Faulkenburg one time come down he's gonna break in but he couldn't get in. We said to him if you want to get in your not gonna get out.

Francis: I'm sorry, what did you say?

Kraehnke: He was ready to go in, but I said, you're not gonna go in but if you go in you won't get back out.

There was a couple of guys already in there so he turned around and left.

Kraehnke: Folkerson was the, uh...He was one of the big shots.

Francis: From Consolidated?

Kraehnke: Yeah.

Track 6 begins

Francis: Ok, and here's a picture of your father.

Kraehnke: Yep.

Francis: This is picture no. 4

Francis: So, the day of the strike, your father, was he actually fired?

Kraehnke: He was fired.

Francis: He was fired and he walked out.

Kraehnke: He walked out and when he walked out everybody in the mill walked out.

Francis: Is just went around like fast. [indicating word of Herman's dismissal]

Kraehnke: Yep. Nobody was in there, they all left.

Francis: Immediately, right after he left.

Kraehnke: Yeah, yeah. That was just before I got home.

Francis: The strike happened at an interesting time because the day your father was fired and the strike started...

T6-1 min

Kraehnke: Same day.

Francis: ...it was, um, in between bombings, so on an international level, um, I think this was right before Hiroshima was bombed, and so did, did, international events affect the local lives?

Kraehnke: When this, when this happened, I don't know....[became a little emotional]...all this, all this stuff, uh, you got citations from all of the big shots [referring to papers]. When he, when Harry Sayre came to Monroe he was like a, like a little organizer. Used to meet and talk with them all. Philip Murray, I knew them all.

T6-2 min

Francis: So, what was the atmosphere like during that time, too during that strike time in Monroe, was it, was it full of tension?

Kraehnke: No, they didn't think it was going to last long.

Francis: Oh, they didn't?

Francis: And, it lasted longer than people thought?

Kraehnke: No, not really. How many days did it last? I can't remember...

Francis: Well, the strike started August 13th...

Kraehnke: Now, was that the Local One strike? 1006?

Francis: That is, yeah, that was your father.

Kraehnke: See that was, that was before I got out of the service.

Kraehnke: There was another strike after that...we had to throw Folkerson out..[unintelligible, paper shuffling]

T6-3 min

Francis: Was that a strike by the Locals at Consolidated?

Kraehnke: Yeah. This was all before I got home.

Francis: After you got home you began working at 1006, eventually, and what happened after that?

Kraehnke: Well, wasn't too much after that. Once the union, once the union got into town, there was, everyone was unionized. Monroe at one time was a union town too.

Francis: Yeah. Monroe at one time had a lot of paper mills here but they are gone now.

Kraehnke: They had Consolidated, BinderBoard, River Raisin...at one time they had a wallpaper thing in Monroe.

T6-4 min

This was before all the unions and stuff. And, my Dad worked with Eddie Knabusch. Have you heard of him?

Francis: Uh, huh.

Kraehnke: Where is Eddie Knabusch from?

Francis: I have no idea.

Kraehnke: Lazy Boy chair company.

Francis: Oh, Ok, I'm not from here so [laughs].

Kraehnke: Ok, all right...that was Lazy Boy furniture. At Mitchell's Paper mill and him, my Dad and him worked side-by-side. I used to take lunch to them everyday at the mill. He asked my Dad one day for twenty-five dollars, start the chair company, wouldn't let him have it. Look what twenty-five dollars would have been today. I would have been a big shot over in lazy boy.

Francis: Yeah. [laughs]

Kraehnke: You never know.

Track 7 begins

Francis: Do you know what the, what it was like before the unions came? Like, what, what were the conditions of the workers before the unions came?

Kraehnke: Before the...

Francis: Yeah, why did they, why bother bringing a union here?

Kraehnke: Well, it was on account of the wages. In them times you was making about .30 cents an hour. They was goin' after wages n' stuff.

Francis: And, after they brought the unions, what got better? Did things get better?

Kraehnke: Well, yeah, they...I feel that the first time the raise they got, the first time they got....you know every so often they would have a yearly [unintelligible] when bargainers, bargain some more money, better conditions, uh, insurance for the family, you know.

Francis: So, do you think your father's experience, um, in the union made you made you who you were in the union as well?

T7-1 min

Kraehnke: Well I imagine it would, yeah. I always think so.

Francis: How do you think that is?

Kraehnke: Follow in your Father's footsteps, I guess, you see now I, I worked at my Dad worked at Binder Board, I worked there and I had my oldest son worked over to the Northside, Harley junior.

Francis: Right here? [pointing over to son sitting in the room]

Kraehnke: No, that's Carl, that's Carl. We used to have every year, we would have a, um, a union picnic. Harry Sayre would come down, um. Philip Murray came down a couple of times. Everybody should be in here, about the picnics [gestures to papers]. There's three generations that, father, son and grandson was all in the same, same company.

T7-2 min

Francis: So, like an annual picnic?

