

LS 0157 – LS 0158

Lennart Setterdahl: You had: - how many brothers and sisters?

Delbert Corcoran: Six brothers and a half brother and two sisters.

Lennart Setterdahl: And Your mother had all the children at home?

Delbert Corcoran: All the children at home, and my aunt was a midwife and she was a Swedish lady: Mrs Adamson. That was; of course, my grand father was Swedish, he came over. I don't know when he did come over.

Linnea Corcoran: But Your mother was two.

Delbert Corcoran: Yeah my mother was two when

Linnea Corcoran: She was born 1884.

Delbert Corcoran: Oh yeah - so

Linnea Corcoran: So he must have come over 1886.

Delbert Corcoran: Yeah. We was up on the farm there and I imagine that he built the barn and the farm up there. Because we had one of these old wells You know were You pull down and have a bucket on it - You know - that You have over in Sweden. There was a well there, when we first moved up there.

Lennart Setterdahl: I am sitting together with Delbert Corcoran, in Jamestown, New York and he was born 1911 May the 4th, in Faulkner, New York. Your mother, she was of Swedish background.

Delbert Corcoran: Oh yes.

Lennart Setterdahl: Hanna Adamson.

Delbert Corcoran: Right.

L: So tell me a little bit about Your father Ed Corcoran. He was of Irish descent?

Delbert: Yeah. He was born; hes dad course came over from Ireland, but I never did see him, because he was old when I was a young man - You know - or a boy, I might say. And he had two brothers, three brothers. And my middle son John, he wants to look up the roots, You know, for the Irish part of it. So my dads brothers; one was an actor down in New York city and then the other one, he went away You know, so I have ever seen any of the brothers at all, but he had three brothers. So my dads part of the family I have ever seen.

L: Did both hes parents die, both hes mother and father?

Delbert: It must have been, because they was

L: He came from a Catholic home?

Delbert: Right, yeah. I imagine that he (?) the home about 11 12 years old. That's what I understand, when I heard them talking about it, when I was just a kid, You know. So that's about all I know about him.

L: And then he came to Jamestown?

Delbert: Yeah - looking for a work - You know. And then he worked in furnituring and things like that, as that was the main. He even worked in Corry, Pennsylvania, in a furniture factory there. Jamestown was a large furniture business You know. So - that's about all I know, that he came around here.

L: So then he met Your mother: Hanna Adamson.

Delbert: Yeah.

L: And she came from Sweden when she was; two years old?

Delbert: Two years old.

L: With her parents?

Delbert: Yeah with her parents.

L: And they settled in Jamestown?

Delbert: In Jamestown. Yeah they came right to Jamestown - You know, and: Faulkner area is where they actually came, because they came over with a family by the name of Jakobson and they were our neighbours for three years. You know, an other Swedish family. And they settled right here in Faulkner and right near the area here.

L: Did Your grand father buy a farm?

Delbert: Yeah he bought a farm, it was a small farm of 17 acres and that's what he lived on and their neighbours, they were from Sweden. Their name was Boulder and they also lived near by and they was farming. They just had a cow and a pig, You know, and rased potatoes and the garden, You know and that's the way they lived in those days.

L: But he had to have another job?

Delbert: But then the most of them would work, try to get a work - in a factory, or so and they did walk home and that's the way they made their living - You know.

L: Did they walk into Jamestown then to get a job or?

Delbert: No, into Faulkner, or elsewhere. We used to walk to the work in every day, for winter and summer. We never late for a work, we always got around the hole time. You worked You know, You didn't fool around, like they are doing today, stay home. Yeah we walked all the time. I never had a car before I was 26 years old. My dad, he never did have a car, so we always walked in.

L: Your parents, they met and got married then?

Delbert: Yeah.

L: Did they take over Your grand fathers farm?

Delbert: When my grand father started to get older, I was only about five or six then, so then we bought hes farm, from grand-pa. Then he moved back to Faulkner and built a little house up by the cemetery in Faulkner. So him and grand-ma lived there and we used to come down to see them. I always got along good with my grand father, but I couldn't speak Swedish, but we understood enough, so we got by, You know.

L: So You picked up a few Swedish words even then?

Delbert: Yeah. Yeah.

L: Did he speak swedish to hes daughter all the time?

Delbert: Oh yeah. They never did speak English, either grand-pa or grand-ma - You know, because they always talked Swedish You know. It was from way back in them days, Talking that many years ago. They never learned the English to much, just a few words. There was good Swedish people You know.

L: Your dad, he was an Irish man, comming into the Swedish.

Delbert: Yeah yeah. - So

L: What happened there then? He was a Catholic and Your mother was a Lutheran.

Delbert: Yeah. But that wasn't much on the Catholic. He never went to a mass or all that. He a kind of got away from it. He was like someone, You know, to go. Like; we didn't bather about: not eat fish on Friday. He could taste hes good on Friday, as he did during the rest of the week! So! He wasn't that strict You know, like some Catholics are, they won't let You. He was always supposed to eat fish on Fridays; no meat, but we didn't go by that. No.

L: Where were they married?

Delbert: (Did you know where they was married)? No, for sure. I would imagine in Faulkner, I don't know.

L: Did Your grand father belong to a church in Faulkner or to one in Jamestown?

Delbert: (Ma; do You think he did)?

Linnea: What?

delbert: (Grand-pa, did they belong to a church)? (Hustru Linnea Corcoran ger Delbert det svar som han för vidare till oss). The Bethel Lutheran in Faulkner, that's where my mother used to go. and that's where I

L: I see. Did You go there too, occasionally?

Delbert: Oh yeah, I went there when I was a kid - yeah.

L: You were confirmed there?

Delbert: Yeah. Yeah that was Felix Hanson that confirmed me and that was a Jamestown church. And our oldest son got confirmed by the same one. (Why don't You stay in here, so I can get a little better information? That will be in so far away).

L: So all Your brothers and sisters then went to this church and got confirmed; baptized and confirmed?

Delbert: Yes. Right. Yeah. Right.

Linnea: Not confirmed. They were not confirmed.

L: No?

Linnea: But they were baptized.

L: Baptized.

Delbert: Yeah I guess that's right. Because we didn't go through all that, that's what You got to go.

L: You didn't go to the Sunday school either?

Delbert: Yeah we went occasionally but not steady, You know.

L: How about the Swedish Summer school? You can't remember?

Delbert: No no no, Nothing like that!

L: They really didn't have it in Jamestown?

Delbert: They didn't have it, I don't think. In them days, I don't think so.

L: They picked it up easy.

Delbert: Yeah. They

L: Your father then, he was working in the furniture factories.

Delbert: Oh yeah he worked in the furniture factories.

L: He had no troubles to find work at that time?

Delbert: No no. He was a finisher in a furniture factory - You know - he put on the varnish, and that. He was an expert in that - You know. He either worked in the mashine room, or in the cabinet room, or in the finishing room you know and he worked it up in the finishing room. He repaired the cabinets and all that.

L: And that was in Jamestown?

Delbert: The factories were in Faulkner. In The Jamestown (?) Company, they made radio cabinets - and - and during the World war one, they made. I remember the World war one, when that was started, You know - and he worked in that: the Jamestown (?) Company. They were manufacturing the radio cabinets - and - furnitures like that. Yeah.

L: Did You have a job in one of those factories too?

Delbert: Oh yeah I worked, I quitted school when I was about 16, and then I worked in a woollen mill, it was the first job and then I worked at the Jamestown Metal Company. Then the Depression came along and I got laid off at the Metal Company and it went bankrupt. That was the first beginning of the Depression. So I worked at the Metal Company until they went out of business. I helped even and loaded the last load of mahogany, course I went by there and the boss said: "You want a job for the day"? So: we worked, You know, when ever we could get a job. So I helped them load. They had the firemen there, - and a couple of other guys and we helped them load that, loaded the mahogany lumber. Yeah. Yeah I worked in quite a few furniture factories. And I quitted.

L: Then it was a long lay off?

Delbert: Oh yeah; then the Depression hit and then I worked in a woollen mill - and then I went in a. There was real bad. That was in 1933. My oldest brother was in the army. My next oldest brother, he went in a CC Camp; that Civilian Camp Conservation Core - You know. That was what Rosevelt had You know to give them and then they got off the streets, You know. So then I went in that CC Camp in October of 1933 and 1934 was when Rosevelt took office You know. And I worked at (?) Virginia to Washington DC on (?). That's where the big shots drove their horses, ride horse back, back and forth, You know. So then my other oldest brother, he was an army man, and; Bob, my next oldest brother, he was in a CC Camp and then my dad, he was on a WPA, that was a work project association - You know and that was where they put the father to a family, to give him a job, working around Faulkner there. So we never went on any welfare relief You know.

L: But the young people, like You, You had to go out of town to get a CC Camp?

Delbert: Oh yeah, yeah we had.

