

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Labor and Management in Early Steel

O.H. 49

EDWARD HUMPHREY

Interviewed

by

Emmett C. Shaffer

on

July 19, 1974

EDWARD HUMPHREY

Mr. Edward Humphrey, long-time president of the Steel Door union, was born on January 16, 1899. He started his career as a labor leader in 1935 by helping to organize a union at the Steel Door plant. For ten years Mr. Humphrey was president of the union and during that time he and the union members were instrumental in getting plant-wide seniority, a higher pay rate, and higher safety standards for the plant.

In his interview with Mr. Emmett Shaffer, Mr. Humphrey talks about early union organizing, the communist participation in the unions, and his association with other well-known labor leaders with whom he worked in establishing union locals. He speaks openly about his union activities and also makes reference to several humorous situations which the members encountered. In the latter part of the interview Mr. Humphrey talks about the Depression and its effect on the people of Youngstown.

Mr. Humphrey worked at the Steel Door plant for thirty years, retiring in 1964, after a long and distinguished career as an area labor leader. He currently makes his home at 2621 DeCamp Road, in Youngstown.

SILVIA PALLOTTA
June 28, 1977

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Labor and Management in Early Steel

INTERVIEWEE: MR. EDWARD HUMPHREY
INTERVIEWER: Emmett C. Shaffer
SUBJECT: The Labor Movement in the Mahoning Valley
DATE: July 19, 1974

S: This is an interview with Mr. Edward Humphrey for Youngstown State University. The project is Labor Relations and the Steel Industry in Youngstown in the 1930s, conducted by Emmett C. Shaffer at Mr. Humphrey's home on July 19, 1974 at 1.00 p.m. Mr. Humphrey is 76 years old. Mr. Humphrey, how did you get started in the labor movement?

H: Well, I first started in the labor movement for the simple reason that I thought we needed an organization and after I started to work, I was approached to join the Steelworkers Organizing Committee. That was started by John Owens and Phil Murray. They were the two big shots that came in out of the United Mine Workers and decided to organize.

There were many fellows that were working in the mill at that time who were asked to become assistant organizers. I was one. They gave us badges that I've still got around here. When they started to organize the Sheet and Tube, there were a lot of good men down there who were really interested in better working conditions for the plant. They also started to organize the Republic. At that time, I hadn't had much experience in organizing, but I did my share of it. I made friends with Vern Halsey and Vern gave me my introduction into the labor movement.

S: What year was this?

H: That was in the 1930s. I don't remember just when it was, but it was after they burned out Campbell

S: At what mill?

H: I was at the Republic Iron and Steel Mill at the time. I imagine it was in about 1937 that I left the Republic and went down to the Sheet and Tube and worked in the line electric department. I had been told at the Republic that I couldn't be raised to a first-class standard unless I had experience in one of the other plants. I was told to work down at the Sheet and Tube Company for a while. After a while, I came back and Charlie Schuster took me back into the Republic. That was the only way I could get raised to first-class line-man.

We started organizing the Steel Door and the fabricating plants around. We started to organize Truscon and that iron works out there and Mackensie Muffler and several of the other fabricating plants in the area

We finally got them started and got their offices all set up and had local unions. At that time the little local unions didn't have any place to meet. I was one of the chief men at Youngstown Steel Door. I was its first financial secretary.

The layoff came and we didn't have a provision in the contracts then that the officers of the unions and the stewards had top seniority. We were all laid off according to plant seniority. After we got straightened around and got the contract, we put in a provision that the stewards in the department and the officers all held top seniority.

The fabricators didn't have any place to meet, so Youngstown Steel Door Local 2310 borrowed money and built the hall in the Gallagher building up over Punch Rand's saloon. We built that hall up there and then we took all the little locals in and finally, the Brier Hill local came in with us. We all met up there.

When the layoff came, the union president was laid off. The vice president of the company and I were really good friends. I finally talked to him and I got back into the plant. As soon as I got back in and saw what the score was, I went after them then to bring the president back. They brought the president back to work for about two weeks and then he quit. We held an election and I was put in as president. I was president of the Steel Door union then for about ten years.

S: What year was that?

H: That carried us up into the 1940s.

S: What year did you actually start organizing the Steel Door?

H: Oh, we started, I think, in 1933 or 1934.

S: How did you go about organizing your union and who was involved?