Kraehnke: Yeah, every year we had it. Yep, every year we went to Toledo Beach.

Francis: Where?

Kraehnke: Toledo Beach.

Francis: Toledo Beach, OK.

Kraehnke: I met probably all the big wheels.

Francis: Want to tell me who they were?

Kraehnke: Harry Sayre, Frank Grasso, Philip Murray, there's a couple more guys

T7-3 min

[Frank] Paley. I met them all on the day that they burnt the paper here that Philip Murray was here. They named the hall after Phillip Murray.

Francis: Let me get that picture. Ok.

Kraehnke: Yep.

Francis: We're looking at the picture of four gentlemen in front of the Murray building [photograph 5]. Do you know who these four gentlemen are?

Kraehnke: I bet I know the one. There's Phillip Murray right there.

Francis: Ok, he's second from the left.

T7-4 min

Kraehnke: Yep, no, I have, can't recognize 'em.

Francis: Ok, yeah, we don't know who the other three gentlemen are in the photo.

We're lookin' at the picture of Reuther standing in front of the Murray building [photograph 6.]

Kraehnke: Yeah, yeah.

Francis: And, when do you think this is?

Kraehnke: 1950....that was the day, that was the day that he burnt the thing saying that the hall was paid off.

Francis: The mortgage burning day?

Kraehnke: Yeah.

Kraehnke: Let's see if I, see if I can see. I don't need the glasses, only to read. Huh. Looks like Grasso and his wife.

Francis: Oh, really, where are they?

Kraehnke: [pointing] Frank Grasso and his wife.

Francis: Oh, Ok, you can see is it, Frank Grassel [Grasso] on the right

Track 8 begins

hand side of the photo. He's holding something in his hand and he...

Kraehnke: That's probably the papers that we burnt. [laughs]

Francis: He's holding something rolled up in his hand and his wife has a hat on with sunglasses, Ok.

Kraehnke: Yeah.

Francis: Anybody else in there that you know?

Kraehnke: Well, I should have been there someplace but I don't see it.

Francis: So, what was that day like?

Kraehnke: I really just, the only thing that I can say is that it was a day like any other day, but.

Francis: But, it must have been a proud moment.

Kraehnke: Yes, it was. Burnt the papers and named the hall.

Francis: That's s a big accomplishment to pay off that building.

Kraehnke: Yep. Yep.

Francis: And, now we're looking at the inside of the hall [picture 7]. Does that bring back any memories?

T8-1 min.

Kraehnke: I don't know what you got hanging up there, but, I don't know if he's around [quietly].

Francis: Is that pretty much what the hall looked like...when you were up there? [long pause] This was probably taken around the mortgage burning time, I think.

Kraehnke: Area five [referring to chalk board in picture]. Well, my Dad's gotta have a picture hanging up there some place, but, I don't know. They're not there. And my dad, Local 1006, my dad has a plaque hanging up on room 209 at, uh, the hospital.

T8-2 min.

Local 1006 paid off that. That's still there today. I go every now and then to see that they don't take it down.

Francis: Yeah [laughs].

Kraehnke: Room 209 [laughs].

Francis: That's great. [long pause] Well, is there anything I'm missing that you want to talk about? [pause] Tell me more about your experiences in the union, being the leader.

Kraehnke: Like what?

Francis: You're the leader, being the leader. Tell me about your experiences, things that you accomplished while you were leader.

Kraehnke: Well, everything was already taken care of all we had to do was follow what they done.

Francis: Well, you had to keep it going too.

T8-3 min.

Kraehnke: Yeah. You had your monthly meetings. You had to be doing a good job or you wouldn't be elected anymore. Oh, there's Nick Vraetic, who else is on there, oh, there's Bill Kittle, he's from Plymouth, Michigan. [both men are union organizers and would sometimes come to meetings]

Francis: Ok. He's looking at the United Papermakers and Paperworkers letter to Herman I think it's when he retired, right? This letter is in reference to him retiring.
[pause]

T8-4 min.

So tell me about Consolidated. Do you know, do you know the history of that company at all? Like when it came into being, [pause] I think around 1921 it became a company. Do you, do you remember when it ceased being a company or is it still a company?

Kraehnke: It's, it's all gone.

Francis: They're all gone from Monroe.

Kraehnke: There was River Raisin, Paper Products, Newton Steele.

Francis: All those companies are gone. Do you remember where the Locals met?

Kraehnke: In the union hall.

Francis: There wasn't another location other than that.

Kraehnke: Nope, in the union hall.

Francis: I heard stories of, maybe, some Locals meeting in different places, maybe at the bar across the street...

Kraehnke: You're talking about River Raisin. River Raisin did have their meetings in the, above, uh...

Track 9 begins

What was the name of the bar, right across the street? U & I Bar.

Francis: So River Raisin met there.

Kraehnke: Yeah. Who else, Paper Products had a different place to meet too.

You're joggin' my memory way back.

Francis: It's hard, I know...it is. Well, I know that's one question that people wanted to know was, were there other places the locals met.