L: That CC program, what was it really standing for?

Delbert: The Civilian conservation core. That was a - we was runned by the army - You know. We had, like an old, 1918 uniform, of the army and we had a brown, old army coat and all that - and that was the CC Camp. Yeah. So I went in there.

L: How long did You stay with that?

Delbert: We did stay in 6 months.

L: 6 months.

Delbert: Yeah.

L: And then You came back home?

Delbert: Then we came back. Then I came back home.

L: You couldn't stay longer then?

Delbert: You could stay longer if You wanted. But I came back and I got a job again. Then I worked down at the (?) Highways, on a Highway, for that summer. And then You picked up jobs You know! You could go around, like You could look around, up to Jamestown - and; - The Erie Railroad, that was running in them days. You could get a job for a day, or so; unloading cars and even unloading a car in some of these factories. You could have a job with loading a car, loaded with coal, You know, for the factories. Course the most of them burned coal You know in their boilers. So You could pick up work if You walked around and looked for it. There also was hard to get a job.

L: Was it a specific age of those guys who could go to that CC Camps? Even older ones; 40 45?

Delbert: They could go, they didn't have no age limit. If they wanted, if they needed to go, they had all kinds of ages. They had older guys active. A lot of them older guys went in and they gave them a job, like showing the younger ones what to do, You know.

L: I see.

Delbert: Like; with me. I had a little experience; I have done a little about everything, so I had the charge of shortening the size on axes and that, You know and showing them how to work it. A lot of them city guys, they didn't know. They could take a size and they said: that looks easy and they did take it then. I remember that one young fellow. "Let me have it. I can do that". And then he would drove the size about the half way into the ground! He couldn't pull it out again, so he gave it up, right away! I mean: it's the way it was You know. And one guy helped out the other and they worked together.

L: And You had a common kitchen then?

Delbert: Oh yeah, they had

L: Did You live in barracks?

Delbert: Yeah we stayed in barracks and we went just like an army. They had a mess kitchen were You went by and then put the food on there. They had three wash tubs with water in it: The first one was for all what was left in the pan, and the next one was for the rinsing and the last one for anything else; if You did a new cup, You just emptied it out. They just lived of the land, You might say. They ran it, like an army camp. We had some old army officers that was a head of the camp.

L: So they had a roll call in the morning?

Delbert: Yeah. Oh yeah.

L: So nobody could skip?

Delbert: Oh yeah. They ran it like an army camp. They sent 22 dollars home to the family and we had 8 dollars to spend, they gave us 8 dollars a months.

L: Where were You located, in the towns or?

Delbert: Yeah - in some towns. We could go into Alexandra in Virginia, or we could go even into Washington on the weekends, that was the first time I went to Washington DC. You could go there in the weekends, the trucks would bring You in, a gang of guys, You know. Then You could go on, what they called a reverdie, You could go with the trucks and go back again at the nights, You know, or on a Saturday, or what ever and then You were riding back. You had a little freedom to go around.

L: But those CC Camps, did they have them in this area too?

Delbert: Oh yeah they had them. They planted forest: trees; right up here and in Panama in the allegheny states.

L: So people from here went all the way to Alexandra virginia?

Delbert: That's the way the government does work, You know. This is another idea of two of them, doing that. Because, You see; if You get a gang of men from around this area, they wanted to split them up. Like we went down to Fort Dix, New jersey, on a army camp and they would se what Your work was, before You came in and then they would send them; different ones in different areas. Course sometimes they needed a guy that worked in a truck, or something and other guys - You see - a lot of the city guys, if they all got together, they didn't have any control over them. That was the ideas of part them up.

L: To mix them up then.

Delbert: Yeah to mix them up. They had the Allegheny State Park and right up here in Panama they had a large CC Camp. That was all over the country. That was the idea of to clean up the forest and do the work, to put in bridges and stuff; and they does a lot of work. A lot of it.

L: What did happen here in Jamestown between 1930 and -35? There were no unions then?

Delbert: Oh no. The unions started until - like I was - right around -35 - yeah - it was around -30, -35 though when they started to organize. Course I helped to organize the Monitor Furniture Union, because they were still only paid 10 15 cents an hour for a lot of jobs, You know. So we started to get organized them.

L: In other cities; like in Rockford and Chicago, they had Swedish socialists. Were they in Jamestown?

Delbert: Oh yeah, we had, what they called: The Swedish Reds.

L: The Swedish Reds.

Delbert: Oh yeah. Yeah.

L: What were they doing then?

Delbert: They was around. They was around. They talked - You know - at the Union and the organization and all that - and they were down on Brooklyn Square. On Sunday mornings I remember they used to come around and distribute The Daily Worker, You don't remember that, that magazine? They used to come around in the Sunday mornings and throwed it on the porch.

L: And that was free? You didn't have to pay for it?

Delbert: Oh, no! They tried to get You to join up You know! - And - Hugo belonged to that.

L: Your brother?

Delbert: The real Swedish - You know. So that was; the Swedish Reds, You know. They was organized. I remember how they was, but You don't, because You are younger, but they was a kind of organized. They wanted to get things a little bit better for the working man, that's what they wanted to.

L: But what happened to those agitators? Were they stamped by the management as being rebels?

Delbert: In them days they couldn't get a foothold, because You had to know somebody to get a work in them days. If they got into a shop and they started any talk or anything, they would be fired.

L: Immediately?

Delbert: Oh yeah. I have seen them fire guys right on the job. I mean: If You didn't do Your work right, they did get rid of You. You see: the management had the control in them days. They couldn't even get started. In Jamestown, they didn't have a chance. I mean: they had to go on Welfare, because they won't hire them. They couldn't get a job.

L: They were frozen out then?

delbert: Oh yeah, they was out. I noticed a lot of places, they wanted to start a union, - like at Myron Rockwell, - the first few that tried to organize down there, they got fired. And then, of course, the unions got stronger. That was in the 40s, that was before the war - and then they had to take them back afterwards, - but

L: Who was this guy; Wallace? With the law of have the right to organize? That came in 1944, or -45.

Delbert: Yeah - yeah that was Rosevelt - and - was it Wallace?

L: I think it was Wallace, yes. He came with the 8 hours work day and the right to organize.

Delbert: Right. That's right.

L: So then the unions could start.

Delbert: Then the company had to let You organize, but wether You got accepted or not, that was up to the company.

L: You said You were along with organizing the

Delbert: Monitor Furniture.

L: Monitor Furniture.

Delbert: Yeh they didn't bather us any.

L: They didn't!

Delbert: No. They had them around the town - You know, different ones was organizing. I was on the Central Labor Council for quite a few years. They didn't bather You too much then, but then they kept getting stronger You know.

L: But were You not afraid then to join this council, I mean: to get shut off the work?

Delbert: Oh no. No. No.

L: They couldn't fire You?

Delbert: No. You know: if You done Your job in the factory, They couldn't fire You for what You had done after You got out of work.

L: Yeah but I mean: just a few years ago?

Delbert: Oh yeah. A few years before, You couldn't do anything like this.

L: So the law helped You then?

Delbert: Then; when they put the law, it protected Your rights, then You could. But otherwise before then, You couldn't do nothing.

L: At the job, You couldn't tak about it?

Delbert: No.

L: But during the coffee breaks?

Delbert: Yeah, oh yeah.

L: Did You have coffee breaks?

Delbert: No. no.

L: No coffee breaks?

Delbert: No! Just no such things at them days. You know -

L: Breakfast before the work and then straight all the way through.

Delbert: Oh yeah - straight all the way through. The only break You got were then You even could. otherwise You didn't have no breaks, there was not such thing as that. No - You worked.

L: How about during the lunch hour? You brought Your own lunch?

Delbert: Oh yeah I always brought my lunch.

L: You were sitting together then?

Delbert: Oh yeah, we sat together where ever - a gang.

L: You could talk?

Delbert: Oh yeah we could talk. Some guys, they would sit around, talk and play cards, or what ever they wanted to do. Oh yeah - there was no restriction there.

L: No.

Delbert: You know that

L: But were people afraid to speak up?

Delbert: Oh yes, a lot of them didn't. A lot of them older fellows, they didn't even join You, they were afraid to get fired, You know. We had quite a job, when we started up the Union for the Monitor Furniture, they had only 30 cents an hour in doughs and I was the one that tried to went around and tried to collect it and it was a hard job to even get 30 cents out of them! But it gradually got a little better, but it wasn't organized like it is today. We had no breaks, or nothing. No it wasn't.

L: What did the members get for 30 cents doughs? That was a month?

Delbert: Yeah. Well.

L: What did they get then?

Delbert: We had five guys, was on the board, they were (?) to negotiate, like for a rase, or something, - and for better working conditions - You know. But that's the only thing they got, it was a little representation of the people. Some guys was complaining if they had to work to hard, or if they didn't get enough wages. We'd to go the superintendent and the president of the place and talk to him. So; that's the way it was in them days.