H: The AF of L had started to come in there and because I was an old AF of L man, I knew what the score was and I wanted the CIO. I was running the crane at the time and I put a big CIO sign on the front of the crane. A lot of the fellows in the paint shop started asking me about the sign and before the week was out, we had all of the painters and some of the car blockers signed up.

Halsey set up a meeting for us and about one hundred men came in and we signed them up. We finally got going around the latter part of 1934 when we went after a contract. Halsey was the mainstay of the local union. Between Verne Halsey, Joe Cummings, and Eddie Jones we got around to the different departments and started to sign them up. The majority were signed up within about two or three months. Then we went in after the contract. They asked us how many men we had signed up. I told them that we had all but three.

One of the presidents from Cleveland was at the meeting. Harold Hendricks, the vice president and manager of the Steel Door at the time, laughed when we told him that we had so many men signed up in such a short time. The president of the company, who was also at the meeting, said "You sure that you got them?" I told him yes. So they said that we would negotiate on it. We set up a date for negotiations.

There were some things that we wanted that they didn't want to give us in the first contract so we brought it up at a union meeting and they voted to set up a picket line. We only needed five men to set up a picket line. When the boys started to go in the plant, we said, "No soap fellows. They won't give us the contract." They turned around and said "Need any help?" We said "No." They turned around and went home. Finally the vice-president of the company sent the security man to bring me down to him. While I was going in I picked up two of the fellows that were on the picket line with me and we went up to the office.

The president, the vice president and the treasurer were sitting in the room. The president said, "Have you

really got those men all signed up?" I said, "Yes, but there are three or four men that will not sign up." He said, "Are those the three or four that you were figuring on catching?" I said, "No. We didn't figure on catching anybody. We wanted to know just how they felt about your not giving us what we asked for in the contract." He said, "Well, you call off the picket line and come in tomorrow morning and we'll negotiate."

The next day we went in and negotiated and we got the majority of the demands that we were asking for in the contract. They wrote up the contract. Jim Quinn was the first man to sign his name on our contract. Halsey did the majority of the talking and I came in with the soft soap after Halsey batted them down. That's how we got the majority of demands. Harold Henricks was really a nice man to negotiate with. He would reason with you but he didn't try to bulldoze you or anything like that. When I'd be after a demand, I'd say, "Now, you'd like to have that, wouldn't you, Harold?" and he'd say, "Damn you, Duke! Quit putting words in my mouth."

- S: How many men were employed at the Steel Door?
- H: At that time, there were about six hundred men
- S: You had all but four men signed up?
- H: Yes.
- S: What were the provisions of the first contract?
- H: Well, the provisions of the first contract were that we wanted union recognition, and officers and stewards. We had plant-wide seniority at a certain level and then we had departmental seniority at another level. It worked out that the shop steward in the department held top seniority regardless of whether he was there for ten years or one year. He held top seniority so that we would know what was going on in the department and so that we could have somebody to take our gripes to.
- S: Could you get a raise in pay?
- H: No, not on the first contract. In the first contract, we wanted recognition more than anything else, but on the second contract, we did ask for a raise. On the first contract we wanted recognition so that we could negotiate.
- S: What year was this?

H: That was in 1934 or 1933.

S: The strike lasted only two days. Was there any violence?

H: There was no strike. Three of us sat in our cars out there on the road. When the fellows started to come in to the plant we'd say, "No soap. They won't recognize it." They'd ask if you need any help, then turn around, and go back home. We'd stay there until about one o'clock in the morning, then we'd go out at seven o'clock the next morning, and again at three o'clock in the afternoon. We made three shifts. I was generally there at all of them, but we had different fellows that came out.

We never had trouble out at our place. There was no violence. Some fellows tried to sneak their cars into the parking lot inside the plant, with a fellow that wasn't signed up in the trunk. They'd get out and go in with him inside the fence. We caught one of them because they couldn't get the trunk open and they had to bar the trunk open to get him out. After he signed up he said, "If I knew that I was going to have to stay in the trunk that long, I would have signed up long ago." I said, "Well, that was your own fault."

We didn't have any violence. During all the time we had picket lines we never had any fights. Some guys gave us arguments but we generally always convinced them that they were wrong. We had several good talkers down there and they were very convincing. We never did have any real violence.

S: What procedure was used to sign up most of these six hundred employees?

H: Well, we went and talked to them. We'd say "We're figuring on a union in here. How about going along?" If he said, "Okay," we'd sign him up. If he said "Oh, I don't know about it," I'd say, "Well, think about it. I'll be around to see you again. The majority of the boys are signing up. If we don't have something to negotiate with, how are we going to get the wrong things in the plant fixed up?" I imagine the rest of the boys talked to them the same way.