Kraehnke: River Raisin...we met someplace though but I know we only met for awhile...

T9-1 min.

Francis: Oh, that's OK.

Kraehnke: There's a lot of them that met someplace else.

Francis: Where were the factories located in Monroe?

Kraehnke: Northside was located on Elm Avenue and Southside was located at the end of East First Street, right at the end. And, the Binder Board was located at, uh, on Roessler Street, which now is, uh, which now is a bunch of condominiums, a big place out on Front Street. If you came down Front Street you had to go by it, cause...it's called...[pause]

Francis: It's brand new, they just built it, right?

Kraehnke: It's about ten year, used to be...that's where, um, Steel Castings [on the corner of Roessler and 5th Street] used to be. They were Binder Board, I worked at Binder Board. That, now is just condominiums, town houses.

T9-2 min.

Francis: And, were there any other factories related to Consolidated in other places, or, just those three?

Kraehnke: Consolidated, River Raisin, Paper Products... Steele Castings...

Francis: You're talking about different companies, right?

Kraehnke: Yeah.

Francis: OK. Yeah, within Consolidated were there other...

Kraehnke: And there used to be Weiss... Weiss used to... Weiss' used to be too, but it's, it's now down around Roessler Street. They got a big senior citizens complex where, where Weiss is at on Roessler Street.

Kraehnke: No, it's on Union Street.

Francis: Well, tell me about your mother, she's from Monroe...and her name was Lucy?

T9-3 min.

Kraehnke: Lucy Elizabeth.

Francis: Lucy Elizabeth. And I have here that she was born in 1918...do you know, um, much about her life?

Kraehnke: 1918?

Francis: No, I'm sorry, she was married. [laughs]

Kraehnke: [laughs] I was going to say.

Francis: Excuse me. I read that wrong.

Kraehnke: My Mom was, was a nice lady.

Francis: Did she stay home with the kids?

Kraehnke: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Francis: And, what kind of mother was she?

T9-4 min.

Kraehnke: She was a good mother, very good.

Francis: Did you and your brothers and sisters get along well, and?

Kraehnke: Oh, yeah, you didn't dare, you didn't dare get out of hand 'cause Dad had a strap under that sink. He'd walk into the door. We'd be out playin' ball and he would whistle and we used to play ball around Ilgenfritz Nursery on a ball field. During the winter we'd play hockey thier pond. Down on Front Street [is] where they used to have their place. And we would play ball there and Dad would get out front and whistle and if you didn't get home, when you did get home you would have a belt on your butt.

You know, he was very strict. My Mom died young. I think my ma was...

Track 10 begins

...63 when she passed away. My Dad lived to 93. And, I'll be 85 on the 22nd of this month.

Francis: So your father's side of the family, enjoys long lives.

Kraehnke: Yeah, my great, my, my Great Grandfather was a 104 and my Great, Great Grandpa was a 111. My Dad was 94 when he passed away, 93 or 94.

Francis: Now, your Great Grandfather, did he live here as well, in Monroe? Or, he was from Wisconsin.

Kraehnke: No, they moved to Monroe. They was from there, but, no they moved to Monroe.

T10-1 min.

They lived next door to one of his daughters on West 6th Street.

Francis: Wow, 111, that's, that's pretty amazing.

Kraehnke: Yeah, yeah. And, he had a beard from here down to the floor. [from a sitting position, indicates from his chin to the floor] He would sit on a chair, sit on a chair and his beard would be laying on the floor. Hard to believe, huh.

I think I saw Carl had a picture of him but I guess he didn't get it out. We had a four generation picture. [Photograph 8] My Great Grandpa, my Grandpa, my Dad and myself. [In the photograph, from left to right, is Harley's Grandfather, Harley, his Great Grandfather and on top Herman] I was, I was only a little shaver. [laughs] I think I was only 11 years old when they took it.

T10-2 min.

Kraehnke: If I can think of anything I'll give you a buzz on the phone.

Francis: Yeah, let me know and...

Kraehnke: I'll keep you informed.

Francis: And, I'll come back and bring you the transcript. And, you can tell me some things then too if you want.

Kraehnke: There's a lot of it in here that we didn't go over.

Francis: Yeah, a lot of it I have the details.

Kraehnke: All right, Ok.

Track 11 begins

Francis: We're looking at the Monroe County Industrial Union Council paperwork here and it says [reading] a token to Herman Kraehnke. The first Paper Workers Local in Monroe, Michigan under Congress of Industrial Organization, organized by Herman Kraehnke date Nov. 4th, 1939. And, then it says, "The First Officers". [stops reading, Document 9]

Do you know any of those officers, besides your father?

Kraehnke: I guess I should 'cause Allen Schmelz that's my uncle, Art [Arthur] Kilgus, that's an uncle.

I had an uncle, his name was Clarence Wehner. He worked at the Binding Board. All the family, almost.

Francis: Huh.

Kraehnke: Dad n' Art Kilgus n' Allen Schmelz.