L: Did You have any meetings with the management at the office?

Delbert: Oh yes.

L: What did they say then?

Delbert: They would say: Well, the business is bad and - and we can't afford to give more wages right now. And they was - at that time - in bad shape at the Monitor Furniture. They was just coming out of the Depression and there was several weeks that we didn't get paid. They didn't even have enough money to hit the pay roll. So; we worked with them and we went without pay for two or three weeks, just until they did get the pay and then they would pay us - You know. The average rate then was only about 35 40 cents an hour, but we worked piece work on the (?) sometimes and we did make 60 cents an hour.

L: I see.

Delbert: But otherwise it wasn't much piece work in them days.

L: Who sat the rate for the piece work? You?

Delbert: No no, the bosses did that.

L: The bosses.

Delbert: Oh yeah, the management didn't have anything to do with that. I mean; the guys didn't have nothing to do with setting the rate in them days.

L: The bosses, were they Swedes mostly?

Delbert: Oh yeah most of them were Swedish - oh yeah. It was very few that wasn't Swedish.

L: Did they favour the workers or the management?

Delbert: The management. But all - his name was Dahlström, he was a head of our union, he ran the band saw and he was a good talker - You know. So. He was such a good talker - and they made a forman out of him. See that's the way they would eliminate a guy that was a leader, with to make a leader out of him. He decided in the company and that was the way the company bullheaded a good worker. So the company used to recognize a man, if he was a leader.

L: So the guy fell for that?

Delbert: Yeah. Yeah. So then

L: Even the (?) buddies?

Delbert: Yeah, that's right! They would go in with it You know, because in them days You had to help Yourself, You know and You had to look after Yourself, because nobody else would. Not all of them.

L: But what happened then? He had no protection from the union then?

Delbert: Oh no, no protection. The union

L: He had to go out of the union?

Delbert: Yeah, then he was out of the union. In them days the union couldn't protect nothing. I mean: they didn't have that much power. They would fire even a union man, - and they wouldn't bother to do anything about it. The jobs were to scarce then and the organizing was just starting. It was a trouble in Jamestown, they had to many Italians that got into that and they didn't want to work in the first place.

L: You mean: in the unions?

Delbert: Yeah they got in the unions in Jamestown.

L: Did the union protect all different groups: like the Irish, the Germans and them all?

Delbert: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

L: There was no discrimination?

Delbert: Oh no no no. No; - the workers, there was all kinds, there was; some was Irish and some was Polish - You know, and - **Oh - no**. They protected the workers.

L: They did?

Delbert: Oh there was no discrimination.

L: There were no patriotism towards the Swedes?

Delbert: No no no. Not when it came to the organizing in the unions, oh no. But I mean: the factory itself would favour, - the management would. But

L: pick out certain (? utelämnat)!

Delbert: That's right. That's right.

L: You had 8 hours work day? They couldn't press You any more?

Delbert: No no!

L: They had to pay You all the time?

Delbert: Oh no no! What such thing is that!

L: No!

Delbert: We worked in 9 3/4 hours, there was no such things as a time and a half in them days!

L: But there was a law though that said 8 hours a day?

Delbert: That wasn't strong enough, it didn't do a thing about it.

L: And no vacation?

Delbert: No no, no vacation, no such thing as that.

L: Could they call You in, for instance on Saturdays, then?

Delbert: Oh yeah, they could call You. Well. They could call You any time. I mean: if they wanted You to work, and there was no such thing, as we ever worked on Sunday in them days. I mean we just worked in the hole week, You know, if the Sunday was a day off - or? We worked a lot of times: half a day Saturday - You know - like: 55 hours. And we'd work 10 hours a day and 5 on the Saturday - and we'd work 55 hours a week.

L: And there was no hospitalisation program?

Delbert: No no nothing. No! No protection at all.

L: Who led You into a better condition? Did You figure it out Yourself, or did You have some outside help; helping You to organize?

Delbert: I mean: we started organizing, gradually, You know, You know to belong to a union and help You to get a little better working condition, to get You a little more wages, but the union wasn't strong.

L: You didn't have anybody from Buffalo or Pittsburgh comming in and tell You: we have better unions?

Delbert: Oh, no! Finally; when the Unated Furniture Workers got organized more, different from Art Metal - and all them, then we got a representative from Buffalo, to help with the organization of the Union, if You had any trouble, or anything. But that wasn't in the later years, that was way up in the 40s or before that started.

L: But I suppose that the management didn't like if You had some outsiders comming in?

Delbert: Oh no, they didn't!

L: Did they find that out quite fast?

Delbert: Did they: what?

L: Did they find that out?

Delbert: Oh yeah - they found out fast, yeah.

L: Somebody squealed?

Delbert: Yeah - course some bird would go back and squeal You know. Oh yeah we had a lot of them guys. We had a name for them, but You know they - Yeh - but.

L: What did You call them?

Delbert: Suckol.(?) - You know.

L: Suckol?

Delbert: Yeah!

L: Is it a Polish word - or?

Delbert: No no, that, You know, You know. You have heard that expression!

L: No I haven't heard it!

Delbert: No! Sucking around the boss, You know!

L: Oh, I see.

Delbert: Yeah, they used to call them that. That was the rough name for them. They were licking around behind them. You know. That's what they did call them. Course they did go squealing. And a lot of them did You know, to save Your own neck, in order to better Yourself - You know. But this soon

L: But were they not afraid though to lose their friendship?

Delbert: In them days everybody was for themselves and they wasn't afraid. I mean: I mean You had a job, You tried to keep it, in one way or another, and they wasn't to much afraid - You know.

L: But I suppose - that all the workers, they belonged to the church and they belonged to the Wikings or to Wasa?

Delbert: Yeah yeah.

L: You would think that the friendship would be diminished?

Delbert: Oh it was. - I mean:

L: It was a spred pass?

Delbert: Oh it was a spred pass and the most of the guys would think twice before they would do that. There generally wasn't too many of them, but there was a few.

L: It was a saying that: if You go down to the Covernant church, You can get a good job at Dahlströms, for example?

Delbert: Oh yeah. Yeah yeah that's; **that's right**. Just like; I got into Crescent Tools, that was 1934, after I got back after the CC Camp, when they made a new pressure oil wrench - and i had (?) Hjalmarson, my cousin, she got me into Crescent Tool. Because they even had green Swedes working in Crescent Tool, they couldn't even speak English! Old Karl Petterson got them over here from Sweden - You know. And - that's the only way You could go into a lot of these factories, by knowing somebody - or going to a church; - mostly it was: just like a church or something, but the lodges didn't have much power in them days.

L: The lodges didn't have power?

Delbert: No.

L: But the churches had?

Delbert: The churches and then a relative - You know - to somebody, like at Blackstones: Oscar Linné, if You knew him and he'd get You in and that's the way they got the jobs.

L: Was Oscar Linné a powerful man?

Delbert: Oh yeah I should say, at Blackstone. Yeah he was a powerful man in Jamestown. Yeah.

L: Also in the politics?

Delbert: Yeah. He got people, he even brought them over from Sweden and paid their way over and got them over here - You know. A lot of them, the furniture guys - and I imagine (?) Nord did the same thing.

L: Like Linné, didn't he have a shady beginning though?

Delbert: Yeah.

L: So he wasn't a church man actually?

Delbert: No not always, they wasn't always in the church?

L: But he was in the church I suppose.

Delbert: Oh yeah. They belonged to the church, cause that gave them prestige and to make a look good You know.

L: You were not married when You started the union activities?

Delbert: Oh no!

L: But how about that man, at John Deer Union. Do You think that hes wife told him to stay out of it?

Delbert: No, I don't think hes wife knew the first things about what was going on.

L: They wouldn't understand what was going on?

Delbert: No the women didn't understand the unions. They done their work and rased their kids. They probably didn't know the first things about what was going on in the factories. At least; that's the way it was with me, at home I didn't say anything.

L: Did You discuss with Your father the problems with the union activities?

Delbert: Dad, he was a union man, because he belonged to the Painters union. He was all for the union You know. The Painters union was quite strong in Jamestown and people were used to get the Painters magazine. That was one of the first that was organized; - was the Painters union.

L: So he was a few years ahead.

Delbert: Oh yes, they were ahead. We worked in the factory then. They had the Painters union then. That started way back in the 1900s You know. They were strong then and then; he belonged to them. He was always for the union. He (?) anyone to talk and he was always with - and he got along good with them guys. Course he had done a little drinking too.

L: He was married with a Swedish girl.

Delbert: Oh yeah.

L: It helped him quite a bit, I suppose, to come in?

Delbert: No.

L: In the factory, were there any suspicion between the groups?

Delbert: No. That was way back, but then they had to hire other people too. They needed a lot of people, they didn't have to be Swedes, they had to be good at their jobs. So there was no discrimination part of that, but as far as the jobs goes, they would favour somebody if they needed a man. They did get the job first You know. But otherwise

L: It was more in the 20s and in the early 30s they would discriminate, because there were a lot of Swedes comming in?

Delbert: Oh yeah that's right. Like I said: as I was born and lived here and then the Swedes, they worked at Crescent Tool, and did just come over! Couldn't even hardly speak English and they worked at Crescent Tool!

L: And they were safe in their work, even if they couldn't speak anything?

Delbert: They were safe, because nobody could fire them, because they were hired by the management and they were protected by them.

L: The management was probably afraid of You, because You could express yourself and get things moving?

Delbert: Yeah. Yeah.

L: Did You feel, that at any time, - that You had a watching eye on You?

Delbert: Oh yeah, especially - this was at Crescent Tool. (?) before we even started the union. At the Monitor furniture the superintendent did come to me a couple of times and told me I better not get involved in the unions and all that. Otherwise I might not have a job. So they would come. They would tell You, the bosses would tell You too: You better stay away from them, they are no good". Oh I was told that, a lot of times.

L: Did You take any action to it?

Delbert: No. We just a kind of took it easy and gradually; we worked. At noon or anything we didn't gather together. Then we used to meet down in the Labor council, meeting about once a month, or so, when we started to organize, but; otherwise. A guy had to be afraid of hes job in them days.

L: Especially if he was married?

Delbert: Oh yeah - the married guys, You couldn't blame them.

L: They were softer?

Delbert: That's right, because they had their kids at home and they had to have their jobs. Yeah.

L: But for 25 30 cents an hour, it wasn't much to feed a family on?

Delbert: That's right. During the Depression, the Jamestown Table Company paid 8 cents an hour. I only got 15 cents an hour when I worked for Jamestown Sterling; hand sanding. I only got 15 cents an hour and my dad got 40 cents, because he was an experienced finisher. And You had to know somebody then, because my dad knew the forman - Maynard Price, he was a forman and dad used to work with him at the Metal Company and he was a forman there - and he was the one that got my dad the job and I got a job there. That was when old Pickard ran the Jamestown Sterling, that was an awful cheap place to work. See they wasn't organized then either. And there was why they were fired. I have seen them fire a guy, right on a spot. The old superintendent would look behind the post and watched somebody. If he wasn't buzy working, he called him in and gave him the money and he had to go.

L: They paid them off?

Delbert: Oh They paid them off, they always paid by cars in them days.

L: Was he (?) out, he could never return again?

Delbert: No, they wouldn't give him a job again.

L: Do You think they called to other companies too and blackballed somebody?

Delbert: Yeah the hole Jamestown was in that way. They always stucked together. The guy got messed up in town, like he was an organizer, or anything. He could never get a job around Jamestown. That's why a lot of them went out of Jamestown. Jamestown was really a town where - if You were named once of the old Swede guys around - You know -

L: They could make it misserable.

Delbert: Oh yes.

L: So they didn't (?) if You had to move to Buffalo, for example?

Delbert: No no, they didn't pay no attention, as long as You got out of here. No, they didn't.

L: Crescent Tool, they had their own union?

Delbert: They were never organized way, until - way back - I mean - in the 40s, just before the war. Then they started to organize them. But; Crescent Tool was a good place to work in, as They treated them, for them days, good and they gave them quite good pay in wages. Course a lot of the old ones, they had worked there 35, 40 years, You know.

L: So they didn't have a high turn over of labors then?

Delbert: No no, they

L: They stayed there.

Delbert: They stayed there. They didn't. The only time they did turn over was when they were laid off, but Crescent Tool was a good place to work in.

L: But don't You think that some companies can fool a worker for 20 years and make him believe there is no other places?

Delbert: Oh yeah, yeah they did that too. Yeah. They held that over the guys: You had better stay here, because things ain't so good somewhere else.

L: Do You think the Swedes fell for that easier then any other?

Delbert: A lot of them did. they wasn't all that gullible. They would step out and get somewhere else.

L: How about the Italians? That was a bad word in the Swedish community.

Delbert: Oh yeah. Yeah. The Italians, they are more for growing fruit. They are a kind of lazy sort of people. They wasn't as ambitious as the Swedish people and they are not (?). I don't think they had the intelligence of

L: Were there differences between Italians and Italians?

Delbert: Yeah there were some Italians that was better than the others, but a lot of them, You know, they didn't speak to good English. There wasn't much use for them You know, because they couldn't even speak good English either. They just had them for; like: a janitor or sweeping up and doing the dirty work You know.

L: So You never saw an Italian comming up in a forman's position?

Delbert: Oh no! Crescent Tools, there were all Swedes, everyone of them. See they bought out Smith & Hemingway, that was a big tool company in New Jersey and they took also some of the formen from there and that was the first Italian forman that they had at Crescent Tool, but he didn't stay too long. He just did come with the company that they bought out and helped them. But that was the first and only Italian they had, but otherwise Crescent Tool never had any Italian to a head of anything there. Well - Oscar Linné too, I mean.

L: At Blackstones?

Delbert: At Blackstones, the same way. There was a few formen in the finishing room in the later years. In the finishing room is the greatest job You know: as warnishing and (?) and stinking and all lackers and some of them became formen - You know. But otherwise the Italians never became anything until in the later years.

L: How did they express themselves?

Delbert: That was another (?). The Italians was a kind of - they did do a lot of talking and that - but they would never get anywhere, because I can say they were not very intelligent and then they weren't very ambitious. But they finally got controol, got in more and more all the time - but; - the Swedish just have been mostly the power in Jamestown. Which they should be, I mean. because the Italians just didn't have it. They was more for farming, or running a food store, or something like that. They were satisfied with that.

L: How about outside the work days, in the streets for example, dances and entertainments. Did the Italians mix with the Swedes?

Delbert: Not too much; no. No. Mostly the Italians stayed with the Italians and the Swedes with the Swedes.

L: And they lived on the?

Delbert: Down on the Water street.

L: The Water street.

Delbert: There was where the Italians lived! Oh yeah. there was quite a big clan of Italians in Jamestown. Now; they are lawyers, right down to Faulkner, they had Italians right there, they became lawyers. The Italian people down there, they worked on a section gang on the railroad and they worked in the wool mill. They had a lot of them in the wool mill, the Italians. The wool mills, there were all Italians around there and they all worked in the woolen mill. The woolen mill was a different thing entirely. But they; - they - the Italians - There is a lot of nice Italian people. We have quite a few, that I went to school with.

L: How about sport activities between the Italians and the Swedes?

Delbert: Yeah - they

L: Did You play soccer?

Delbert: No no.

L: No?

Delbert: They didn't have. The soccer was away, long time ago.

L: Before the 30s?

Delbert: Oh yeah, that was way back. (?) was a soccer player.

Linnea: He played with the Swedish Reds.

Delbert: Yeah.

L: The Swedish Reds?

Delbert: Yeah.

L: Were they socialists?

Delbert: They didn't call them the Swedish Reds, the soccer team? Did they?

Linnea: They called them the soccer team: the Swedish Reds.

Delbert: Okey. I don't know. That was the old old oldtimers that belonged to that. They haven't had no soccer teams in Jamestown for years and years.

L: So the generation of Swedes that was born here, they didn't play soccer then? They went over to baseball and to football?

Delbert: Yeah, that's right. Of course now they are starting with soccer again - now - but it is much during the later years, but in them days it was mostly baseball and some football, but mostly baseball. That was the sport in them days. They had the Italians playing baseball with the Swedes - You know.

L: Were the Italians among those players?

Delbert: Yeah - there was Italians.

L: But then they mixed?

Delbert: Well then they mixed.

L: When they were growing up?

Delbert: As they were growing up, You know, they mixed all right. I had a lot of Italian kids that I grew up with together. Course they always called them the Deigo, it was a bad name for the Italians; - and the Wops.

L: Wops - who were they?

Delbert: That was the Italians. That was the bad ones, You know.

L: Wops?

Delbert: (?) called them Wops. I don't know were they have got the expression.

L: It was one grade below the Degos!

Delbert: Yeah I guess so. And then the Italians, they always said; Well: they came from Sicily, all the bad ones, they said. They came from Sicily, they weren't Italians.

L: I see.

Delbert: But - the Italians. - Like: Carlson here, this fellow who bought the farm, - hes dad said - when hes dad used to come up from Pennsylvania, when they did go down the Brooklyn Square and tried to find some Italian to fight with: pick a fight You know. (They didn't like the Italians at all).

L: No.

Delbert: No.

L: But it was pretty tough (? överhoppat)?

Delbert: Oh yeah.

L: Broken noses.

Delbert: Oh yeah, that's right. When they had to fight, the men, they didn't go around with gloves on! No.

L: How about the drinking? Were the Italians drinking as much as the Swedes?