The union never forced anybody to join. The company told them, "These fellows are all signed up in the union. We don't want any trouble. Either join the union or we'll put you on a job in which you're not under the union." The office workers weren't in the union. One of the four men wouldn't sign up so he was put in the office as a time keeper. That was another thing that happened there. The company showed that it really meant

to do things right. They called the men in and told them, "Either join the union or we'll put you on a job in which you're not under the union."

The best part of it is that one of the men who didn't want to join the union was elected vice president in the following election. He was worse than any of the rest of them. He was more rabid than the others and we had to quiet him down several times.

S: Did you get the checkoff system, a collection of union dues by deduction from each worker's wages, in your first contract?

H: No, we didn't get the checkoff system. We never had it until about the third contract.

S: Who was Jim Quinn?

H: Jim Quinn was the district director. John Mayo was the first district director. He was from the International Office. Then Jim Quinn became district director and after him Jimmy Griffin. Jimmy Griffin was one of the boys. Later on he was hurt in one of the plants and we took him down to Columbus. Jimmy was one of the boys and we stuck with him all the way.

S: Who were the officers of this first union?

H: Jerry Beck was the first president of the Mahoning County outfit. Jules Cummings was the president and I was financial secretary-treasurer. Right after that lay off, I was put in as president. I forget the name of the vice president. We had a colored fellow that was the secretary.

S: Your local was under the Mahoning County CIO Council, was it not?

H: That's right.

S: Who were the leaders of the Mahoning County CIO Council?

H: Well, Jerry Beck was the president, and if I'm not mistaken, Dave Treharn was the vice president, but I've forgotten the names of the others. We had a good bunch of men there. All of the old timers were on the board of the council. They were the key men of the council at that time. In this photograph you can see Jerry Beck, Dave Treharn and me.

S: You mentioned a layoff in 1934.

H: Well, it was in the latter part of 1933 or 1934.

- S: Was this one of the reasons for putting the seniority clause into the contract in 1935?
- H: That's right. We didn't have any trouble in getting the seniority clause into the contract because the vice president and the president were pretty reasonable to talk to.
- S: Was the Steel Door willing to sign the contract because you had the members signed up in the plant and forced them to sign the contract?
- H: I didn't force them to sign it
- S: Were they willing to sign?
- H: They were willing to sign the contract because we did have all of the members signed up. We had all of the employees signed up except three. Of those three, two signed up with the union and one was put on the office work.
- S: Your first contract was signed in 1935 and ran for a year. When did you sign the second contract?
- H: Well, the contract, at that time, ran for a year.
- S: What were the provisions of the second contract?
- H: Oh, the provisions of the second contract were for more money. There was no argument about getting the raise. We got it. I forget what else it was that we put in the contract.
- S: Did you ask for a checkoff?
- H: Yes, we asked for the checkoff, but we weren't able to get it at that time.
- S: Were there any safety provisions?
- H: Oh, we had a lot of safety provisions that went in on the first and second contracts. Practically every contract that we signed after that, had safety provisions in it. We never had to strike to get safety provisions. The first time that we ever walked out, was when we got orders from Pittsburgh to shut the plant down in sympathy with the Little Steel Companies.
- S: Was that in 1937?
- H: Wasn't there another one after that? Yes, I think there was.

- S: Did you shut down in 1937 when Little Steel went on strike?
- H: No, I don't think we shut down then. The only time we shut down was when we got orders from Pittsburgh. I got the call at about eight o'clock at night and I didn't even have to call anybody. I got in the car and went out and sat on the road. When the men started to come into the plant, I told them that we were shutting her down in sympathy with Little Steel. The only thing they said was, "Do you need any help?" There were no arguments because the men were really union-minded.
- S: Did you have your contract with the Steel Door signed, sealed and working even prior to the Little Steel Strike in 1937?
- H: Yes, we had working agreements with the company before the Little Steel Strike.
- S: Did the Little Steel Strike in 1937 affect the people at the Steel Door at all?
- H: No, not too much. We had steel in there for what we needed and we worked right through the strike.
- S: Then you were ordered out in sympathy with Little Steel when they went on strike in 1940?
- H: Yes. That was the only time that I pulled any of the workers out.
- S: How long were you out?
- H: We were out for just two days, I think.
- S: What effect did the Communists have on the labor movement during your years in the labor movement? Did they have much effect?
- H: Well, the Communists agitated a lot. The council was able to keep them from causing a lot of trouble. They wanted strikes and they caused a lot of trouble in different parks. In South Side park one time a fellow was knifed. The only local that had any Communists in it that amounted to anything was 1330 and they were instrumental in the NAACP here in Youngstown.
- S: They were instrumental in organizing the NAACP?
- H: Yes, that's right. The officers of 1330 were instrumental in the NAACP.