T11-1 min.

Francis: Hm, so you've had a lot of family members who worked for Consolidated as well.

Francis: Working for Consolidated, I assume that paid good money?

Kraehnke: They were the place, if you lived in Monroe, that you would want to work at. You wouldn't have to worry about being laid off. Always had a job for ya.

Francis: What was Monroe like at that time?

Kraehnke: Well, after the union got in there it was nice. Well it was and still is a nice place to live.

Francis: Was it really busy, the downtown?

Kraehnke: Oh, yeah, well, then we didn't have all the shoppin' centers.

Francis: Right, so everyone went downtown for shopping.

T11-2 min.

Kraehnke: Downtown, that was it. You go down there Friday, Saturday, Sunday, you had to fight to find a parkin' place. We didn't have, you didn't have the parkin' over across the from the river. St. Mary's Park wasn't there, you know that's right in behind Custer's statue. That wasn't

there. The Sister's of Saint Mary had their building there. It's where all the Sisters lived. And you could get goin' down where Saint Marys School is, you could go down the basement and walk under the and get over the expressway and come up in the building and be on the other side of the road.

Francis: Oh, ok.

Kraehnke: Interesting.

Francis: It was like a bridge under the...

Kraehnke: No, no, it was a tunnel. You walked through a tunnel.

Francis: Under the river?

Kraehnke: No, no, under the, under the road. They used to take and do washing and stuff over there. But that's where the Sisters were at. They didn't have this, the Academy they've got there.

Kraehnke: The Academy they built later.

T11-3 min.

Francis: Different from today.

Kraehnke: Yes, it is. Years ago, we used to have we used to have streetcar tracks. They would go from Monroe to Toledo. They would go from Monroe to Detroit and then up on the corner of Elm Avenue they had a, like the street car barns, where they would put them in they could turn the street cars around inside it. Come back out. They could go up and down and down the streets.

Kraehnke: It's gone a long ways from the day yesterday. It used to be you could go out to the, out to the, out to the place, and go out to the beach and they had a big club house out on the, out on the, a mile and a half out on the lake Erie. You could go out on the walkway, go out to it. Yacht club.

Kraehnke: Yeah, a lot of stuff has changed.

[long pause]

T11-4 min.

Francis: Can you tell me what that is? [document 10]

Kraehnke: That's from H. Lee Rauch, 50th, Ray Rauch's 50 years of service with Consolidated Paper Co. This was over at the Monroe Golf and Country Club. This is my Dad's invitation to it. [Consolidated was

founded by E.C. Rauch and August Boehme in 1921. Monroe Evening News, Aug. 19,1990.]

Francis: How about this one?

Kraehnke: Which one? Now that was, that was the first time he went for, he got beat and I think it was Wheeler Longworth beat him. That was the time that, and he [Longworth] got it for one year and that was it.

Francis: [Here's an] article about Herman Kranhke's

Track 12 begins

Defeat in Consolidated Local election. But that was after 11 years of serving as President. That's what it says here. [document 11]

Kraehnke: Yeah. And, then he ran the next year and he got back in.

Francis: Oh, so just took a year break.

Kraehnke: No, he didn't take it. [laughs]

Francis: He was forced into it. [laughs]

Kraehnke: Yeah.

Francis: All right. Well, I want to thank you so much for speaking with me and when I come back we can get a few more details then.

Kraehnke: Yeah.

Francis: Thank you.

*This document has been edited to remove repetition and statements that do not aid the conversation.

DOCUMENTAION – Harley Kraehnke

- A. Photograph of Harley and Betty's wedding day.
Track 2, 0 min.
- 1. Photograph of tent during strike in 1945.
Track 5, 2-3 min.
- 2. Photograph of tent with men seated in front.
Track 5, 3-4 min.
- 3. Photograph of a close up of strike signs.
- 4. Photograph of Herman Kraehnke in front of tent.
Track 6, 0 min.
- 5. Photograph of three men with Walter Reuther in front of the Philip Murray Building.
Track 7, 3 min.
- 6. Photograph of Walter Reuther speaking at the mortgage burning ceremony in front of the Philip Murray Building., June 10, 1951.
Track 7, 4 min.; Track 8, 0 min.
- 7. Photograph of meeting hall inside the Philip Murray Building.
Track 8, 1 min.
- 8. Photograph of four generations of men in the Kraehnke family.
Track 10, 1 min.
- 9. Document of a tribute to Herman Kraehnke from the Monroe County Industrial Union Council.
Track 11, 0 min.
- 10. Document in the form of an invitation for Herman Kraehnke to attend H. Lee Rauch's 50 years of service celebration.
Track 11, 4 min.
- 11. Document of articles concerning Herman Kraehnke.
Track 12





GERMANS ALLIES

GENERAL QUINCY

ONE MAN BROUGHT THE CIO HERE 1400 WILL KEEP IT

WILLIAMS



ONE MAN
BROUGHT THE
C-I-O HERE.
1400 WILL KEEP IT.

UNITED PAPER WORKERS
C-I-O
DON'T STRIKE

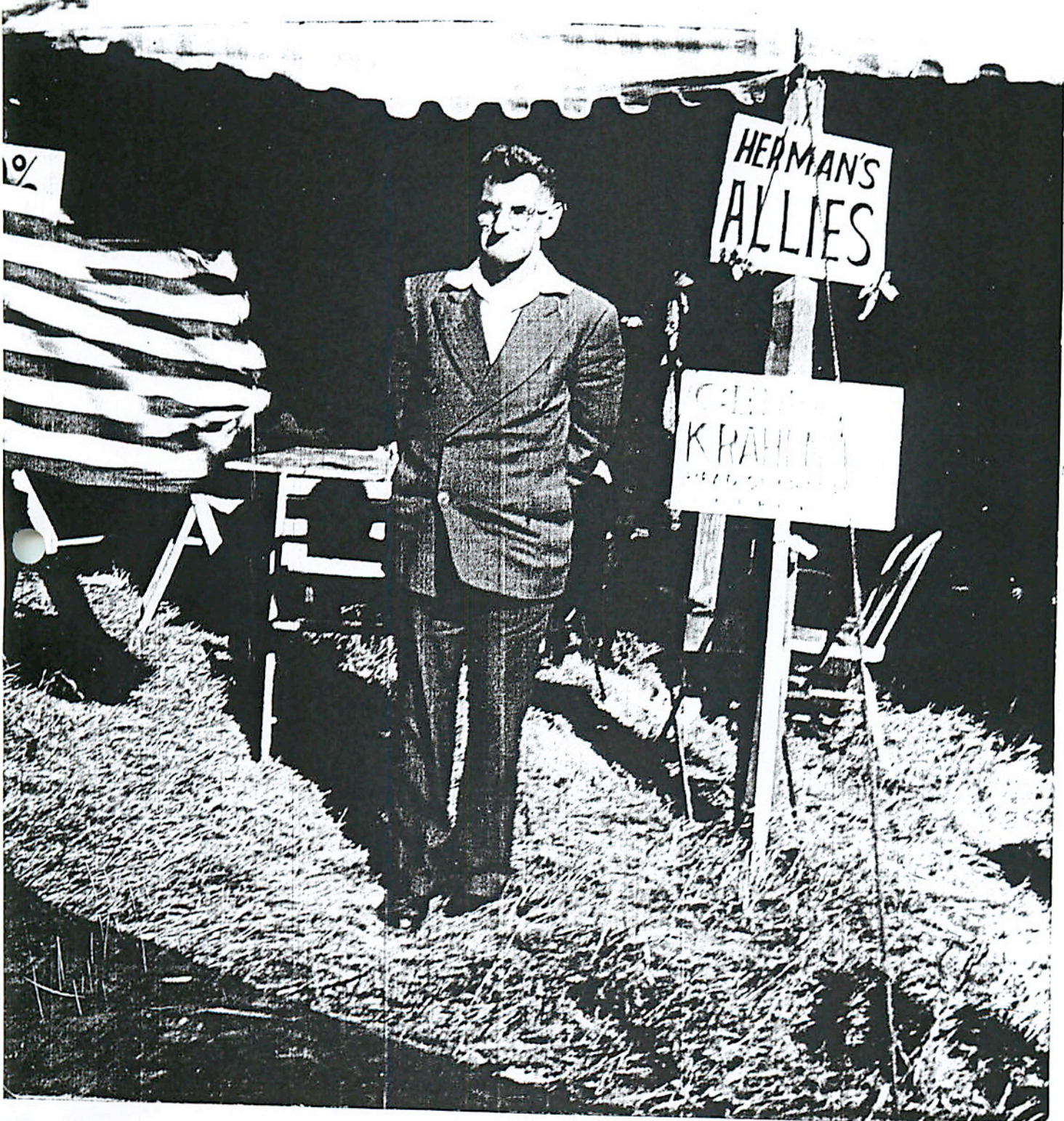
West Side Local 1004
UNITE
PAPER WORKERS
C-I-O
South Side Local 1004
DON'T BREAK
LINK!

HERMAN

Don't
the

Washburn
Sama

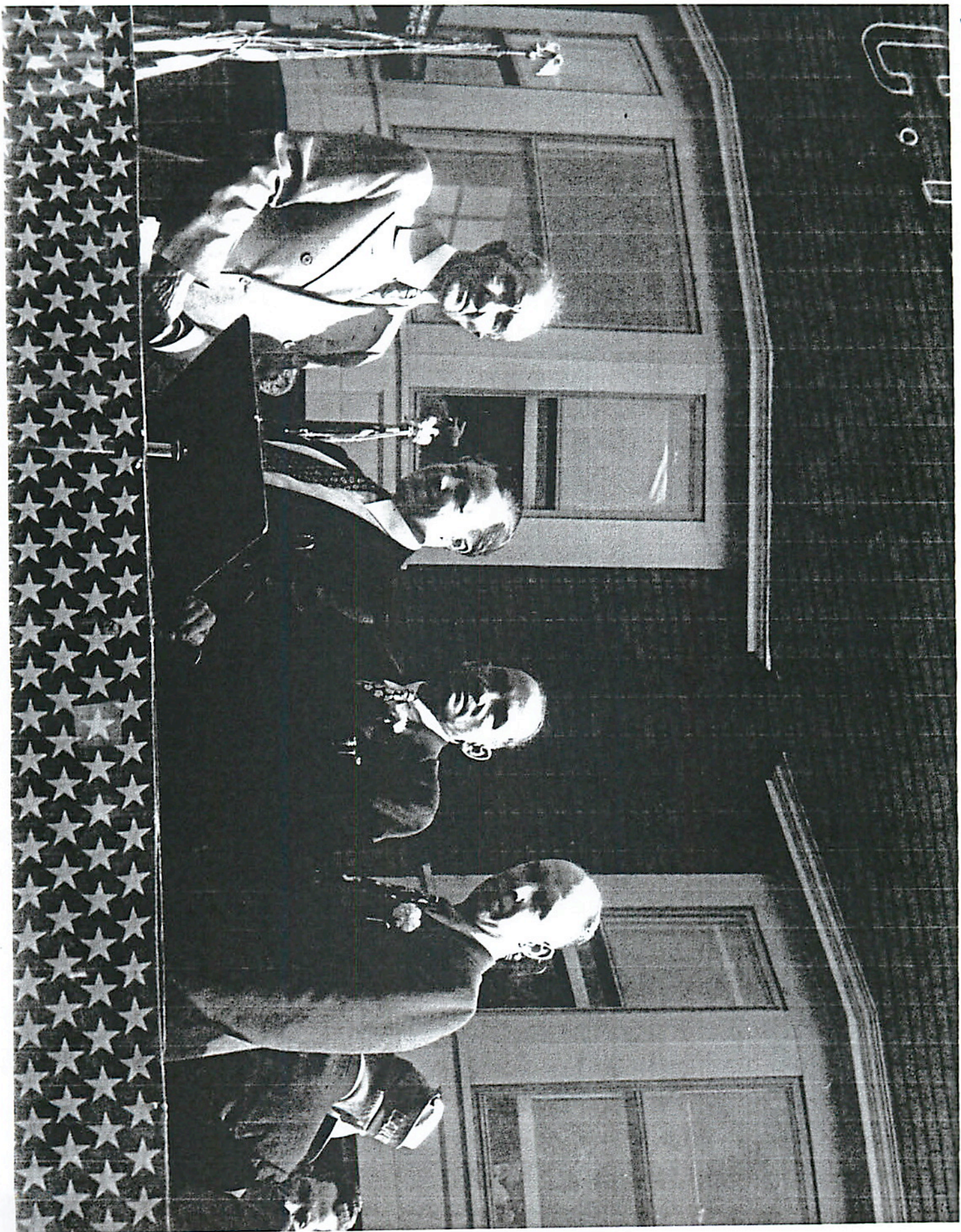




9/

HERMAN'S
ALLIES

GERMAN
KRAHNS









Monroe County Industrial Union Council



41 West Front Street
Phone 4084
Monroe, Mich.



A Token to Herman Kraehnke.

The first Paper Workers Local in Monroe Michigan under Congress of Industrial Organization, organized by Herman Kraehnke date Nov. 4th, 1939

The first officers.

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Herman Kraehnke | President. |
| Arthur Kilgus | Vice-President. |
| Clyde Miller | Recording-Secretary |
| Earl Sacks | Financial-Secretary |
| Roy Wehner | Treasurer. |
| Charley Strickler | Trustee. |
| Henry Forter | Trustee. |
| Allen Schmelz | Trustee. |
| Earl Salow | Executive-Board. |
| Benjamin Weier | Executive-Board. |

Brother Herman Kraehnke who is a delegate to this Monroe County Council, 41 West Front St. He served twelve consecutive years as president of Local 1006 U P A C I O. He is now past President.

In behalf of this council and myself, we join with the others in paying tribute to a real union man, who devoted much of his time and effort for the labor movement here in Monroe.

Date of presentation
Dec. 27th, 1951
at the Union hall.

Carlos Gastembide. President
Carlos Gastembide

*You are cordially invited to attend
a Dinner for
Mr. H. Lee Rauch
commemorating his fifty years
of service with the
Consolidated Paper Company
Thursday evening June twenty-ninth
Nineteen hundred and fifty
at the
Monroe Golf and Country Club*

Mr. Herman Kraehnke who was the first President of Local 1006 UPACIO. And served twelve consecutive years was invited to this dinner. We had the first active CIO Local in Monroe and are trying to have real management and labor co-operation. After looking over some of this material you will know what I mean.

Union Vote Ends in Tie

A deadlock in voting for a new president highlighted an election since the United Papermakers Paperworkers Local 1006, No. 1 plant, employees of the Consolidated Paper Co., No. 1 plant, Harley Kraehnke, who has served as president since 1959, and Tony Ziegler tied in the vote for president and a runoff election between the two will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday. Harley Wolfe was the third candidate.

Other officers elected were: Bernard Gillenkirk, vice president; Edward D. Toll, recording secretary; Harold Hartle, financial secretary; James Williams, chief steward; and Edward Croskey, sergeant at arms.

Three members, Bernard Gillenkirk, Earl Riehle Jr. and Ira Simmons, were named to the board of trustees, while six men were elected to the executive board. They are: Frank Meade, Benny Oley, Mr. Riehle, Steve Smith, Gordon Vance and Leonard Violanti.

Stewards elected were: Mr. Violanti, maintenance; Earl Green, beater room; Mr. Oley, dry room; Charles Kominek, machine room; and Mr. Meade, finishing room.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1962

Workers Receive 8-Cent Increase At Consolidated

Average Hourly Rate Now \$2.37; Benefits Are Added in Package

The Consolidated Paper Co. has granted its workers an eight-cent-an-hour, across-the-board wage increase, bringing the average hourly earned rate to \$2.37, "a new all-time high in the paper industry," it was announced today. The increase became effective Aug. 8.

Minimum wages on hourly rated jobs become \$1.80 for men (janitor and watchmen) and \$1.75 for women.

The contract, signed by representatives of Local 1000, 1004 and 1006, UPA-CIO, is said to mean an 11-cent-an-hour monetary package. This includes a one-cent boost in second shift differential pay, company-paid insurance coverage for dependents of retired workers, funeral leave and overtime premium for all hours worked before as well as after regularly scheduled shift times.

An adjustment increase of five cents an hour was granted about 300 workers in the machinist, millwright, welder, electrician, pipefitter, printing pressman, cutting pressman, diemaker, ink man and engraver classifications.

The guaranteed Christmas bonus was increased to provide a minimum of \$40 an employe, with an additional \$10 for each \$100,000 increase in net earnings of more than \$800,000.

The average vacation pay for workers this summer was reported to have been \$363, "another paper industry record."

The increases were negotiated by a joint committee representing the three unions. Members were: Local 1000 — President Robert Haynes, Vice President Clarence Nisely Jr. and Chief Steward William Anteau; Local 1004 — President John Jennings, Recording Secretary Charles Navarre and Chief Steward Jesse Reece; and Local 1006 — President Herman Kraehnke and Art Tamara.

Herman Kraehnke Is Defeated In Consolidated Local Election

Herman Kraehnke, who has served 11 years as president of Local 1006, United Paper Workers of America, C.I.O., of the Consolidated Paper Co. No. 1 plant on Roessler St., was defeated in the annual election yesterday by Wheeler Longworth. Mr. Kraehnke has been the local's only president. He received 113 votes to 170 for Mr. Longworth, a beaterman who has been employed at Consolidated for the last eight years. He was chief steward last year. Mr. Kraehnke is a machine tender.

There will be a runoff election for vice-president between Leonard Violanti and Charles Bale. Mr. Violanti received 125 votes and Mr. Bale 93 with the third candidate, Art Tomaro, receiving 45 votes.

Pierson Miller was named financial secretary-treasurer over Harold Hartley, receiving 142 votes to 108 for Mr. Hartley.

The seven members of the executive board and their vote totals

are: Frank Bialy 180, Frank 134, Ray Moore 192, Harry sr. 135, Ben Solean 171, Do crant 137 and Gordon Vance. Defeated candidates and the totals were Leland Estu George Gasper 115, Charles 83, Don Shavalia 121, Mike 65 and Woodrow Braden 11.

Named without opposition: Herbert Farner for recording secretary, Nick Teason for sergeant-at-arms, Tony Ziegler for correspondent and three to Joe Simek, Nellis Fiedler and ley Wolfe.

Stewards elected were: and K. B. department, Herbert; finishing department Soncrant; dry room department Bernard Geiman; machine Ray Moore, and maintenance power house, Gordon Vance.

Handy Pack

OCTOBER 7, 1954

Kraehnke Heads UPA-CIO Local

Herman Kraehnke, veteran union official who was renamed president of the Local 1006, UPA-CIO without opposition, also was elected chief steward in Wednesday's balloting at the No. 1 plant of Consolidated Paper Co. He received 42 votes for steward to win in a five-candidate field with Homer Nunn receiving 33, Maurice Carter 30, Leonard Violanti 27 and Ray Oley 5. He was given 105 complimentary votes for president. George Galbraith was elected recording secretary without opposition.

Other results were: sergeant-at-arms, Steve Smith 111, Ray Oley 24; press correspondent, Anthony Zeigler 79, Charles Clark 56; executive board (seven to be elected) Gordon Vance 125, Albert Siebarth 123, Don Soncrant 116, Woodrow Braden 110, Leonard Violanti 109, Victor Waltz 106, Maurice Carter 91 and Homer Nunn 87; vice president, Frank Meade 113, James Giles 19; financial secretary and treasurer, Pierson Miller 112, James Williams 24, and trustees (three to be elected) Norman Burkey 113, William Blessing 111 and Harley Wolf 109.

Department stewards elected were Gordon Vance, maintenance; Arthur Tomaro, dry room; Leelon Estus and Harley Hasley, beater room; (tied, runoff set for 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. Monday); Mr. Kraehnke, machine room; and Victor Waltz, finishing room.

Local 1006 Candidates Are Named

Candidates for offices in Local 1006 at the Consolidated Paper Co.'s No. 1 plant have been announced by Tony Ziegler, correspondent. The union election is scheduled Oct. 18.

The candidates are: Herman Kraehnke and Donald Soncrant, president; Dan Braden, Ed Hubert, Evans, Charles K and Burrell Quick, vice president; James Giles and Ed Steward, recording secretary; Harold ley, financial secretary; Williams and Harley Wolf, steward; Edward Croskey, sergeant at arms; Mr. Ziegler, correspondent; Francis Steve Smith, Nick Teason, don Vance and Leonard ti, executive board.

Bernard Gillenkirk, Mr. and Ira Simmons, trustee Green and Mr. Mosley, room steward; Mr. Giles Oley, dry room steward; A mons and Mr. Violanti, nance department steward Barton, Mr. Cole, Mr. Me Mr. Teason, finishing room, and Chester Kamini Kominek and Mr. Evan chine room steward.

Mr. Kraehnke and Mr. have been appointed dele Council.

OCTOBER 2, 19



FAMILY TRADITION seems to be in the making at Local 1006; Monroe, Mich. where Harley Kraehnke, above, was elected union president this month. Harley's father, Herman Kraehnke, now retired, was the first president of the Monroe local.

INDEX – Harley Kraehnke

Battle of the Bulge, Track 1, 4 min.

Binder Board, Track 3, 1 min.; Track 5, 1 min., 4 min.; Track 7, 1 min.;
Track 9, 1 min.

Bowling, Track 1, 2 min., 3 min.; Track 3, 4 min.

CIO, Track 3, 2-3 min.; Track 4, 1-3 min.; Track 5, 3 min.

Consolidated Paper Company, Track 3, 1 min.; Track 4, 1 min.; Track 5, 4 min.;
Track 6, 3-4 min.; Track 7, 4 min.; Track 9, 2 min.; Track 11, 1 min., 4 min.;
Track 12, 1 min.

Faulkenburg, Ervin, Track 3, 1 min.; Track 5, 4 min.

Grasso, Frank, Track 3-4 min.; Track 7, 4 min.

Kilgus, Arthur, Track 10, 4 min.; Track 11, 0 min.

Knabusch, Eddie, Track 6, 4 min.

Kraehnke, Herman, Track 2, 1 min., 3 min.; Track 3, 0 min.; Track 5, 2 min.;

Track 6, 4 min.; Track 7, 1 min.; Track 8, 1 min.; Track 9, 4 min.; Track 10, 0-2
min.; Track 11, 4 min.

Kraehnke, Lucy Elizabeth, Track 9, 3 min, 4 min.

Longworth, Wheeler, Track 11, 4 min.

Michigan State Bowling Assoc., Track 1, 3 min.

Mitchell Paper, Track 3, 4 min.; Track 6, 4 min.

Modern Packaging, Track 3, 4 min.

Mosher, Ray, Track 4, 3 min.; Track 5, 4 min.

Murray Building, Philip, Track 4, 1 min.; Track 7, 3-4 min

Murray, Philip, Track 6, 1 min.; Track 7, 1-4 min.

Paper Products, Track 3, 1 min.; Track 8, 4 min.; Track 9, 0 min, 2 min.

Rauch, H. Lee, Track 11, 4 min.

Reuther, Walter, Track 4, 3-4 min.; Track 7, 4 min.

River Raisin (the river), Track 1, 2 min.

River Raisin Co., Track 4, 0 min.; Track 5, 4 min.; Track 8, 4 min.; Track 9, 0
min., 2 min.

Sayre, Harry, Track 4, 3-4 min.; Track 6, 1 min., 4 min.; Track 7, 2 min.

Schmelz, Allen, T11, 0 min.

Steel Castings, Track 9, 1 min.

Steel Strike, Track 2, 3-4 min.

Strike, Track 2, 3-4 min.; Track 3, 1 min.; Track 5, 2 min.; Track 6, 1-3 min.

U & I Bar, Track 9, 0 min.

Union Camp, Track 4, 0 min.

United Papermakers and Paperworkers

of America (UPP), Track 3, 2 min.; Track 4, 4 min.; Track 7, 3 min.

Wehner, Clarence, Track 11, 0 min.

Weiss, Track 4, 0 min.; Track 9, 2 min.

Woodall, Track 4, 0 min.