Delbert: No. The Italians always made their own wine and they done all their drinking at home, while the Swedes would drink on the outside. And the Italians - then was the days when whisky wasn't leagal. So the Italians would make their own whisky and then they

would get it from Buffalo, so they were the bootleggers. So they would; like my dad, could go into a foot stand down to Faulkner, runned by an Italian and he could buy hes whisky.

L: That was during the prohibition?

Delbert: Oh yeah during the prohibition, that was before - in -34 was when they left that, when the prohibition was taken away. That was when I was in the CC Camps. That was leagal January the 1th 1934, that's when You could go and buy a whisky - You know.

L: In Your opinion, was the prohibition something bad?

Delbert: Oh yeah. You could keep on drinking.

L: They were still getting it?

Delbert: They were still getting it. My dad would get bootleg stuff and

L: And some of it was pretty bad?

Delbert: Oh yeah, some of them died from it. Then they used to distill. You see: in the furniture factory, they had a lot of alcohol to mix for the paints - and stuff and they used to have away and distilling that, so they would drink it. So then the Swedes would be all red faced, You know, from drinking that stuff. A lot of them died from it. They had some way of that they could take the poison out and drink the alcohol. That was the trouble with the painters. They always claimed they were drunkers from the painting, which a lot of them was - You know! They could get the alcohol. They could get the clear alcohol in them days. Instead of put it in the paint, they could put it in the balley. My dad used to drink - and - he was with them painters that would get the drinking. One time he fell off the ladder and Carl Rose(?), the painting contractor, brought him home. They had, like small places, where they used to go and drink. Course they opened up the bars then in the later years.

L: So the Italians, they kept going for the wine drinking?

Delbert: Yeah that's right.

L: In their homes?

Delbert: Yeah. You did never see a drunk Italian. They mostly stayed at home when they had done their drinking.

L: Oh, I see.

Delbert: Yeah. That was the Swedes - for once in awhile - but the most of them. The Italians drank their wine with their meals - You know. They didn't get the habit that they wanted to drink all the time. Yeah.

L: During that time, they were afraid to come down to their jobs though?

Delbert: Oh yeah. You did never see anybody drunk comming on the job.

L: They wouldn't take that risk?

Delbert: Oh, no. No. Never! But; my dad was a good painter. He went on a job one time and then they got to drinking a little. There was no work man compensation, or nothing, in them days, so he brought him home. Then he was hopping around for awhile and then he went back to work. Carl Rose, he was not a Swede guy. He knew he was a good worker, and - he had a family. So they wouldn't fire him. They had their problems too in them days. No, You never came to the work drunk. No.

L: You stayed down in Jamestown, for how long?

Delbert: I stayed around here. I stayed around here all the time, You know. I never went anywhere else to work.

L: For how long time did You keep going in the furniture factories?

Delbert: I worked at the Monitor Furniture until -41 and then I went into Myron Rockwell and I stayed with them the rest.

L: And that was metal?

Delbert: Oh yeah, that was ball and roll bearings.

L: And that was during the war?

Delbert: Yeah. Then the war started in December -41 and I started down there in August -41, so then I was drafted in -43.

L: You went into the service.

Delbert: I went in the navy for 2 ½ years.

L: When You left the Monitor Furniture Company, which progress had the union made so far, at that time?

Delbert: They were going all right. They didn't have much trouble with the unions and that.

L: Were there any strikes during the time You were there?

Delbert: No.

L: No.

Delbert: No strikes. No.

L: So how much did you ask for then?

Delbert: I mean; it was only a nickel.

L: An hour?

Delbert: Yeah, or so, like that. We were never demanding to much. No. No we didn't even have vacations, or anything. We didn't have much then, You know.

L: No.

Delbert: No, I didn't have a vacation in my life until I got to Myron Rockwell You know.

L: So then You had to join another union there?

Delbert: Yeah - then we joined another union there, and they had already had that started: UAW; the Unated Auto Workers.

L: Oh, I see.

Delbert: Yeah.

L: So I was a recording secretary there for over 4 ½ years. I was in the Union and I met Walter Roth(?) and I met Roth's brother and I met some of the big organizers, You know, in there.

L: So You were a secretary from this district then, from Jamestown?

Delbert: I was from UAW; the Auto workers, we were about 1 500.

L: Delegates?

Delbert: See - I was the recording secretary for the union for 4 ½ years. I was active in that.

L: You mean: for the National?

Delbert: No, for the union of Jamestown!

L: For the Jamestown area.

Delbert: We had our own president, vice president, recording secretary. I was one of the committeer. Yeah.

L: So when You met with Walter Roth - for instance,

Delbert: See - Walter Roth came to Jamestown after the war, because Myron Rockwell went out on a strike, so Walter Roth came here. When I first got out of the service, I wasn't going to go back to Myron Rockwell, so I went to be a mechanic down to Faulkner! But that only lasted about two months, wasn't it? So I thought I'd better go back to Myron Rockwell, because I worked for an old, stingy guy that had the (?) and he only gave me 60 cents an hour and then he would have me doing all kinds of jobs, but automobile work. So then we had 90 days to make up our mind, when we got out of the service, if we wanted to take our old job

back. So I went back and then we went out on a strike for 9 months after the war, You know; after we got back. So then it was when Walter Roth came here to try to settle the strike.

L: During the war, they couldn't strike?

Delbert: That's right.

L: There was a law against it.

Delbert: Oh yeah, there was no striking, or nothing. Oh yeah.

L: What happened then if somebody ?

Delbert: They were thrown out of the service.

L: Oh I see.

Delbert: Oh yeah. You didn't mess around then. Otherwise You were gone. They would: "Out You go".

L: What happened after the war?

Delbert: More wages and better working conditions. Then they went to the extreme - You know: holidays, and birthdays off, and all that.

L: After the war then, the unions got a little bit more active?

Delbert: They got more active then.

L: With outside help?

Delbert: That's right. We had, - like - we had help from the auto workers in Detroit Michigan, You know. Walter Roth headed the auto workers, that was the head quarters for them.

L: Did You go there for any seminars or conferences?

Delbert: I just went to Cornell down here for a summer school, for the organize of the men. (?) the knowlege about unions and how they operate.

L: And what kind of right You had?

Delbert: That's right. But otherwise I was in the negotiating committee here, course I didn't go to Detroit. The recording secretary didn't need to go. It was mostly the president, the vice president and that part of the union that would go.

L: Did You (? överhoppat) like in UAW?

Delbert: We kept on here - and once a year they went over - and did see us.

L: So they knew what was going on in the chapters?

Delbert: Oh yeah and they would have international organizers that came here, if we had any trouble.

L: After the war, then You started to ask for more time off and a shorter work week.

Delbert: Then there was more strikes and the management became more concerned, because they had to pay out more and they had a lot of trouble with the workers. They complained to much. Every morning in the shop they would grind and committed with the grind and they talked with the management about what ever problems they had. The unions got stronger and stronger and the management, of course, got their own people that they aducated in to be personal managers. They were always the ones that we went in to talk to. They were no fools, **they got into it too. The personal manager was real a man that was educated and he could talk out. You know; the mostly average union man never had any education, or anything, like they would be college guys, like these management had. They could talk.**

L: How did they succeed though with the union?

Delbert: They kept going to school and then each guy kept getting more of knowlege of how the union operates. If You want to get a leader within, they would go to Buffalo to

study in a school there, that the UAW set up and they would get educated there. We had one there, that did become quite powerful in the Union, so he did become an organizer. He went to Buffalo and he quitted the shop and became an organizer. That's how they did work for that.

L: So then You could meet the management, head on?

Delbert: Then You could meet the management and they had somebody that knew what he was talking about.

L: But I suppose they always said that: the times are not to good?

Delbert: Oh yeah - they always had that - You know.

L: But they never showed the books for You?

Delbert: Oh no, no. They didn't have to show their books, they didn't have to. Like at Monitor Furniture, they were telling them just about how Sterling; Jamestown Sterling, paid so small wages and how they could compete with them, so they had to go out of business, but Monitor Furniture (?) to be one of the bigger ones in town. But then in the meantime (?) bought Monitor Furniture and then they eliminated them entirely. Now there is no more Monitor Furniture. They were right down on the Steel street, next to the power plant, so they had an auction here two weeks ago. So they sold the plant to the city of Jamestown. That's the way all the furniture factories are going in Jamestown. But each organization, - like the Unated Auto Workers, - i mean; like the United Furniture Workers, - they got a kind of a bad way, because they got the communists into that organization - and that a kind of fizzled it out. The unated Furniture Workers didn't amount to much after a few years, they didn't amount at all. But UAW was strong, because they were a comming thing and they got the workers from Detroit, and Michigan, and that's how they got their stuff.

L: Like Blackstones and Cummings, they were in the UAW?

Delbert: No no.

L: No!