S: What mill was 1330?

H Carnegie.

S: Who were some of these Communists?

H: Well, there were Ted Dostel, Sammy Kamens and Myron Winestock. There were two or three others and I forgot their names right now, but they were officers of the 1330 union.

S: Was Gus Hall active?

H: Gus Hall was active until about 1936-1937. Then he was called over to Russia.

S: How do you know they were Communists?

H: They didn't hesitate to tell you that they were.

S: What type of incidents did they create?

H: Well, they wanted to put in different motions that they knew we could never get. The council was almost always able to discredit anything that they brought up. There were very few things that they got away with at that time. Some of them are on the steel workers' payroll right now.

S: Communists?

H: Yes. They won't hesitate to tell you.

S: Would you care to name who they are?

H: Well, Sammy Kamens is one of them. He's a staff representative someplace, I don't know the rest of them. I know that Myron Winestock is still out around 1330, but I don't know whether he's one of the officers. I've seen him out there when I go to Senior Citizens.

S: Were the Communists more interested in organizing unions or just stirring up trouble?

H: They were interested more in agitating different things. They have wanted to put some things in contracts that they knew darn well we couldn't get. They'd still agitate to get it. They did agitate by speaking in different places.

They had an office down on Watt Street at one time. They kept agitating like they're doing right now. They tried to get their men into high places. I think it was

in 1938 that we set up the Mahoning County Council. Jerry Beck was the head of the Council and of course, the Communists had their delegates to the Council. We had to take one of their delegates down to Columbus.

S: Did the Communists create any violence connected with the Labor movement?

H: They created some violence in the parks and then they created the violence down at Stop Fourteen and Stop Five. They were also instrumental in the burning of Campbell. It reached Youngstown at the time.

S: Do you recall what year this was?

H: That was when I was still down at the Republic. I think it was 1919.

S: Do you know any details of the Little Steel Strike in 1937?

H: No, I don't because I wasn't tied up in it. The men who were involved were using different halls and I was around several of the meetings and heard some of the reports that were made. I was not personally tied up in any of the trouble.

S: Other than being president of the local Youngstown Steel Door, did you hold any other offices in the labor movement?

H: Oh, yes. I was the first president of the Political Action Committee. I was the chairman of District 26 Political Action Committee. I organized it. Paul Langley was my co-chairman down in Struthers, Al Shipka was my co-chairman in Campbell, or East Youngstown, Phil O'Toole was secretary and I think Dave Treharn was vice president.

S: What year was the Political Action Committee organized?

H: The Political Action Committee was organized in the 1940's.

S: Was it in the early 1940's?

H: Yes, I imagine it was. Jerry Beck could give you the year better than I can right now.

S: What was the purpose of the Political Action Committee?

H: The Political Action Committee was set up to give the workers a voice in the city and county government. It was more or less a lobby and we got good recognition. We called candidates to come here and we talked to them.

We asked them their views on certain things and how they felt about labor. If they answered our questions favorably, we endorsed them. At that time, we didn't put out any money towards their campaign but we did ask the different locals to endorse them. A lot of the people that we endorsed were elected.

S: How was it financed?

H: I think the local unions donated some money, but the candidate didn't have to pay any hall rental because we let them use the local 2310 union hall anytime they needed it. Locals that didn't have a hall were welcome to use the 2310. All they had to do was make arrangements to use it on certain nights.

S: Who were some of the political candidates that were successful through your endorsements?

H: Well, Paul Langley was one of them. He was elected despite the powers against him. One candidate that was defeated was Jack Hunter, our city mayor right now. Another one that was defeated was Duke Tablack.

S: Paul Langley was sheriff of Mahoning County, wasn't he?

H: Yes. Paul Langley was endorsed by us when he ran for sheriff of Mahoning County. Johnny Vitulla (Mahoning County Democratic Chairman) went along with us and was elected. He was re-elected, but I think he didn't get re-elected for his third term because something went wrong with the Democratic Party.

S: Duke Tablack was a state representative.

H: Yes.

S: Did you back George Ellis for state representative?

H: Yes. Old George was one of us.

S: What are the significant accomplishments of the labor movement in the Mahoning Valley since you've been in it?

H: Well, the labor movement in the Mahoning Valley area has done a lot as far as contributing to organizations such as Community Chest.

S: What were the major problems in the labor situation that made you organize in 1934?

H: Well, we organized because some companies treated the men badly. The workers didn't have any say. They could not say anything about safety or they couldn't go against

the boss. If they did, why, they would get fired. Even if they looked cockeyed at the boss, they had to watch out or they'd be fired. Now that the labor unions have come in, it has changed a whole lot. Now you can go in and talk to any boss.

There is a grievance procedure now since the labor movement has come in. Years ago you went in and told the boss the grievance and if he liked it, all right, but if he didn't, why he fired you. That was one of the accomplishments of the labor movement. There are grievance procedures in all contracts.

S: What is your reaction to the statement that American labor is producing less resulting in higher prices?

H: No, I don't think that it has caused prices to be any higher. There is a limit to what you ask for. Many times, unions asked for more than they expected to get because they figured that they were going to be chewed down on it. I never had that trouble.

I never took a grievance to the plant that wasn't valid. I'd take in a borderline grievance, but if an employee was wrong, I'd tell him that he was wrong. If you were a little bit wrong and the company was a little bit wrong, I'd take it in and ninety-nine times out of a hundred, the worker won.

S: Who were some of the major adversaries of labor in Mahoning County?

H: Well, old Jim Campbell was one. Well the majority of the plants didn't want labor to have any say. Practically all of the bosses didn't care too much about having unions in their plants. There was a plant on Meridian Road that wouldn't have a union in there. The boss gave the workers parties, but they couldn't go in and talk to him. They didn't get fired, but they couldn't have a union. The outcome was that the president and couple of union guys got in there and started trouble and the owner closed the plant down and sold the property.

S: Was the press and the ministry anti-labor?

H: Well, the press always has been more-or-less anti-labor. You know that yourself. There were many ministers for labor. They figured that the men had some rights.

S: Is there any truth to the statement that the steel industry tried to keep other industry out of the Mahoning Valley in order to control the labor market?

- H: No, no. That isn't so, right now the steel industry is figuring on dropping a lot of their steel plants in Youngstown because they are antiquated. Everything is mechanized now. It used to take about one hundred and eighty people to run a mill, and now it takes about thirty or forty.
- S: What have been your most enjoyable memories of your activities in the labor movement?
- H: Well, I had a lot of memories of the conventions. I made many friends at different conventions and I had many friends right here in town. I am friends still with many of these people.
- S: If you had to do it over again, would you be a participant in the labor movement?
- H: You bet your life I would.
- S: Would you name some people that would consent to an interview of this nature?
- H: I think that Jimmy Griffin would.
- S: Do you know of any others?
- H: I don't know whether Dave Treharn is in town or not, but if you could get a hold of him he'd be a good man to talk with. Johnny Panco just retired. Have you talked to Ernie Konestky?
- S: Not yet. Did the United Mine Workers help you organize the Steel Door in 1935?
- H: No, they didn't have any men here, but they were with us one hundred percent. I was friends with some men from District 50. They were in on our conventions when we first started out.
- S: At the Steel Door, did you run into any anti-labor resistance once you got the men signed up.
- H: No, we didn't. We had men in office that were not radical. We could go in and sit down and talk our points through. Halsey and I were a good team because he would get the management steamed up a little bit and then I'd pour the oil on and cool them down. That way we'd get what we wanted. Halsey would fight for what we wanted and I'd put the oil on and get it.
- S: The Steel Door at one time, had a reputation of being a slaughter house because of unsafe working conditions. What's your reaction to that?

H: After the union got in there, it was cleared up. Right up until I got out of there, they were on the top in safety standards.

S: In what year did you retire?

H I retired in 1964.

S: What was your reaction to the depression in the 1930s?

H: Well, I wasn't working at that time and I tried to get some welfare but I couldn't. I didn't have any money. I had two children and my wife to support. I had a thrifty wife and she knew how to manage with what few dollars we did get in. It was tough going and I think we learned something from it.

S: What did you learn?

H: We learned to be thrifty.

S: Did you work during the depression?