Delbert: No they belonged to a different union, they belonged to a mashinist union. No the Auto Workers, the only ones that belonged to them was the ones that made parts for a car; like we made ball- and roll bearings and automobile bearings, but the mashinists, like Blackstone and them, they belonged to a different organization.

L: Yes, but didn't Cummings, don't they produce ?

Delbert: Yeah Cummings, but they are different people entirely. They don't have any organization in there. Cummings is a big company.

L: Independent?

Delbert: Independent. They don't - they don't have no unions in there.

L: They don't?

Delbert: No. Cummings is a different thing entirely. They never had no unions. They have like a working company, all together in their company and nobody is a boss, or a head of anything. They don't belong to the auto workers.

L: How does that work then, compaired to the rest of them?

Delbert: Cummings is a good place to work, but You can only get in there - they had to interview You and if You had any union activities You don't get any job. No Sir!

L: They still go on a screening process!

Delbert: They still. They still.

L: But do they have the right to ask those questions today? They can't ask You what religion You have any more.

Delbert: Oh, no! I mean there is nothing!

L: But the rest of it, to find out who You are?

Delbert: Oh yeah. It ein't far to do that today You know. The auto workers. Course the Blackstone make radiators for Chrysler, they don't belong to the Auto Workers. They have a different union that they belong to. Like some factories, they belong to the Mashinist Union and then the others, they have another union in the factory, they belong to two different unions here.

L: But how can the auto workers in Detroit and the Denver area and in Illinois, and all over,

Delbert: Yeah.

L: how can they see between their fingers with non union produced radiators, for instance. How can they go along with that?

Delbert: They have to, because they don't have no control over that part.

L: So Blackstone is to powerful then to compete with?

Delbert: You see: Blackstone has their own union that they go by and they don't have to belong to the Auto Workers, or anything. Each big company, what ever they are producing, they belong to different unions. Some don't even have unions today.

L: So there is still going independent in some places?

Delbert: Yeah that's right – yeah.

L: So the management came in then after the strike. You said nine months strike.

Delbert: Yeh nine months and then we settled that – You know.

L: What kind of compensation did the union give You then for nine months?

Delbert: What we did was. – My younger brother and I worked. We went out and got jobs and then we just got out of the service, so they gave us a GI pay – I think it was 3 months that they would give us money, like we got 20 dollars a week. It was quite a lot of money in them days. Othervise we didn't go on unemployment. We went around and found jobs and then we (? överhoppat) and then we got a little pay for that. So that is the way we got by for the 9 months. That was a kind of tough.

L: Did the union exist then during the war years. You still paid in a few cents a month?

Delbert: Oh yes.

L: You were all in the service!

Delbert: Yeah I was in the service. Yeah.

L: But the people that stayed at the plant? Did they pay every month during those years?

Delbert: They did. The union went on. It wasn't very strong then.

L: But they were still active?

Delbert: Oh yeah they were still active. They kept on.

L: How about the head quarter in Detroit? Did they help You during the strike, or was it only the local?

Delbert: That's were we got (? överhoppat) in them days, but now adays, if You are out on a strike, You get a pretty good help, but in them days

L: From the national organization?

Delbert: That's right. You get so much a week, like You get (? överhoppat) just to go and pick it, You know. Course they have a big strike fund. But in them days; we guys, we would go out and get a job.

L: You were not in the meetings then, during this nine months strike?

Delbert: They would have meetings to see how the thing was coming out. We met in an old theatre in Jamestown, course there was a lot of people there. We would meet there every so often.

L: But this meeting were in 1967?

Delbert: That was way after, no that was after. No. They would meet; when they offered them a contract, and they would either take it and accept it, or not.

L: And they kept on for nine months?

Delbert: Yeah they kept on for nine months. - Yeah.

L: What did You think then?

Delbert: They held out, You know.

L: Nobody was working?

Delbert: Nobody was working.

L: How could the company survive then?

Delbert: I mean: they had made all kinds of money during the war, they wasn't in a hard shape.

L: Oh I see.

Delbert: They wasn't that hurt, You know, course the business had slacked off in any way.

(? Överhoppat).

Delbert: It didn't cost them to much.

(? Överhoppat).

Delbert: They were still getting money from the government (? överhoppat). The company was making good money.

L: And this company was called?

Delbert: Myron Rockwell Corporation.

L: Myron Rockwell.

Delbert: Myron Rockwell Corporation yeah.

L: So then they finally got settled. Did they meet Your demands?

Delbert: You know: they didn't get everything, but they got better working conditions and they got their rates and they got a certain rate a year, they were going to get another 10 cents an hour in the next year and then that would be settled until

L: And that was a three years contract than?

Delbert: Yeah.

L: Did Your demands at that time; were they more related to better working conditions, rather than to encreased wages?

Delbert: Then they got so they would bring in – what they would pay for Your insurance. You've got hospitalisation, and that, paid. A lot of Your friends benefits were better than getting that weekly wage, getting more money in Your paying log.

L: You didn't have to pay taxes on that?

Delbert: That's right. You didn't have to pay tax on that. Like we had a good retirement pension plan, they paid Your medical bills and all that.

L: But still no coffee break?

Delbert: Oh then; then they started the 10 minute break, or like that.

L: And that was in the contract then?

Delbert: That's right – yeah. Course the buzzer would ring 10 minutes to and You had to 9 o'clock.

L: Was it a benefit to get a coffee break for the workers – to relax?

Delbert: I mean: there wasn't that bad – but now adays they have too much of that stuff I Mean. They take the advantage of it, like they used to blow the whistle 25 after. Like we worked 8 hours, and then we got time, for overtime, after 8 hours – You know, – which we didn't get before. So then they blow the whistle 25 after 3 and that was the time You were supposed to have to wash up and get ready to go home and they would

rounded the clock and stand. They were already washed up and ready to go home and they would stand there for five minutes. And then another thing. They negotiated for more vacation so then (? överhoppat), he said: “Here we are”. He said: “We didn’t have to take our vacation. We could work during the vacation time, like to go in and clean up the mashines and work in the warehouse, counting the stock and all that. So we could work if we wanted to. We don’t have to take two weeks off”. That was generally in July. We took two weeks off in July. So he showed that over 90 percent of them didn’t even take the vacation. “Why do You want more vacation when You are not even taking it!” So then the Union had a kind of – pull their horns in them - and said: “Well they can take the vacation then”.

L: People rather worked than to get more money?

Delbert: Yeah You get paid for two weeks vacation plus You’d work that, so You’d get double money. So people would rather make more money than have the vacation. So then they cut them out on that and said “You got to take two weeks off” then.

L: That was the law?

Delbert: Yeah I mean: they paid You for two weeks! So then they had to take the vacation. Course You could take one week off and then take one week off later, if You wanted to (?) something like that. If You wanted to take off for Christmas time, You could take the other week then. In that way the factory did keep on working, they didn’t have to shut down because everybody was going at the same time.

L: So they never shut the factories down then in Jamestown, during July or?

Delbert: They generally did, once a year, to clean the oil out of the mashines and all that. But then they were buzy when they were doing that, plus running right through. (? Överhoppat). And they had a lot of work. So – that’s the way they used to operate. At Myron Rockwell, they were better than the most places. Furniture factories is a different thing too, they don’t have to clean up the machinery and all that, but they had their paid vacations too. That’s the way they operated.

L: Did You become a forman?

Delbert: No no. They had 21 lathes in our department – and – then, – You know, – I had worked for them before and – I was a good lathe operator – so they made me to a set up man. I set up the mashines and then the guys worked in piece work. So: I became a set up man. In that way I got a good working wage and I didn’t have to work. So I was a set up man – and – that was a good job. Then I could go in the department. I could stroll around the hole shop and it wasn’t that hard. Course I did get the guys set up and I had to care of the mashines that they broke down. I rather had that job than to be a forman, or anything. Ones You became a forman, then You are out of the union. Then You had no protection, like if they wanted to fire You. Then they’d fire You.

L: That’s the end of the story?

Delbert: That’s right. That was one way, if You did get rid of them too, to make a forman out of them. If they didn’t like what he is doing, they would fire him. They had no protection.

L: Did it happen?

Delbert: That happened. It was the guys own fault; if they would be drinking of something, You know, or if they had a lot of drinking problems. It could be even the formen.

L: But I suppose it was a stressful job?

Delbert: That’s right. If You worked for a big company like that. They did demand. If the guys scrapped some rings. You had rings (? överhoppat). The boss said: “where was You?” the head boss; he came in and watched that. So they could get in trouble too.

So there was quite a job. They were always after them and the management, or the superintendent, did get more and more work out, to get a good work out.

L: If You look back, here in Jamestown. If You take the management and their descendences (? överhoppat). The management seemed to survive much better, even during the hard times?

Delbert: The management, in one way, they were looking out for their own profit and that and a lot of factories was to much for their own self, but, like I say: Crescent Tool and then Myron Rockwell – and them places – they had a good feeling towards the management. They really needed to get together more and work together more.

L: But during the war years, the management would really put in a lot of profit?

Delbert: Oh yeah.

L: And they did?

Delbert: Oh they did!

L: The service men, when they came home from the war, they had no salary to speak of at all.

Delbert: See that was it. They could see that. Like I went. When I was drafted in -43, I was working in a defence plant, but they needed the men so bad, that they drafted You any way.

L: How old were You then?

Delbert: 33. I was 33 when I went in and Michael was six months old. Like this one brother, he had two boys and a girl and he was working in a defence plant, course he came in just a little while after I did and he was drafted in -44, so he got in the Battle of the bulge. He got taken right out of Myron Rockwell. I mean: If You worked in a defence plant, You had to know somebody or be in good with somebody above to get out of the draft board. Otherwise You could get defered. They needed You there better than they needed You in the service. (?) so I got drafted, just like my brother did.

L: So the management, they made a lot of profit?

Delbert: Oh yeah they made a lot of profit.

L: So You think they would give it in.

(? Överhoppad dialog).

Delbert: That was some of the old men that was a head of the directors of the company, like A. C. Davies. He was an old furniture man; like Nord. He was the ones that won't give it in to it. He wanted to keep the wages down. They didn't want even listen to him. He would walk right by the picket line and they egnored him. What was happened was that that guy died; the big shot died and then after that wether it seemed like the strike was over. He was one of the big men that was holding out. ““You don't give me any more money. You don't give me””? That was the way Jamestown held it down. The Ford Plant wanted to come in here one time, but they won't let them come in, course then it would be higher wages. They were not allowed to get in. Jamestown was in that way for the years and years. The ones that headed the furniture in Jamestown – and the factories around here, – the chambers of commerce, or what it was, – they held out, so they could keep the wages down.

L: But wasn't that rather a backward idea though?

Delbert: Yeah it was backward. That was the old people, the oldtimers, not to let the worker get too much above, You know, so they could be demanding and have a little more rights of their own. You see; they held You down, all they could. So that's how they worked.

L: But the worker usually spends hes money in the community?

Delbert: That's right! But the guy in the factory, what would he do? That's why the workers: like they called them: The Swedish Reds, and then You know, they had that idea. For us guys: Who is going to do Your work, - "so Pay me", - for my work. So they didn't get paid what they were worth.

L: The Swedish Reds, they were looked upon as communists.

Delbert: Yeah.

L: How about the rest of the unions, were they looked upon as communists too then!, in one way or another?

Delbert: They figured - You know. The democrats, that was terrible in Jamestown, it was next to being a communist You know. That's the truth! In Jamestown was all, the hole county, was all

L: Republicans.

Delbert: republicans. Yeah.

L: How about Sam Carlson? You knew him?

Delbert: Oh yeah. Yeah.

L: Was he a republican, or a democrat?

Delbert: No he was both: I mean: he was for the working man, – and even the old democrats; like: my dad was a democrat, (course I am too). He would Go for Old Sam Carlson, You know: Because that's the way he was. He was for both sides. He was like they should be!

L: How could he play in that way?

Delbert: I mean; he was that popular – You know. He would see if the workers got their share and he did see that the manufacturers got theirs - and they worked together.

That's the way any business would succeed You know. Course: Old Sam was that way.

L: So he was diplomatic then?

Delbert: That's right. Yeah.

L: Was he (? överhoppat).

Delbert: See that was way back, before they even had any unions.

L: So he didn't have that trouble?

Delbert: No. No, but he was the one that started the municipal (?) plant You know. He even wanted to start a dairy plant You know. But he was a real head on guy. Yeah. Yeah. They didn't know nothing about the labor unions, but he was in power for years! He talked to You when You came on the street, like anybody else, and he was a good man! Yeah.

L: How did the City Hall act towards the management during Your nine months strike here? Did You have any problems with a picket line?

Delbert: Where You get a lot of that is in the big cities, were they got these young guys, that did come in. They are always looking for these

L: Radicals.

Delbert: Yeah, but we didn't have no trouble with the police department or anything.

L: How did the police department react, were they for the workers?

Delbert: Oh yes, they were For the workers.

L: They were?

Delbert: A lot of the police men, they would help them out, if they had to. Course the guys were drinking in the bars with them, You know, when they were out of duty. We had the old police department. Everybody knew them and You mind Your own business in the bars here You know. And they could look; like gambling and that, You know, like

they had Turkey raffles. They wouldn't say nothing and they won't bather. One in awhile they would raid, just to make it looks good! That was, – You know! – it worked better that way, than to work against them, You know. The police department worked real good with us, we never had no trouble with them. We never had a Mayor in Jamestown. That was a democate until Mayor Carlson and some of them got in, that we have now.

L: You mean Steven Carlson?

Delbert: Steven Carlson - yeah.

L: He has no relation to Sam Carlson?

Delbert: I don't think so. No.

L: No.

Delbert: It just happened to be the name.

L: There were mostly Swedes then in the 30s and the 40s?

Delbert: Oh yeah.

L: Controlling the hole town?

Delbert: Yes. That's right. Yes. They controlled everything. Yeah.

L: there was no way for any democate to get in there!

Delbert: No. The chamber commerce – You know – they had Your name, and if You got into trouble, you know like if You were a radical like, You couldn't get a job in Jamestown.

L: So the chamber of commerce was a very important department?

Delbert: That's right. Yeah. That's right. And that was all controlled by the manufacturers and that's why

L: So they decided where the factory would settle?

Delbert: They decided. That's right.

L: So they were (? överhoppat).

Delbert: That's right. They didn't have any chanse. You know: Most of them had a job, but they never went anywhere, they didn't get a change, or anything.

L: But wouldn't you think that Jamestown closed them self out then from the outside world?

Delbert: They did, I mean they did, and they had to pay for it. Crescent Tool was gone, Art Metal was gone. Art Metal Desk, You know, that was a big one. That started in Jamestown and when that went out of business, that hurt Jamestown and; the Automathic Boarding Mashine, You know, that's another one, that was; that was the first. The Automathic Boarding Mashine, that was the first in Jamestown You know; I mean: to through out in the country. That was started here and that was one of the big businesses. Prodel Tool was another wrench company, they also have gone. Cooper Industries has bought up Crescent Tool, so they are gone. And all the furniture factories, they are about all gone, but just a few left.

L: There were 52 of them during the years before that.

Delbert: Yeah. Yeah.

L: If I ask the management of those companies,

Delbert: Yeah.

L: they would probably say that the union killed it?

Delbert: Yeah that's right.

L: Is it right - or?

Delbert: Oh yeah, they would say that the unions did it, – You know.

L: Is that the right statement?

Delbert: But it isn't the right statement, because they lost it all (? överhoppat). See the lumber; like the popular lumber, that they made, that's the popular tree of soft wood, it can be both finished and made stained, like hard wood, You know. It was easy to work with. They shipped that out from the south (?) prize of shipping the lumber up here and all the factories is gone down (? överhoppat). So that's one part there, but they had no control over it. The furniture factories is the ones that kept the wages down in Jamestown, we could say: paid cheaper wages You know - and then the metal factories is what made the wages go up You know. But; Jamestown is on the way out You know. It's around 45 000 here, with it's peak about -35, -36. It is going down, all the time.

L: So the younger persons ?

Delbert: They don't stay here.

L: They don't stay here?

Delbert: They do go.

L: They go to college, and disappear?

Delbert: That's right. They go to college, just like our three boys. I never thought they would go away, but they are all gone away, because they went to college and they met somebody else, or else they got a different job, so they didn't come back.

L: So they were never employed then in Jamestown?

Delbert: No, they would never have much employments at all in Jamestown.

L: Do You think they had a picture (? överhoppat) to settle in Jamestown?

Delbert: (? Överhoppat). Because there isn't too much here – You know. They meet somebody else and then they marry and then they never come back, You know, course that was the case of my two boys.

L: You have three boys?

Delbert: Yeah. Michael; he worked for, he worked for Watson's, that was another factory that has just about gone. They made metal cases and stuff, You know – and they had just about gone. He got laid off there – and so. But; that's the case of Jamestown.

L: You have the business college?

Delbert: Yeah.

L: 300 students, mostly girls.

Delbert: The Community college, they call it.

L: Yeah but they have a business college on the (?)?

Delbert: Oh yeah Jamestown Business College. That's the old old school. I only went to the second year high, but if they graduated, they go to the Jamestown Business College and become a secretary, or some other job, You know. That is Jamestown Business College.

L: And there is about 300 students a year?

Delbert: Yeah.

L: So there won't be (? överhoppat)?

Delbert: No. They will get a job and then they will go somewhere else.

L: To get to a school again?

Delbert: To get to a school and then they will go somewhere else. And of course we have got a community college down there, that's a kind of a big thing, but that people come here to study and then they go, You know. Michael went one year down at the Community college but then he went to college away. Yeah Jamestown Business College is an old old, they used to train a lot of people. Then they have the Predonia Normal, where they went up to Predonia, that's only about 20 miles from here. That is a teacher's college. A lot of them went up there to learn teaching.

L: How about the Swedes? Have they stayed together in groups; like the upper managements and the workers in the Wiking and in Wasa?

Delbert: Yeah they

L: Which are those people in the Wiking- and in the Wasa organizations? Are they mostly workers?

Delbert: They even get Italians in the Wikings now.

L: Are those people married into Swedes then?

Delbert: Oh yeah. Yeah.

L: Intermarriages.

Delbert: Right. And then they become Wikings. Because some of the names are Italian names now. They can join, in order to their relation. This is quite of a variety in them now You know.

L: So the old (?), that the Italians are bad, is gone?

Delbert: Oh yeah yeah, they are a kind of more and less accepted.

L: They are respected?

Delbert: Yes, we got a lot of them. Like they are lawyers and doctors and they own; like; the Italians, they own a big auto park, a place in the town that started out years ago and – they are accepted now - and just a part of it. The old council - the most of them- are Italians, quite a lot of them.

L: You mean the City council?

Delbert: Yeah. You see this is what the mobster do, they used to be in the public works, course they didn't have no job, so then they got on the welfare and they did go for the public works, working for the city of Jamestown. So then they got to be formen and then they would work themselves up and that's how they got into the City hall.

L: So then they are active recruiting votes?

Delbert: Oh yeah. Yeah. See they are active, all over.

L: Do You think that the Italians are smarter than the Swedes now of running a business?

Delbert: No, no they never will be. I mean: they just; they don't have the brain/ skulls. I mean: I am not against the Italians, but

L: You see it practical?

Delbert: Yeah – the practical part of it is that they got a few of them in that way, but on the average they just don't have it. A lot of them don't go to school You know. They are not to much for college either.

L: Do the Italians still have large families?

Delbert: Oh yeah, they have quite large families - yeah. Yeah most of them have three four five six You know. They still have large families. But they are getting more, like I say, all Americans You know. They blend in with the rest of them, they get along all right! Yeah.

L: So there is no fist fights any more down on the 2nd avenue?

Delbert: No! No no.

L: Hill side Park was a hang out, wasn't it?

Delbert: Hill Side yeah yeah. That's right.

L: They were quite active?

Delbert: Oh yeah. Hill Side Park.

L: But that time, that has gone?

Delbert: That's right. That's different times here now.

L: What do You think about the future for Jamestown? Do the unions and the management understand each other better?

Delbert: Yeah they respect each other now more and they get along.

L: Because the union guys are educated and can meet them?

Delbert: That's right. They can stand up and they have the background and everything, You know. So they have lawyers of their own and everything, so they

L: But You have been with it since the beginning?

Delbert: Yeah. Yes I have seen the starting of it – yeah. But now my opinion of it is that the unions are gone to far. They have just prized Yourself, right out of the market, especially the (?) union. They have spoiled because of their radical (?) and not let the other. They don't have no respect for the company, - You know, - or anything - and they expect them to give them more money and more money, and they don't do any more for the company, they don't bring them any more business. The same way with the unions in the factories. They was getting higher, they are getting higher wages now and they don't do the work. You see: Myron Rockwell, that Berens company, they was bought up by TRW (Thompson Products Ramo-Wooldridge) You know. That started out in Cleveland Ohio. My sister worked for them in Cleveland, Ohio and they started out and they are a big company, they are just like the General Motors, they own companies over the world. So they bought the Berens division; they called it the Berens division, they don't call it Myron Rockwell any more. And now it's for sale.

L: Here in Jamestown?

Delbert: Yeah the Berens business is for sale. So there will be another knock out for Jamestown. They had just come out here in the passed month that The Berens division is for sale. So; wether the (?) & Witney will buy them or not, they don't know.

L: What will the chamber of commerce do in them situation? Do they like the (?) & Witney, or what will they say?

Delbert: No the chamber of commerce

L: They have no power?

Delbert: They don't have nothing to do with that any more. No. They are just, they are just there for the

L: Names on the paper?

Delbert: names on the paper and that. The chamber of commerce,, they ein't nothing, like it used to be.

L: But are they out, seaking other companies to come here?

Delbert: Oh yeah, they are trying to see if somebody wants to buy, You know. Oh yeah they're working, but I mean

L: What do they have to offer them? (? Utelämnat)?

Delbert: Yeah I know, yeah I know it.

L: What do Jamestown offer the companies coming in here now?

Delbert: The only they can offer them is

L: Labor?

Delbert: Yeah that's about what it is.

L: But they can't tell them: don't organize, because then they are out immediately?

Delbert: Oh yeah oh yeah they can't tell them nothing, You know. Course Cummings, they bought out, outside of Jamestown. They are away out, so they don't, they don't have nothing to do as far as Jamestown goes. Course the Chamber of commerce, You know, tells Cummings about (?) but they have no power over them at all. The same with Myron Rockwell, they have nothing to do with it. Course they tried, see Jamestown, they ein't got

nothing to offer, You know, not a big highway, or way. They don't have no railroads, or nothing.

L: It is hard to (?)?

Delbert: That's right. And it is not a growing thing, it's nothing to set up a business here. During the winter time You got Your cold and Your big high heat bills, You know. Myron Rockwell put a plant down in Georgea here a few years ago – well - 10, 15 years ago and that's going pretty good, but they found out that they didn't have the help down there, that they have in Jamestown. You know; the practical help that they need of the knowledge of producing mechanics. They want to go fishing down, they go fishing! They don't care about their jobs! That's a fact, they said. There are not the most people within any knowledge of the machinery or that. That's why they have their problems down there. So they sent a few of the people down there. But - You know – You can't locate. People have lived here all their life and then go down to the south and live.

L: So there is a different culture down there?

Delbert: Yeah. That's right. It will take them a long time to brake them in and then the work was so poor down there that they had to send it up to Jamestown to repair it, so I don't know if that plant will keep on or not.

L: During the 20s, You worked hard?

Delbert: That's right.

L: Do You think the generation today will be spoiled? They like to have everything.

Delbert: They want to start at the top. That's right.

L: (? överhoppat) benefit?

Delbert: Yeah that's right, before they put in work in this. Like 1953, we decided to live up at the farm. My whife owned a (?) in Jamestown and I was at the newspaper at the same time. (? överhoppat). So she (?) for the (?) and this (?) acre and a half of land here with her grand father, so we bought that (?) acre and a half of land. Just the land, nothing here, for 500 dollars and in them days You didn't have to have a building permission or nothing. (? överhoppat) and then have them dig the cellar out and then I started. Course: Hugo helped some, and my brothers. (? Överhoppat resten av stycket).

L: There was to many middle hands?

Delbert: To much red tape and power.

L: (? Överhoppad fråga)?

Delbert: Yeah see that was the different thing.

L: It was important?

Delbert: Yeah. But I mean: like that's the way we started out. I worked in the shop and brought up three boys and my whife worked too. We all worked together. See it wasn't given to us.

L: No.

Delbert: I mean we worked them days and that was our life You know. But now! You were so lucky that You owned Your own home. Yeah! Nobody gave it to me, I had to work for it. The older guys, they are used to work in that way – You know. The younger ones now, they don't want to do nothing. Sitting in front of the TV set. I never watch that thing. I don't have the time, or I have something more interesting to do. So that's the way it goes You know. But today, I think, it's a different thing entirely.

L: It is expensive to live today.

Delbert: It's expensive yeah.

L: Fun and entertainment cost a lot of money.

Delbert: Oh yeah.

L: Years ago it didn't cost so much.

Delbert: No, that's right. Just to give You an idea. We used to sell cement for (?) by the barrel, four bags (?) barrel, 94 pounds to a bag You know and that was \$ 3.90 for four bags and no tax on it. No such thing in them days. Now today a bag of cement is \$ 5.49 for one bag. So You can imagine what the prize of concrete is now. Yeah. So that's a different thing. Just like this Medi-Care, and all that, it has just gone to crazy. I don't know what is going to happen, course every time they negotiate a contract they want more money.

(? Överhoppad lång dialog).

Delbert: Now we don't get the help for the schools or that. Even the roads and that. They have to let them go, because they don't get no ade from the federal government. Everything has just going down. You didn't happen to go up this way, up to the stop at the light?

L: No.

Delbert: And then go. That bridge there, that was flooded out two years ago – and so much red tape and stop, just to put a little silly bridge in! It is going to be another year for to put that little bridge in. It goes right on the main road up to Beaman's point. I mean; this bridges around here are in bad shape, the roads are in bad shape. People can work, but they have no money for it! Yeah.

Transkriberat från kassetband 2012-12-19 /O-KS