H: I worked after I pulled a few strings. I began working with the aristocrats at WPA. We would go into the schools and tear the old fixtures out and rewire them for new lighting. I think I got ninety dollars a month. Some workers were only getting sixty dollars. That's why I say we were the aristocrats at WPA. We got ninety dollars a month.

S: In what year was this?

H: I couldn't tell you right now.

S: Was it after 1933?

S: Were you working from 1930 to 1933?

H: Well, I went to work right after they began the WPA. I couldn't get any welfare, because to get welfare you had to sell your car and you couldn't have this or that in your house.

The WPA first started digging ditches and putting sewers in. That's what I did. I helped put the sewer up through Old Ax Factory Run and out to Meridian Road. That's as far as we went with it. In that winter and in the spring they began this other project of wiring the schools and renovating them and I was in on that. I worked on the schools then until they called me back to the Steel Door.

S: Were you married from the time the depression started until 1933?

H: The major problem was getting enough money to feed ourselves and pay rent. You had to pay the rent or you were out. That was it.

S: You had to pay the food and the rent.

H: That's right.

S: If there was a depression today do you think the American people would accept it like it was accepted back in the 1930s?

H: I think they would have to accept it. That's one of the things that I've claimed right along. I think the Communists are taking advantage of the whole damn works. Right now, they're trying to put through laws that they have put through in other countries. They confiscated all the guns and ammunition and if you had a gun, they shot you.

That's what they're trying to do here. They're trying to register your guns. They know where they are at, and put a tax on them. Then they'll come in and confiscate them. Without guns people don't have a thing to fight with besides clubs or sickles or tools. That's how the Communists have taken over every country that they have. Kruschev said, "We're going to take you over and we aren't going to do any fighting."

S: Were there more friendly people during the depression than there are today?

H: Yes, I think they were more clannish.

S: In what way?

H: Well, there were many families that helped each other. Some families had gardens. Two families would work the garden and they'd split up the produce. You can't get that going today. People would rather pay forty-nine cents for a head of lettuce than dig down and work in the garden.

S: Do you think that Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal was good for Mahoning County?

H: Now I'm going to be honest with you. Franklin Roosevelt did do quite a lot for this country. When he saw the way things were going, boom, he put a clamp on everything. The same thing should have been done here a few years ago and things would have been a lot different now. It hasn't been done though. Franklin Roosevelt sponsored things and did things that weren't exactly right either, but, who are we to criticize? We all make mistakes. We don't realize it until after we have made them.

- S: Overall, you think Roosevelt was good for the Mahoning County?
- H: He was good for Mahoning County because he did stop everything so that you could make out. After he put the freeze on everything, you could go into the stores. I was making four dollars an hour before the depression came on. I went back to work at fifty-five cents an hour.
- S: You were making over four dollars an hour before the depression?
- H: Yes.
- S: So you went from making over four dollars an hour to making fifty-five cents an hour?
- H: That's right. I was damn glad to come back.
- S: Were you aware of any corruption or political favoritism in the Mahoning County relief setup?
- H: Yes, there was. There were some people that could get relief and others that couldn't get it.
- S: Why was that?
- H: That's what I told Ira Fruer. I said, "What the hell do I have to do, go down to the cellar and get some soot out of the furnace and blacken my face?" He called the cops to take me out.
- S: What year was this?
- H: It was about 1932 or 1933. He called the cops to take me out. One of the cops was a friend of mine and he said, "What the hell are you trying to pull?" I said, "I'm just trying to get some relief." He said, "You might as well forget it."
- S: Did you see any soup kitchens in Youngstown?
- H: No, I didn't see any that I know of. The Salvation Army had soup kitchens, yes. I don't know whether the government sponsored them. They gave out bread and gave people meals.
- S: Was there much misery in Youngstown?
- H: There was some but not too much. At that time, many people were more or less clannish. If you needed something, and they had it, they'd divide it with you. It

wasn't too rough. You had to be an economist. You had to know how to economize.

S: In some respects did the WPA, really help the labor movement?

H: Yes, it did.

S: In what ways did it help?

H: Well, it helped in that it gave a lot of the fellows that were out of work in the steel mills, enough money to live a half-way decent life. It also kept them anchored here for the mills when they re-opened. The men didn't have to leave here and go someplace else. There were some men that left and went back home or somewhere but I think the majority of them stayed here.

S: It made them more appreciative if they could get a union.

H: That's right.

S: Mr. Humphrey, may the Oral History Department of Youngstown State University use this interview in their research program?

H: That's what they wanted, wasn't it?

S: Yes.

H: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW