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Industrial Relations

University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Twentieth Century Trade Union Woman:
Vehicle for Social Change Project

Angela Gizzi Ward

An Interview Conducted by
Sue Cobble in 1976
for the California Historical Society
Women in California Collection

San Francisco Chronicle

March 20, 1997

Angela Ward

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She completed a business course and went to work for the international banking department at the Bank of America, where she was valued for her knowledge of foreign languages.

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She also joined the Communist Party, remaining a member until 1957.

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She resigned from the Communist Party in 1957 because of her disillusionment with the Stalinist era. That year, she was called as a witness by the House Committee on Un-American Activities, which held hearings in San Francisco, but did not cooperate.

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The Oral History Decade, 1980s.

Louis Goldblatt receives his oral history, April 4, 1981. House of Estolv and Angela Ward, Berkeley.

Louis Goldblatt, Angela Ward, Estolv Ward, Andrea Nakagawa, Willa Baum.

Interviewing session at the Ward home, 1986.
Norman and Marjorie Leonard, Estolv and Angela Ward.

The following oral history with Angela Gizzi Ward was donated to The Bancroft Library by Mrs. Ward. Provenance of the oral history is related in the following pages. Researchers are referred to an oral history with Estolv Ward, joined by Angela Ward, in progress in 1987.

Willa Baum, Division Head
Regional Oral History Office

Ward, Angela Gizzi - Interviewed By: Sue Cobble, ~~1976~~ 1977.
Legal Status of Interview: Unrestricted

-- Interview is a collaborative effort with the Women in California Collection, California Historical Society Library, p. 65.

Angela Gizzi Ward was born on February 19, 1910 in San Francisco, California. The oldest of four children of Italian immigrants, Ward was greatly influenced by her father's avid interest in European literature and politics. It was the frequent after-dinner political discussions of her father and his friends that initially introduced her to socialism. The philosophy courses she later enrolled in at the University of California at Berkeley intensified her interest and led to her eventual membership in the Communist Party.

Upon graduation from college, Ward completed a business school program and started work in the International Banking Department of the Bank of America. She was often required to work overtime but made time to serve as a volunteer usher for the San Francisco Opera House, as well as to demonstrate against Hitler and fascism. This political activism resulted in a demotion but this did not dampen her involvement.

Ward's first exposure to a union was in 1936 at an AF of L organizational meeting for white-collar workers. She then helped organize bank workers, was elected President of her C.I.O. local and was subsequently hired by the C.I.O. as a full-time organizer. In 1938 she was elected delegate to the state C.I.O. convention and it was while serving as secretary of the Constitution Committee that she met her husband, Estolv Ward. They moved to Los Angeles where she organized Harvill Aircraft Corporation and then, with her husband, organized for the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers. Both were later transferred to Las Vegas to organize Basic Magnesium Incorporated, but because of the wartime no-strike pledge and other difficulties, their attempts were unsuccessful. Consequently, they returned to Los Angeles where Ward became chairman of the War Manpower Committee. In 1945 she organized the women of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, urging them to demand equal pay for equal work and negotiate for maternity leave. She also taught a course on the Bill of Rights at the Labor School.

Ward became disillusioned with the Communist Party and left it in 1957. She later worked for the Progressive Party and became active in the Third Party Movement.

ANGELA WARD

Table of Contents

Oral History Interview

with

ANGELA GIZZI WARD

Albany, California
January 26, 1977

by

Sue Cobble

INTERVIEWER: We could start with your grandparents, as far back as you remember.

WARD: Do you wish me to describe my mother's side and then my father's?

INTERVIEWER: Why don't we start with your father's. Where was he born?

WARD: In Ceccano, a small hill town, fifty miles south of Rome. He came from a middle-class family; they had a beautiful home on the top of the hilltop. The doorway of that home is now a national monument. My father was born there, and he was the only son in a family of four sisters and father and mother.

INTERVIEWER: What was your grandfather's occupation?

WARD: He was a vintner.

INTERVIEWER: He made wine?

WARD: Yes, in a way. I really don't know what else he did. I know he was considered a very knowledgeable person on wines. This is the region where Lacrima Cristi wine is made, the white wine that has the name of the tears of Christ. My father came from an old Roman family. I don't know how else to describe what else grandfather did. His wife, my grandmother, was a school teacher. I suppose he was the head of the household and oversaw the running of the home, in the sense that he was the patriarch. Not the domestic aspects of the home but just in charge of things around the village, or the town. That's all I can tell you about him. I have more to say later, during World War II, but as far as the background is concerned, that is what he was.

INTERVIEWER: He was a fairly important man in the community then?

WARD: Yes. I don't know exactly how far back you want me to go. I

WARD: can tell you that when I went to Ceccano the first time in my life with my husband, we went through the town and when I looked up and saw the family name on the high school in Ceccano I was so utterly moved. I didn't even think that my family had any academic associations of that kind, even though I knew that my first cousins were all involved in professional work.

INTERVIEWER: Somehow that tradition was lost?

WARD: Yes. My father came to the United States in 1908 and my mother came from the north of Italy. She came from Florence or the environs of Florence. Both of them came to the United States in 1908 and they met on the ship, the Princess Irene, coming from Italy--or maybe it was going back to Italy from the United States, because they both had made several trips.
My father ran away from home. He didn't like the rigid discipline that prevailed in Ceccano, and he wanted to leave the country and come to the United States. He came with a friend of his. The reason he gave us for leaving was that he was trying to avert a disastrous marriage that had been arranged for him, and for his friend.

INTERVIEWER: By your grandfather?

WARD: Probably my grandmother had more of a say about that. But whatever it was, my father did not want to get married at that time. He was only about twenty years of age, and he had already graduated from the ginnasio. The family envisioned a professional career for him, and that entailed his marriage to somebody they selected for him, that the family selected for him.

INTERVIEWER: Was that a common practice?

WARD: Yes, in that part of Italy. At any rate, he ran away, literally, with this other friend from Ceccano who was also having a marriage arranged for him. They came to the United States, and, as my father told me, they got jobs on the Pennsylvania Railroad. Here were these young, Italian, semi-professional people working on the railroad, and they thought it was fine. They worked their way to the west coast.
Then, I suppose, my father became homesick. He went back to Italy, and on the ship he met my mother who had come to the United States. He fell in love with her and wanted to have a marriage very quickly.

INTERVIEWER: Just the opposite of the first marriage arrangement.

WARD: That's how the two parents got together. They went to Florence, because in those days it was very important that the parents meet the families. So they were married in Florence.

INTERVIEWER: That was where your mother was from?

WARD: Yes. She was from a working-class family, whereas my father--it's difficult to say. Maybe his father was a gentleman farmer, though I never saw any farming lands around the hill town, but he was involved in the vintner business, and they did have grapevines growing on the hillside.
Well, they went to Florence, and that's where he married my mother. Then they left Florence and went to Ceccano, where she met my father's family. I don't think she was too pleased with them, from what I have heard. She was from the north, and the northern Italians don't look very kindly on the people from the "settentrionale"[the mid-Italians or the Romans]. They feel that the Romans are too ebullient and noisy. The northerners are very quiet and refined.
Anyhow, my parents came to the United States. They arrived here, I guess, in 1909.

INTERVIEWER: Your mother had already come here with her parents?

WARD: No, she came alone. She came from a working-class family. I often asked her, "Well, what were you doing, Mama? What was your occupation?" And she said, "I was a lady's companion." She did come with a very wealthy lady from New York. I suppose what she really didn't want to say was that she was a maid--you know, a companion. In those days, wealthy women traveled with somebody who was refined and my mother was well brought up, even though she came from a working-class family. She probably took care of this millionaire wife's clothing, but she always traveled first class, and was given the best attention.
At any rate, when she met my father, going back to Italy with this woman, they had this tumultuous romance, and she got married and they came to this country. My father had already established some roots in San Francisco, because he had been here twice. He went to work for the California Packing Corporation, which was then the old cannery--now the famous brick place right near Ghiradelli. He went to work there as a bookkeeper and my parents set up house on Bay street. That's where I was born.

INTERVIEWER: You said that she was well brought-up. What do you mean?

WARD: In the old sense of the term. She was very refined, and had "good manners"--as we say in quotes--even though her mother, my grandmother, had been left a widow with eight children when she was very young. Her husband died of cancer, I believe, and my grandmother raised those eight children.

INTERVIEWER: How did she support herself and them?

WARD: She was from Bologna in the northern part of Italy; it's the great cooking capital of Italy. They called my grandmother the Bolognese, because she came from Bologna. But then she moved to Florence, where my mother was born. I believe my grandfather, her husband, died shortly before they moved to

WARD: Florence. My mother was born in Tuscany--in Florence; the other children were born in Bologna. My grandmother on my mother's side was very proud and wanted her children to be brought up in the best [manner] even though they were extremely poor. She wanted them to have "good manners." My mother would say, "We were always brought up to have good manners."

INTERVIEWER: Now, how did she support herself?

WARD: She was a cook after her husband died. She cooked. And I suppose she scraped around until she could raise these children. They went through some dire times. They had a fire in the house, and one of my mother's sisters died in the fire. They had all sorts of tragedies. For that time. For any time.

INTERVIEWER: Was your mother the only one of the children . . .?

WARD: Who came to the New World? Yes. She was the only one. Her sister--I came to know her later in Florence; Zia Beppina we called her--Giuseppina--married a rather well-to-do man. My cousin Marisa, whom I still see and visit, was the result of that union. Well, my mother never saw Zia Beppina again after she came to the United States; they never saw each other again.

INTERVIEWER: She never went back to Italy?

WARD: No. (laughing) I have to tell you so many things about my family that it's difficult to relate. What happened subsequently: my father became a very successful man, financially. He became the superintendent of the California Packing Corporation plant, and he was in charge of the entire plant. He was quite a personnage in North Beach. He made a good salary; and he was given big bonuses at the end of the season when they packed all the peaches and they got so many cases up to here, there and yonder. He would always say to us, "This is the greatest cannery in the world"; and it was supposed to be the largest cannery in the world.

INTERVIEWER: Was it mainly Italians who worked there?

WARD: Yes, from North Beach. And the women would come in their blue smocks and their white hats; I remember when I was a little girl these women streaming to the cannery on Monday morning, and coming home about five o'clock. The women were primarily North Beach housewives and young women in their late teens of Neopolitan or Sicilian background. Many of them came from households where the husband and father was a fisherman. As this is a seasonal occupation, the women in the family would supplement the income by working at the cannery where the operation was also on a seasonal basis.
As I recall, the women prepared the fruit or vegetables by sorting the product as to size and quality, pitting the peaches, peeling, etc. The actual canning was even then all automated on

WARD: an assembly line--fascinating to watch. Since this all took place in spring and summer, the work was heavy and concentrated to preserve the prime quality of the product and to prevent spoilage. The whole cannery worked long hours at top speed during these months, executives and work force.

INTERVIEWER: How did your father feel about the people he worked with?

WARD: My father never expressed any opinion about the people under him. I know there was no relationship, social or otherwise, with the workers in the plant. Occasionally, persons seeking work would come to the house asking for Papa and wanting to know about a job. My father's social contacts were only with his white-collar colleagues at the cannery--accountants, expediters, etc. Well, when I went to school at Sarah B. Cooper in North Beach on Lombard Street, my father announced to me one night, "You can tell your teacher that her class can come to the cannery tomorrow, and I will show them how the peaches come down the assembly line, and the cans go around, and how we pack the peaches."

INTERVIEWER: He was very proud of it.

WARD: And I was so proud. And I said to Miss Tobin, the principal, "My father says if you want to take the class to the cannery, he will show the children all around." And she said, "Oh, that's marvelous, Angela!" And she said, "I will call your father, though, to make sure it's all right." Which she did, and my father said, "Surely, you bring the classes down." And this went on for quite a while. I was so proud, you know. The classes would go down, and my father would show them how the peaches were canned, or the asparagus, or the tomatoes, or whatever was in season.

Well, one day in 1927, my father came home from the cannery to our new house on Lombard Street and he announced, "We're going to Italy on Thursday." This was a Monday. He wanted to take us all to Italy, my mother and the four children. He said, "I want to take you to Italy." He said, "We're all going to Firenze, and Ceccano, and Roma." Here was my mother with four children, the youngest of whom was about six. I was the oldest; I was sixteen. And he said, "We're going to go; I'm going to buy the tickets," and I started to wail. I said, "Oh, Papa. I'm graduating from Galileo. I'm not going to go to Italy. I have to go to my graduation." It was about April. And my mother said, "How do you expect me to get this whole family organized by Thursday?" We would go by train and then by ship. He got very angry, that we didn't want to go, because we all had our little things that we wanted to do. And my mother obviously couldn't organize the whole thing. So he said, "I'm going by myself." And he did. He went by himself and left us home. That's why she never went back to Italy. Then, after that, the Depression came; my father lost all his money. That's another story.

WARD: The last thing I remember about my mother's connection to Italy happened at Christmas time one year. My sisters and I decided we would give my mother a Christmas present; we would call her sister Beppina in Florence. This was when overseas long distance was not all good. We made an appointment with the operator and quizzed her about how much it would cost. She said it would be between twelve and fifteen dollars, so we finally arranged it that the call would come through at hours that would be more or less convenient to both parties. My mother got on the phone and her sister in Florence got on the phone, and all they could say was, "How are you? I'm fine. How are you?" (laughing) And they kept saying, in Italian, "I'm fine. How are you? And how is the weather? I'm fine How are you?" For three minutes that's all they said.

INTERVIEWER: How did you feel about this phone call?

WARD: Well, while we laughed at the lack of communication between the two sisters, I felt a great sadness--it was truly impossible for either of them at this stage to span the decades of experience and events that had transpired since they last saw each other. Of course, the telephone call, which we had worked for, was all the more poignant and "triste" in the realization that it was a poor substitute, indeed, for a physical meeting between the two. Sometimes I thought, had I not been so eager for that Galileo graduation might I have influenced Mama to go on the trip?

INTERVIEWER: I'm curious about the fact that your mother was the only one of the children who came over from Italy. Did she ever talk about why or what it was she thought about this country?

WARD: I think she came here because they were poor. I don't know how she met Mrs. Pratt--I think that was her name--this millionairess from New York--and how they got in contact in Florence. Her brothers went to work as skilled craftsmen in Florence. I don't know exactly what kind of work they did. They didn't make jewelry. They might have been plumbers or electricians. Her sister, Zia Beppina, who married a professional man, married very early. I don't know how that connection was made. When I say "professional", he was professional in their eyes. He may have been an accountant or a bookkeeper or whatever; but he was not working-class, as they defined it. He was a white-collar worker. The other sister died in the fire. I really don't know much about that part of the family, even though later on when I went to Europe--the first of what were subsequently many visits--I met them all. I was utterly....it was the most beautiful thing. My Zia Beppina, she looked exactly like my mother. When I saw her the first time in Florence, I just (her voice breaking) broke down and cried. (pause) Because my mother had died by then. She was a great lady, my mother.

INTERVIEWER: On your father's side, you said your grandmother was a school teacher. Was that unusual for a woman then? Did that mean that she was a very educated women?

WARD: You know, I have so many relatives in Italy, I dare say that all the women are school teachers or professoressas, as they call them. Some of them are in universities, but they're all in teaching capacities. My father's mother was a school teacher; my father's sister, Zia Margarita, who lived to be ninety, was a school teacher; her husband Ugo was a school teacher. Five children they had: one is a lawyer, the only male of the five, and he was a Communist Deputy until 1973 and was elected a deputy from the province of Frosinone. Of his four sisters, two are high school teachers, one is a psychiatric social worker, and the youngest one was a housewife.
But this tradition of school teaching continues to their children, one of whom visited this summer and spent a month with us. She's a school teacher in Rome. They're all school teachers. Well, one of the daughters, Dina, is a very fine guide in Rome. They call her professoressa because to be a guide in Rome, you have to really go through a course of study the equivalent of a PhD in this country. One of her two brothers is the first Consul in Brussels; the other is the first Secretary of the Italian Embassy in London. Before that he was in Paris. That part of my father's family has all gone into foreign service or teaching; they're middle-class and professional.

INTERVIEWER: When your father immigrated, was it for solely personal reasons?

WARD: Oh, yes. There was no political motivation. He was a very difficult man. Also a very interesting man. He was very cultured. He raised the four of us--the three girls....we were raised in a very strict environment, here in San Francisco.... an Italian family. My father never permitted us to go out, for example, or have dates. And from the very beginning, none of us spoke English until we went to school. I went to the Sarah B. Cooper school; my mother took me. I entered elementary school at five and a half years and I could not speak one word of English, though both my father and mother spoke English--my father with a very heavy accent, but very correct grammatically; my mother with less of an accent but with cute little idiomatic reversals. They both spoke good English, considering that they'd only been here about four or five years.

INTERVIEWER: They always spoke Italian in the home?

WARD: Always. We didn't dare utter a sound unless it was in Italian. When I went to school, I didn't know how to say hello in American. You learn very quickly, of course, and naturally in school I spoke English, but the moment I entered the front door, it was Italian always spoken until I left home. I never spoke to my father or to my mother in English. We always spoke Italian, and it was very correct Italian.

INTERVIEWER: Is that unusual in Italian homes, do you think?

WARD: Well, at that time, perhaps not so unusual, but my father was a very well educated man, and he insisted on the best Italian. He

WARD: would always say to us, "Your mother is Tuscan, I'm Roman, and lingua Toscana in boca Romana." That's supposed to be the best Italian in the world: the Tuscan language, the language of Dante, spoken by a Roman, who have the best accents. He would always remind us of that, how lucky we were to be born to parents, one of whom was a Tuscan and the other a Roman. He just wouldn't permit us to speak any English. It was a strict household; in many ways it was bad.

INTERVIEWER: Was he the one who was most responsible for raising you?

WARD: Oh, yes. He dominated the household; my mother just followed suit.

INTERVIEWER: Would she intercede on behalf of the children?

WARD: She tried to. She was much more sympathetic. Being a woman she had a lot of--how shall I say--she had a deep understanding of her own role: how terrible it was, under the domination of this man, and of the fact that we would have a difficult time, because we were being raised in a very stringent, disciplinary household. But she was unable to assert herself. She tried, but she was unable to assert her own will. We grew up very much the children of our father, in the sense that we were dominated by him.

INTERVIEWER: How would that dominance manifest itself?

WARD: I think he meant well; but, for example, he was a very unfair person in many ways. He would take the three girls--I won't mention my brother because he was not even born yet--but there was twenty months difference between the three girls. I was six or seven, and my sister Irene was five, and Maria was maybe four. And after supper he would read the Divine Comedy to us, or Hamlet. He adored Shakespeare. He would read Hamlet's soliloquy, or Iago's dissertation, but all in Italian. Then he'd say, "Now, I want you to memorize it." Even though we were little children, we would memorize these things. As we grew a little older, when we were eight and nine, he would say after dinner, "Now, I'm going to see which one is going to recite Hamlet's soliloquy."--it was understood that it was in Italian, because we'd never heard it in English--"And the one who recites it the best, with the least mistakes, is going to get a dollar," and he put a dollar out on the table. How unfair he was. I was the oldest, so naturally my memory was the best of the three. Poor little Maria could hardly remember anything. I'd always win the dollar, because I was the oldest. Now, at that time that struck me as being eminently unfair.
My mother would say, "But that isn't right." And she'd say, "Angelina"--they used to call me Angelina, or Nina--"Nina is the oldest, and she's heard it so many times. She can remember it better." And I would even say, "That's not fair, Papa. Divide the dollar between us." But Papa would say, "No, you did it the best." Then he would give me the dollar. Well, subsequently,

WARD: I would divide it with my sisters, but it hurt them. It was the old Italian tradition: I was the oldest and I'm sure he would have preferred me to have been a man, a male child, but he did the best he could. That's the kind of person he was; he was very difficult and I can honestly say that I never loved him. When I became older I respected him, and I'm grateful for the fact that he taught me so much, in a cultural way. It may not be useful nowadays, but I always think how wonderful it was that I grew up learning so much.
By the time I was fourteen, I knew Shakespeare, and I knew Dante. He used to read us these long-winded passages, in Italian, from Crime and Punishment. And music. My mother sang quite well and they'd play their old Victor recording, Caruso and all. We'd listen to the opera. He took us to the opera in Civic Auditorium. And so we had a good cultural education. But he was a difficult man. I always resented him because even when I was a child, I felt he was not being fair to my sisters or to my mother, or even to me.

INTERVIEWER: In what ways was he strict?

WARD: We were never allowed to go out, as we say. When I entered the University of California I was seventeen years old; I had never put on lipstick. I remember the day I went to register: I was wearing bobby socks. Here were all these sophisticated gals with makeup on, and I had my middy blouse and my blue serge skirt. (laughter) And he was strict in that it was all family; we could never go out with boys.
We had a nice house on Lombard Street, with a big garden, swings and slides. One thing I'm grateful for: they never, never practiced any discrimination, even though my father was a conservative person essentially. We would have Greek kids, black kids, Chinese kids; they all came to play on the swings and the slide. My mother would come out and give everybody cookies. There was never any question that anybody was different because their skin was darker or lighter.
Some Sicilian kids lived around the corner from us. The girl, Florence, had red hair, and her brother had red hair. The Sicilians were from the south. I'd heard some stories that the northern Italians were better than the southern Italians. I said to my mother, "How is it that Florence has red hair and blue eyes, and she's Sicilian? And she does talk kind of funny; her Italian isn't like ours." My mother said, "That's because she comes from Sicily, and that's a different part of Italy." She explained it to me. I said, "But her hair's real kinky even if it's red," and my mother explained that to me. Then when my father came home, my mother told him what I was asking and my father sat down with me and he gave me the whole history of North Africa. (laughter) I don't know if I understood it all, but enough to understand why Florence had red hair and blue eyes even though she was Sicilian.
At one point he said to me, "You've got blond hair and blue eyes." And my mother said, "Well, that means some Germans came down into Italy. So then they gave me a lecture about the mingling of the

WARD: races and how that's what made Italy so great, all this melange of people coming from the north, the Huns.

INTERVIEWER: That's what made Italy great?

WARD: Yes, because they had all this mixture of blood. They were virile people, because they came from all over the world. That's why you had Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo and Raffaelo. These were the products of all this mixture from all parts of Europe and Africa, and we should never be ashamed of it. That's what they told me. Which is true, (laughing) I guess.

INTERVIEWER: Was religion very important in your home?

WARD: We were raised as Catholics, though I left the Church when I was twelve. Neither one of my parents practiced the Catholic religion, but we all received communion. We were all baptized; we all received confirmation. My father and mother never went to church, or seldom, and I literally broke with the Church when I was twelve, because I didn't like the priest at St. Peter's and Paul's in North Beach. I'd go to Sunday School and when you were preparing for communion and confirmation you'd have to go to these afternoon classes. The priest would describe Hell to us. I was a very impressionable child, and he'd describe the Devil coming up with fumes of sulphur out of his mouth, and how we were all going to be taken to Hell, and how we'd never get to Purgatory, and certainly never to Heaven. Here we were, little kids.

Every Friday afternoon we'd go to confession, especially before we received Holy Communion. I'd go with my sisters, and we'd say, "Gee, I haven't even got one sin to confess." And we'd try to think of sins to commit so that by the time we got to the church, we would say, "Father, I have sinned." But our imaginations didn't go very far. The only thing we could think of....I remember I said to my sister Irene, "Oh, I've got it. I'm going to call you a bugger." (laughing) I didn't even know what bugger meant. Then she said, "You know, even better--let's steal an apple at the grocer." So we all stole an apple, or tried to steal a banana, so we could go to the priest and say, "Father, I have sinned. I called my sister a bugger, and I stole a banana from Mr. Perata," or whatever. (laughing) Then he'd [the priest] say, "My child, you have sinned. I want you to say a hundred Hail Marys and two hundred rosaries," or whatever it was.

I'd go home and tell my mother, and she'd say, "How foolish you are. This is all nonsense." My mother was never religious, and she inveighed against the Church many times. She never went to church, and neither did my father until he was practically on his deathbed. Then he decided to take out insurance (laughing) and he let the priest come to the house. But this was when he was seventy-three, just before he died.

INTERVIEWER: You never took religion very seriously?

WARD: At the first I did. When I received Holy Communion with the veil and all, yes, I took it quite seriously. I almost went to a point where I would discuss with my sisters, "Let's be nuns, and be holy and perfect and never do anything wrong." But [I began to take it less seriously] as my father read all this stuff to me. We would read so much in our family. Also, I hated that priest when he told me how I was going to burn in Hell for these sins, and he described so vividly how the fumes came up and the sulphur and all. I began to think, "That's wrong. What have I done?" Then I'd go home and I'd say to my mother, "Mama, the priest says we're all going to go to Hell." She'd say, "That's a lot of nonsense," you know, and I'd say, "Why do you send us there if it's a lot of nonsense?" And she said, "Well, your family in Italy and Papa wouldn't like it if you didn't have your communion." And we'd ask her, "Well, why don't you go to church?" And she'd say, "Don't ask me--there are questions I can't answer." So that's the way it was.

INTERVIEWER: Did your mother have a formal education?

WARD: No. But she spoke some French. She had no formal education, but she spoke very well and she read a lot--as much as she could raising four children. She always listened very attentively at night when my father would read these tomes to us--poems and so on. She always listened in and would say how beautiful they were, and how we should learn them. She had an appreciation for it.

INTERVIEWER: Did she ever work after she was married?

WARD: No, never. I remember, after we were all married and gone on our way and she and my father were left on Lombard Street.... she got her first social security check. I don't know how she got it, but apparently Social Security sent checks to housewives. They sent my father his share, and they sent my mother this measly check. She was so proud of it. She'd say to my father, "You are not going to get this; this is my money. And I shall spend it how I like." Because even when he was well-to-do, before the Depression, he'd give her money to run the household and buy our clothes and so on, but he never....oh, he was a male chauvinist pig of the first order and my mother was the most meek, accepting person. The only time she ever rebelled against this [chauvinism] was to us, when he wasn't there. I often think she should have told him off long ago.

INTERVIEWER: She felt she shouldn't?

WARD: Yes, that's the tradition in which women were raised in those days.

INTERVIEWER: What did she do with all that anger?

WARD: She wasn't a happy woman. I don't know that she did anything with it, except to suffer inside herself. I think she had an awful

WARD: life. An awful life. She and my father didn't get along at all, especially when we were growing up. When we were teenagers there was this terrible strain in the family. They did not get along. I often said to her, "Mama, why don't you get a divorce. It would be better for all of us." And she would say, "Oh, my God! What would your father....your father would kill us all if I got a divorce." And I would say, "Well, let's try him out." But no, she never did, never would. I still think to this day it would have been better for her and perhaps even for us if she had divorced him.

INTERVIEWER: So it wasn't that divorce in itself was wrong, but that he didn't want her to do that?

WARD: She was afraid. Now that you look at it from the perspective of the women's movement, you think, how could people have been so repressed? How could my mother not have ever done anything to liberate herself? How could she have lived like that until the day she died? Until she was seventy-six years old, she lived with my father, though he died before she did. And he was very fond of her at the end, but what good did it do? She didn't have a chance to ever express herself, and I think she was a talented person and could have done something.

INTERVIEWER: She wasn't afraid of community reaction--it was more she was afraid of your father?

WARD: She was afraid of him, and also tradition. You have to remember that forty years ago people didn't get divorces as readily as they do now. The other thing was that she was dominated by her background; in Italy the divorce is still a very chancey thing, even though the last parliament, I believe, passed a law that will allow divorce in Italy under limited circumstances. And this is now in 1975. In 1927 they never had a chance, or she never had a chance.

INTERVIEWER: Was she involved in any kind of activities outside the home?

WARD: No. Never. Her life was raising the family. She was a marvelous cook but so was my father. And they fought in the kitchen. They'd say to us, "Who cooked this? Who do you think made this pasta? Who do you think made that chicken?" And if we said, "Mama made it," he'd say, "No, I made it." She was a great cook and a good hostess. They always put on a show. Let me say that. That's what they did, they put on a show. But in the home it was a tense situation. They didn't speak to each other for days on end. That's how my mother rebelled.

INTERVIEWER: Withdrawal?

WARD: Yes. As a matter of fact, I remember they didn't speak for eight years. We'd sit around the table and my father would say to me, "Tell her to pass the beans," or whatever it was. He was a very irascible man. He could be as gentle as a lamb, and then

WARD: he could hit the ceiling without any provocation, as far as I could see. So it was a turbulent background from which I came, domestically speaking.

INTERVIEWER: How was your brother treated differently than the girls?

WARD: Well, he was born the last of the children and my father had wanted a boy from the very beginning. As I often said to my mother, "You probably would be bearing children yet, until you got a boy." Fortunately, she got a boy, at long last. And then it was a disaster. My father made a mess of that boy. In the first place, he expected the impossible from him. He was dreadfully spoiled from the very beginning. Here he had three sisters: we were all wheeling him around in the baby carriage--I was eight years old--and he was pampered and spoiled and so on. He came to hate his father; they never got along. Never. He never even had the advantage that we had from my father's learning, and the good educational background he gave us. I don't know how much stock you place in it, but when I look back on it, I'm very happy that my father opened up these worlds of literature to me, and art, and music. He never gave [that] to my brother, because by that time the world was changing. It wasn't the custom for little boys to sit at home and listen to their father recite Shakespeare.

INTERVIEWER: He would try to do that but your brother wouldn't take part?

WARD: He gave up very soon, my father did. He thought, "This one, he doesn't know anything. You'll never know anything." Here was a little boy--why should he respond to all this? He was growing up in another world and my father should have recognized that. If he wanted him to be a learned child and have all this cultural background, he should have drawn him into it in a much more subtle way than he tried to do.
When we were growing up, there wasn't the openness that you have today, for example, or that we had even later on in our life. Everybody was very proper, and children more or less obeyed their parents and did as they were told.

INTERVIEWER: But by the time your brother was coming along, those values were changing?

WARD: Yes. The ideas were changing, and the world was beginning to change. We were growing up on Lombard Street, and we were betwixt two worlds: the North Beach of down below, and the Russian Hill up there. My father had lost his job. He worked for California Packing Corporation for thirty-five years, until 1936-1937, and without warning he was let go, six months before his retirement date. He was the top man in the cannery; he was entitled to a pension that would have kept him in comfort for the rest of his life. We found out subsequently that's why they let him go--so they wouldn't have to pay him the pension. This really killed him. I can feel sorry for him about that.

INTERVIEWER: It seems things like that really make you change your opinion about the world, that they could have strung him along for twenty years.

WARD: They certainly had a very profound effect on me, as far as my radical development is concerned, I'll tell you. That was a terrible thing they did to him. First of all, being Italian, he invested all his money in the early twenties in the Bank of America, Transamerica Bank of Italy stock. He was so proud, you know. Here's the man from Italy who told his papa and mama he wasn't going to go to the University of Rome, he was going to come to America and make good. And he did, from his point of view. He made money; at that time, he told us, he was worth about a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. It was all on paper--this Transamerica stock. Suddenly overnight in 1929 the whole bottom fell out of the economy. He didn't have anything left of what he considered to be solid capital. At least he had this job with California Packing. So he worked with California Packing and continued to work. He had built this beautiful house on Lombard Street, which we still have--my sister lives there, right below the winding road; he had built that in 1927, right before he went to Italy when we didn't go with him. He had a mortgage on it but he kept things going, as they say. Then, I guess it was in 1936 or 1937, he was summarily told that his services were ended. That crushed him beyond belief. I think that ruined him. From his--even from my--point of view, he was a crushed person; he never really came out of it again. (pause) (speaking softly) And that was it.

INTERVIEWER: You said you lived between North Beach and Russian Hill. North Beach was the main Italian community?

WARD: Yes. We shopped and did everything down in North Beach: Columbus Avenue, Green Street, Vallejo, Union--everybody knew my father. He'd get together with his cronies in Washington Square Park. Our house was on the fringe of Russian Hill on Lombard between Leavenworth and Jones, the latter being the dividing line to North Beach. Robert Louis Stevenson had lived in the beautiful mansion on the corner of Hyde. Now, it was the home of Noel Sullivan of the Phelan family, patron of the arts and host to Negro artists like Marian Anderson and Roland Hayes, then victims of S.F.'s segregationist hotels.

Twice daily on my way to Galileo High which I attended from 1924 to 1927, I would walk the famous crooked Lombard Street past handsome homes owned by some of S.F.'s top families. Galileo was considered a leading high school in S.F. at that time. My classmates ranged from sons and daughters of Sicilian and Neopolitan fishermen, garbage collectors, skilled craftsmen, etc., to the sons and daughters of the Sloss', the Fleishacker's, Harris', Seroni's--we were all ffiends.

So we lived between the world of Russian Hill and Columbus Avenue. We went to a school on Russian Hill, so to speak, and lived in a house on Russian Hill, but we ran shopping errands for mama on Columbus Avenue in North Beach, went to church and the playground in the heart of the Italian colony. That was our everyday world.

WARD: We had this big house at 957 Lombard Street and then in the back we had a lovely little cottage, where we had lived before my father had built the big house in front.

INTERVIEWER: Could you describe the room in which you lived?

WARD: I had my own bedroom when we moved into the "big house". The room was nicely but conventionally furnished--matched pieces in white and blue. It was small in size, but it was my own and afforded some privacy, but not too much! Any family member had access to it. The only time the door was closed was when I studied at my small desk--then my privacy was respected. Still, it was a considerable step up from our former home where the three girls occupied one bedroom furnished with a double and a twin size bed. Since I was the oldest I got to sleep alone in the smaller bed. Always, being the oldest in an Italian family had its advantages. So, when we moved, I had my own room, but my two sisters shared a room. My brother, being the only male among the offspring, had his own room.
We rented the back house. We rented it to Herb Caen's sister, for example. She is a concert pianist and teacher. And Yehudi Menuhin would come there. Isaac Stern, Roland Hayes, Paul Robeson, and Benny Goodman; all these people used to come there, and my mother would even babysit some of these people's children. I'd come home from high school or college in the afternoon, and I'd be walking to my front door and hear this beautiful music--a voice perhaps, or a violin. I'd go upstairs and say, "Mama, who's over at Estelle's?" She'd say, "Oh, Isaac Stern is over this afternoon; he's practicing." Or, "Betty Alexander is working with Roland Hayes." Then I'd go and sit in the back room and listen. Sometimes Mrs. Alexander, who occupied the house before Estelle did, would call up my mother and say, did we want to go over there and listen to some of the music that was being made or played. So, it was two worlds--for me, and for my family. We all felt that way.

INTERVIEWER: Did you feel conflict, or was it more that they could build on each other and supplement each other?

WARD: I think it was that we could build on it, and supplement.

INTERVIEWER: What percent of Galileo was Italian?

WARD: I can't tell you in terms of numbers, but I can tell you this. The Italian professor at Galileo, Clemente Zulberti, was a good friend of my father -- he'd come to our house--and so was Mrs. Oglu, who was Greek. She taught Italian at Galileo. We took Italian at Galileo from the moment we enrolled there. Professor Zulberti taught first, second, third, and fourth year at Galileo because it was very important; there were a lot of Italians then.

INTERVIEWER: So that high school drew from both the North Beach area and Russian Hill.

WARD: Yes, and a lot of the Russian Hill or Pacific Heights people took Italian. In those days, the high schools taught Spanish, French, Italian, and Latin. I think the education that you got in those days was better than now. It really was, I think. I'm certainly grateful that I can jabber in French and Italian, and a little Spanish. Most young people don't know any languages because the school system has foregone the teaching of languages. A large percentage of the students were Italian; I would say probably 35 or 40 percent.

INTERVIEWER: Was there any kind of antagonism between cultural groups?

WARD: I don't recall any, no. There weren't any Chinese. Isn't that interesting? Now a majority of the student body is Chinese. But at that time, no; the Chinese went to Francisco.

INTERVIEWER: I was interested in what kind of social activities your family participated in as a whole, and then your parents individually.

WARD: My parents individually didn't. Occasionally my father and mother would go out. When Elenora Duse, the great Italian actress, the Sarah Bernhardt of Italy, would come to San Francisco to do a play, then my father and mother would go, or they'd go to hear Sarah Bernhardt. We were all too small to participate in that. As we grew a little older--not too much though--my father would take us to see Rigoletto at the Civic Auditorium. We'd be taken to the opera and that's about all. We didn't go to movies, or things like that. That was considered too American.
The family used to have dinners where they'd invite Mr. Zulberti, my Italian teacher, and another Spanish-Italian teacher from Polytechnic High School; they were all men friends of my father. Then there were a few family friends, Italian families that we knew.

INTERVIEWER: Not related to you?

WARD: No, just Italians that my parents had met over the years. They would come over on state occasions, like Sunday dinner or holiday affairs--Thanksgiving, Easter. We'd all sit together. They'd come with their kids and we'd be perhaps fifteen at the table. We'd have these elaborate Italian dinners. The grown-ups would talk and tell the kids to shut up; we weren't allowed to participate in the conversation. These functions were the main thing that occurred. Then as we grew older, we still had these kinds of dinners, where the Gastaldis and their children, family friends--Mr. Gastaldi was an accountant at the cannery--would come for dinner. We were a little older, but we'd have to sit there and listen to all this discussion about socialism and Mussolini. People would argue back and forth, and we couldn't get up from the table and go somewhere else and talk. My father would say to one of the men--he never said this to the women--"Did you read the latest article?"--in some Italian magazine--and they'd get in a big discussion about it. Then, finally,

WARD: my mother would say, "Well, let the young people go in the living room and play cards or play the phonograph." So we'd go and play the phonograph. That was our social life; we never had boyfriends or close female companions.

INTERVIEWER: It was family?

WARD: All family, all the time.

INTERVIEWER: Would your mother participate in those political conversations?

WARD: No very much. The women didn't. After the dinner, the women would gather at one end of the table and the men would be up at the other end, and the women would make remarks about the men being so remote from them, and not letting them participate. But they never said, "Damn it, we want to have something to say about what's going on." They didn't; they just kept over to their end of the table or retired to the kitchen to help with the dishes. Then their discussion would revert to domestic things and gossip. They might talk about some play or Italian cultural event. My mother would say, "We went to see Duse the other night." And then, "Oh, how was she?" In the end they would end up discussing their recipes and that was it.

INTERVIEWER: Was there always a strong interest in Italian politics, in what was going on in the old country?

WARD: Oh, yes, very much so. A very strong interest. In fact, I think we were brought up to have more interest in what was going on in Italy than what was going on in America.
My father was always talking about Mussolini. He didn't know so much about what he was doing intrinsically, but he felt that Mussolini had achieved something. He made the trains run on time and that sort of thing. The time my father went to Italy in 1927--that served him right, by God. The first night Papa was home, he told us what happened to him. In those days you took the train, and then you took the ship. He got to France, I think it was, and then he took the train to Switzerland, and from Switzerland he came down through Milano. When he got to the station at Milano, the bersaglieri, the police or customs, got on the train to look at the passports. They looked at my father's passport, which was an American passport because he had become an American citizen, and they opened up the passport, these Fascists, and said to my father, "You are 'un pidocchio rifatto'." That means a renovated louse. They pushed him around and my father got the idea immediately.
When he got off the train at Milano, he was scared to death--as he reported it to us--because he knew they were going to follow him. He got in a taxi and went to the American Consulate, and reported that he was being annoyed--he probably used a much stronger term--harrassed--by these Fascist blackshirts. They had on black shirts and all. So the Consulate said they would send men with him, and he got back on the train to go to Rome. And, by God, when he got off the train at Rome, they were waiting

WARD: for him, to give him castor oil. That was the treatment; they had threatened him with castor oil. He got away all right, and he went to his town, Ceccano, and nothing happened to him. And he was telling us all this and I said, "You see what rats those people are? Those Fascists?" And he said, "Yes, I realized that when I got there." He kept describing in great detail how he had been so smart to rush to the American Consulate for help. And I said, "Yes, you had to go to the American Consulate; otherwise you would have probably been given a good dose of castor oil."

INTERVIEWER: Was that generally true, that there was a lot of anti-Americanism?

WARD: Oh, yes. For an Italian-born to go to America, and become a citizen of the U.S.--that was considered the worst crime of all. He [my father] was such a volatile man. He was brilliant one day, and I would consider him very stupid another day. He would just fly from one point of view to the other.

INTERVIEWER: He was ruled by his emotions.

WARD: Yes, by his emotions.

INTERVIEWER: What were the main cultural adjustments that you saw your parents making? Did you find that your parents changed their values by coming into contact with American culture?

WARD: Essentially, no. Though I think that my mother was the more liberal of the two parents, in the sense that she made friends more easily. Her personality was such that people were drawn to her. For example, she learned to speak English from an American neighbor, who was very fond of my mother, and who taught her a great deal of English. They were good friends. My mother was more open and could make friends more readily than my father. He did not adapt himself, I would say, to the American cultural and social scene. Essentially my mother didn't either, because she followed him. But--how shall I say?--she did not become part of the American cultural scene. They still did things, like going to the opera or, for example, the big event I remember in their lives was when Elenora Duse came to this country and appeared in a play. My mother and father went to this at the Civic Auditorium. No, they didn't do anything that was American, in that sense. I remember we would rebel against their isolation from the cultural and social community. We would say to them, "Why can't we be Americans, like other people? Why can't we have breakfast on Sunday, with pancakes (laughing) and eggs and hash brown potatoes?" And they wouldn't even know what hash brown potatoes were. That sort of thing. No, they were never assimilated, I would say. Possibly my mother in later years, but much later.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have friends who were in the same situation, whose parents were born in the old country?

WARD: No. Well, one family, but they were more assimilated than my family was. I guess maybe at the most, we knew two other families who had come originally from Italy, but who adapted, I think, much more to the American culture than my own family did.
Possibly this little incident would give you an idea. I think I have said that my father read a great deal. He was very fond of the Russians: Dostoevski, Tolstoy, Gogol, all the Russian writers. I was reading Crime and Punishment in Italian when I was thirteen years old. Sometimes my father felt a pull.... he felt that we should become more American. I remember he said one day, "I think you should take Luigino"--that was my brother--"to the baseball game." And I looked at him: "Baseball? Why should I go to a baseball game?" "Well, you're the oldest one, and you should take him to a baseball game; that's what all the Americans do." So he ordered me to take my brother to the baseball game and I had no interest whatsoever in a baseball game. But I took him. I remember I took Crime and Punishment along because I was fascinated with it. Here I was sitting in the stands at the old Seal Stadium with my book. I was reading Crime and Punishment while they were running around the field. My brother was removed too; I don't think he was too interested. I gather he liked the hotdogs and the general atmosphere. So that was one instance I can recall where my father thought maybe we should be "a little more American," as he put it. But that's about all.
In our eating habits we never got away from the business of having a cafe au lait in the morning, and then having a big meal at noon, and a light supper, soup and salad. We followed the pattern of the Italian, or European, tradition. Our meal hours were like that. We never had drinks before dinner. Those things only happened much later, when we were grown up and married and left home. We would go back to the house and have dinner with the family and then my father would serve cocktails, because this was the thing he had learned.

INTERVIEWER: They had changed by that time?

WARD: Yes, but it took an awfully long time. From 1909 or so when they came here, until 1934 when we started to bring our friends home, then they adapted gradually to the custom of serving apertifs and so on. Never before that.

INTERVIEWER: Did your father have different attitudes towards your brother than towards the girls?

WARD: Yes. I think he expected a great deal more from him, because he was the male. Yes. He gave him more attention. I think he expected so much of my brother that it never worked out; my brother could never live up to his expectations. There was always a great schism between them.
He gave me more attention because I was the oldest and the first-born, even though I was a female. He treated me better and gave me more opportunities than he did to my sisters.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned last time how you felt that by the time your brother came along he was really in a different world than your parents.

WARD: Yes, my brother was born in 1918. He grew up in a different world; the rules, morals, traditions after the first World War were different from what they had been before then.

INTERVIEWER: What specifically?

WARD: I think the society was beginning to change. The war had changed things, and the women's suffrage movement was gaining. Environmentally the cities were growing more and people were more open than they had been before. From 1920 to 1930 great changes were occurring in society and in the environment. Now, I don't know all this from my own experience, because after all I was only eight years old and my brother was just born; he was eight years old when the Depression hit in 1929. I can't explain it, but I feel he was growing up in a world that was not as strict as the world that I knew. In the family, however, this rigidness still prevailed.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned that your father was really strict with you.

WARD: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: What kinds of things would you have conflicts about?

WARD: Almost everything. We were never allowed to go out, or have "boyfriends"--that was unheard of--and we didn't feel free to invite people to the house. We didn't have any really close friends, because we were afraid that my father would....we were embarrassed by him, that was the thing. We were embarrassed by this man. Imagine: you bring your girlfriend to the house or your schoolmates and he starts giving them a lecture on Shakespeare or Leopardi or on Dante or something. That made us retiring. We were embarrassed; we didn't think he looked American. At that time we wanted to be very American, my sisters and I. My brother was too young yet. My father's looks, his appearance, was very stern; we thought he looked like a foreigner. (laughing) That's exactly how we felt. He wore a derby hat like Charles McCabe used to wear and these high white stiff collars; he never took to the American way of life. He always stood out in a crowd; you could spot him as being somebody from overseas.

INTERVIEWER: Even among other Italians?

WARD: Yes. Yes. A lot of them in North Beach always spoke of him as being (laughing) an especially different person. That embarrassed us. We were growing up and we wanted to be like our schoolmates and friends. We didn't like to have our father pointed out as being sort of bizarre.
I remember, for example, when I was sixteen, and my mother said, all right, I could have a party and invite my friends--I guess I

WARD: invited about eight of my schoolmates--all girls, no boys. My mother fixed the table in the dining room with little baskets and bonbons--that all seems so remote and useless now. Anyhow, I was so nervous, because the party was at two o'clock and I was hoping that everybody would leave by six o'clock, or five o'clock when my father got home, because I didn't want them to meet my father. I thought he might start to give them a lecture on how loose the Americans were, and why weren't we home at five o'clock. He was always very strict about our being home at five o'clock. We didn't have a key, of course, so we'd ring the bell and then he would press the buzzer to let us in. He'd be standing at the top of the stairs with his watch in his hand. He had one of those Walton watches on a chain. He'd be standing there, telling us, "You're one minute late." Or "two minutes late." That one image haunted me for years. So here I had my sixteenth birthday party, which was very bourgeois, following the tradition of those days. And I was so excited. At the same time, I wasn't having a good time; I kept looking at my watch--my first birthday present was a wristwatch.

INTERVIEWER: From your father?

WARD: From my mother and father. I don't know who picked it out. But anyhow, I had my new watch and I was saying to myself, "Gee, I hope they all go home by five o'clock, because then Papa will be home and he might interfere with the festivities."

INTERVIEWER: What happened?

WARD: As I recall, they all left before, or near, five o'clock. Anyhow, I didn't have to introduce my father, though most of them knew him by sight. But that was the difference in the culture, really. My family didn't become American in the sense I would have liked them to at the time. Later on I may have been a little glad that they didn't.

INTERVIEWER: Why? What specific things about their behavior pleased you?

WARD: When I went to the University of California my values began to undergo a change. I had my first contact with Socialist and Marxist literature through my philosophy courses. I became a devoted fan of Mencken and George Jean Nathan--the whole Mercury coterie. I loved the way they spoofed American conformity and its middle-class conservatism, both political and social, Main Street America. At that point, I began to see that it mattered not one whit that my father wore a derby hat or spoke with an Italian accent; that he and my mother didn't play bridge every Saturday night with the same old people. I realized that in maintaining their Italian heritage, they had enriched our lives and that it was okay to be different. By rejecting unimportant American customs--big Sunday breakfasts, eat and dress alike patterns, etc.,--my parents had given us knowledge and fluency in a beautiful language, culture and tradition that I was to appreciate more and more as I grew older and came to know my family and relatives in Italy.

INTERVIEWER: Were you allowed to visit other people's homes?

WARD: Not until we were in our late teens. Then I guess I started to go out to other Italian homes. One of my father's friends, Mr. Marzona--my mother's friend too--was a very fine cultured man, an Italian. He was a top-notch tailor in San Francisco. He lived with his sister, a widow, on Vallejo Street--his sister had married a Frenchman. He was a close friend of my family and we would go there for dinner, en famille at first. Then, as I grew up, Mr. Marzona's sister had a daughter who became a good friend of mine. I would invite her to our house for dinner--this was when I was about eighteen years old---and they would invite me to their house for dinner. Then I was allowed to go alone, because after all, it was only a few blocks away from the house.

We had other friends in the neighborhood, mostly Italian, and one American family with whom my father, my mother, and the whole family were very close. This American family loved my family, and loved its "Italianinity," if you can use that word. They liked my mother's food, they liked my father. They liked all of us. You couldn't really say that we adapted to them; they adapted to us. That was an old and beautiful friendship which went on over the years.

INTERVIEWER: Was that a business friendship?

WARD: No. This woman was the one who taught my mother English. When my mother and father moved to Bay Street, this American family lived next door. Then, when we acquired the property on Lombard Street and moved away, my mother and father rented the cottage in the back to this American family. So we grew up together, the whole lot of us. It was very nice.

INTERVIEWER: You've talked about how your father would sit you down and read stories. What kinds of things would you do with your mother?

WARD: When my father was at work, we would be with her. It would be after school. We'd do mostly cooking; she'd teach us how to make pasta. She'd roll it out, and we'd help her. We'd also have discussions with her as we grew older, maybe when I was fifteen and sixteen. We detected that the marriage was not a good one and we tried to talk to her to find out how she met my father, did she love him, and if she'd ever had any other affairs. She was marvelous. She said the only time she ever really loved anybody was when she fell in love with a lawyer in Italy. But he didn't believe in marriage--and this was a long time ago. "He thought that we should just live together," she said. "Well, I couldn't do that." So we'd ask her all these questions.

In those days, you didn't think of asking your mother if she was a virgin when she got married; we just assumed she was. She was very knowledgeable, even though she had no formal education. We would just talk about life. (laughing) She often told us not to get married, that it was a hell of a business unless you found

WARD: a man who was really compatible. And she thought that was very rare.

INTERVIEWER: So she had confidence that you could take care of yourself?

WARD: Yes. She also was very anti-religious, basically. She'd say, "There's no God, and don't let anybody tell you Jesus Christ is going to give you a better life in another world." So we'd say to her, "Why do we go to confession? Why do we go to church?" And she'd say, "Well, that's the way things are done." But she would not accept any religious concepts of any kind. She'd get very angry when I would say to her that the priest had inveighed against all the young people and said how terrible they were, things like that. She would reassure us.

INTERVIEWER: Was she interested in politics?

WARD: No. Except that she was very much for the underdog. She would read the paper and comment on what was going on. She always took a good position, a good, progressive position, I think almost instinctively, because certainly she wasn't well-read, in the sense that she had studied Marxism or anything. She had a socialist concept without really identifying it as such. She would argue with my father when some event occurred; she would take the side of the underdog all the time. This had an influence on all of us. She was very liberal.

INTERVIEWER: I didn't get the impression last time that she would argue with him, or stand up.

WARD: Oh yes, she would argue. But when it got rough , when she wanted to avoid a conflict of any kind, then she would retreat. She wouldn't say that he was right--never did I hear her say that--but she would just become silent or go out of the room and that was the end of it.

INTERVIEWER: I'd like to talk a little bit about your growing up. I was curious as to what kind of early ambitions you had for yourself.

WARD: I guess I was pretty romantic, in that I always wanted to be a writer, and travel, and get away from the family. I thought I'd like to be a journalist and that I wanted to go to college. But I didn't have fantasies about being a ballet dancer, for example. I knew my limitations. I always thought how wonderful it would be if I were musically inclined and that I would like to play an instrument, but I never gave it serious thought. Within what I conceive to be the range of my capabilities, I thought, "Well, I'd like to be a newspaperwoman."--knowing that I wasn't talented. Young people have fantasies many times about how they'd like to dance their way through life. I didn't have that; I just thought I'd like to, mostly, get away from the family and be a newspaperwomen and do things on my own. Oh, and I thought I didn't like the idea of marriage. I'd say to my mother, "I never want to get married." And she'd say, "You shouldn't take

WARD: that attitude just because your father and I don't get along." She would say, "Don't marry an Italian; marry an American, or a Jew; they're wonderful husbands," she always told me. So I grew up thinking I didn't want to get married. I didn't want to have much to do with men, as such. That's when I was around sixteen, seventeen, eighteen.

INTERVIEWER: Did your parents have ambitions for you, in terms of a career?

WARD: No. I think they wanted me to go to college, mostly because I was the oldest. They were relatively well-fixed, economically, when I started at the University of California. I gathered they would have liked that for all their children. As it turned out the Depression knocked that one in the head. I guess they thought in the end--if they ever thought about it at all; I suppose my mother did--"Someday she'll get married, and she'll have a good education." They did say it would be good to get training in some field, like a teacher, in case you ever got stuck and needed to get a job. But I didn't like teaching; I didn't like the whole concept of that. So it was pretty vague. I think they all thought, "Well, we have three girls and they'll all get married one of these days regardless of what we say for or against." They didn't really have a long view and neither did we, I don't think.

INTERVIEWER: There wasn't any kind of pressure for you to have a certain career?

WARD: Oh, no. There may have been, but there was never an opportunity to formalize or articulate it, because when I was seventeen years old I went to Cal. And in 1929 the Big Crash occurred, and my father lost all his money, his cash; everything caved in. Then it was very difficult in the ensuing years to keep up this front that he had set up for himself.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned that when you first went to school, you hadn't spoken English at all. Did you have a difficult time in school?

WARD: No. No, I never did. I remember the first day of school my mother took me; it was only a half block. It was the Sarah B. Cooper Elementary, at Jones and Lombard. It's still there. My mother brought me to the class and I remember I was very bewildered. The teachers were very kind but they were talking to me in English and I didn't know what the heck they were saying. My mother left me there but I didn't cry or feel lost in any way, and at two o'clock she was there to take me home again. All I remember is--I was five and a half--that it was rather difficult to understand what everybody was saying. But I didn't feel upset by it, and I think I learned quickly because it was never a traumatic experience.

INTERVIEWER: Were there other Italian-speaking children?

WARD: Yes, but they knew some English. I didn't know a word; I didn't even know how to say hello, as I can recall. But then I learned

WARD: quickly. I remember an incident when I was in the first grade. The teacher was saying, "Tell me the temperature of the water when you brush your teeth." And the kids raised their hands and some would say, "Hot!" and others would say, "Cold!" I raised my hand and said, "Tepid." You know, that was the Italian, tepido. I should have said lukewarm, but I didn't know how to say that; I said tepid. And she looked at me and she said, "What does tepid mean?" I always remember this because I was so proud. I was trying to say neither hot nor cold and I said, "In the middle." She laughed and told the class that was right; you should brush your teeth in tepid water or lukewarm. She said tepid was a good word too, but it was a little esoteric. That was fun.
No, I didn't have any problems that I remember. I made friends and I liked the children. I think I was pretty well adjusted, really.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of things were you interested in academically when you got older in high school?

WARD: Philosophy and history; English and poetry; languages. This reflected my background, I think. I didn't like math or algebra, but I liked all the literary things.

INTERVIEWER: Were there teachers who were important to you?

WARD: Yes. In grammar school I had a teacher who required that we write essays and short stories. I do believe that in those days we had a much better education. I remember that in eighth grade in elementary school I would write short stories about shipwrecks or other things, you know, that required some imagination, because I had never been in a shipwreck. I remember one story I wrote about a shipwreck; I got an A+ on it. I would try to get the most beautiful English expressions, and so on. And it seems to me that the demands and the discipline was much more strict than they are now. We'd have spelling contests and we all took Zaner and Palmer penmanship and we wrote beautifully flowing hands. That was one teacher whom I liked very much.
In high school I had my Italian teacher, Professor Zulberti, who was a family friend. He was a great teacher. We used to read poems in Italian. And then my English teacher at Galileo gave me a real understanding of Shakespeare in English in contrast to my father's teaching, which had been given to me in Italian. Even though in high school we didn't have the philosophy, ethics, or logic courses which I subsequently had in college, some of my teachers in high school began to open me up to what you could learn. I remember one of my teachers in English mentioned Mencken, the iconoclast. So then I started to buy the American Mercury.

INTERVIEWER: To read Mencken?

WARD: And George Jean Nathan. I used to love to read his caustic comments on the theater and drama. That is mostly what I was so taken with in those years, when I was about seventeen. Then I

WARD: went to college, but that's how I got an orientation, I think. My father had about three male friends who would be invited over to dinner about once a week. They would get into terrific political arguments and all of us would listen, you know, at the dinner table. They would shout and talk about what was going on in the world, and how the Bolsheviks were doing this and that. Some of my father's friends were socialists but my father was very erratic [politically]. One Saturday night he'd be great, on the socialist side, and the next Saturday night he'd be conservative. He was very volatile and changeable. They'd argue about the post-war [World War I] trends in Europe, what had happened to the peace at Versailles, what kind of burdens it was placing on the German people, how the mark was going up, how the Italians had been made to suffer because of the Versailles Treaty, and what was going to happen. They were predicting all those dire things. So we got an idea of what was going on.

INTERVIEWER: Did your father fight in the First World War?

WARD: No. I actually think that one of the reasons he left Italy, though he never said it, was to avoid serving in the Italian armed forces and certainly not in this country. In the First World War, he had already had three children, and in 1918 the the fourth one was born, my brother.

INTERVIEWER: Was there much interest in the Sacco and Vanzetti case?

WARD: Yes. I remember my father talked about Sacco and Vanzetti; he was for them because they were Italians, you see. Maybe I'm doing him an injustice; he probably at that time thought that they were being maligned and persecuted. He also expressed an interest in the Mooney case, but I think he thought Mooney was guilty, which is ironical when you think about my husband's and my own subsequent activity in relation to Mooney. However, he was all right on Sacco and Vanzetti.

INTERVIEWER: Was there anything comparable to the Palmer Raids on the west coast? Were any of your parents' friends affected by anti-alien sentiment?

WARD: Yes, there was some of that. I know that my father was so angry when they'd call us dagos and wops. Then all his pride in Italy and in being Italian would come to the fore. There was also a period that I recall, but most vaguely, when there was talk of the Black Hand. I suppose that was the Mafia of those days. People would say that if you didn't look out, the Black Hand would get you. These were the terrorists and also the criminal element, who may or may not have been Italian. They didn't use the term Mafia; all I remember is the Black Hand. My family felt that the Black Hand was a terrible organization; whether it was Italian or not, it was something that they didn't approve of.

My father was a frustrated writer. He told my husband many years later that he would have liked to have been a journalist of the

WARD: first rank. I suppose that's why he read so much and had such great admiration for the fine writers of his time and before his time.

INTERVIEWER: Did the students in high school take much interest in politics?

WARD: No. It was pretty conventional. I don't recall anything political.

INTERVIEWER: You said when you got to Berkeley . . .

WARD: Oh, that's when it started . . .(laughing)

INTERVIEWER: You said you were still wearing bobby socks . . .

WARD: Yes, and a navy blue pleated skirt and a middy blouse. It was a little different from my peers, I'll say that. It didn't take me long to change to a pink sweater, a white skirt, and saddle shoes.

INTERVIEWER: You were right at home at Galileo, but then when you went to Berkeley there was such a difference?

WARD: Yes. I found that I was very immature. I think I realized it pretty quickly, that I was relatively immature in comparison to my fellow students. I wasn't at all sophisticated; I was very naive. I didn't know much about boys; you could tell it from my behavior, from my open face without any makeup. (pause)

INTERVIEWER: Had your mother given you any kind of sexual training?

WARD: No. I didn't know a thing about sex. I figured out the basic things from what I had learned in high school in my senior year, and from my reading. But no, we never had any discussions about sex. She didn't speak of it and in the rare times she referred to it, she didn't speak of it as though she enjoyed it. She never sat with us and said, "Well, this is what happens when you have a baby," or, "This is how you make a baby." She never discussed that. I guess we just picked it up sooner or later. She did make references to the sex act, in the sense that she didn't enjoy it, and my father certainly never did anything to make it pleasant. This she said to us later. When I think back on it, there were allusions that would indicate that she didn't enjoy it, and that my father was pretty rough with her. I think she said once or twice that she didn't think it was fun at all.
You know, when I went to school, young people in those days weren't as developed as they are now. I think they matured much later, both male and female. Another thing, I was seventeen and most of my peers were eighteen.

INTERVIEWER: You had advanced a year?

WARD: I had skipped two grades when I was in elementary school. I remember that my mother and father talked about that; they didn't know if it was such a good idea. But the teacher said, "She should be in the third grade, instead of the second or first." I skipped two grades at that time and that put me into college a year or a little less than a year ahead. I was younger but not by very much, nine months to a year. But I always had the feeling that the people in my freshman class were older and more mature than I was. (laughing) But I suppose I eventually caught up with them.

INTERVIEWER: How did you learn about menstruation? What was your reaction to "becoming a woman?" Did your mother prepare you in any way? If not, where did you get your information?

WARD: I didn't menstruate until I was sixteen. My mother did talk to me about menstruation precisely because I was so much later than my peers. In fact, she took me to the doctor for an examination and was assured that I was okay. It was at that time that we had our only conversation on the subject of anything relating to sex. My mother discussed this with me on a strictly medical basis. It was not until many years later that she discussed, for example, the subject of abortion, in which she was a staunch believer, having in fact had at least one.
When I finally menstruated I was elated and couldn't understand why it was referred to, even in those days, as "the curse." I had no problems with cramps. In my time, the free and easy referral to the subject of menstruation which we have today was simply unheard of. Ads on the merits of one tampon against another would have caused a scandal, not to mention all the taboos associated with the menstrual cycle: don't swim, bathe or shower the first two days, and above all, never discuss your period with a member of the opposite sex. Otherwise, I didn't associate the menstrual period or cycle with "becoming a woman"--I guess I didn't know I was entering that exalted state!

INTERVIEWER: What kind of activities were you involved in when you were at Berkeley? Were they mainly academic?

WARD: Yes. I also went out for sports; I took horseback riding, bow and arrow, and then the general things that you do like swimming. But no competitive sports. These were all sidelines; mostly my activities were in going to gatherings and conferences that dealt with academic matters.
First of all, I didn't live in Berkeley; I always lived at home during my whole college years, which I realized shortly thereafter and over the years put a big crimp into things. I commuted every day and didn't have the same access to all the activities that were going on campus, because I had to come home. I was a good student; that was the first thing I had to do, my homework. I never stayed overnight at Cal; but I would stay over for events in the Greek theater, plays or some musical event, like the appearance of Antonia Brica, the woman conductor who was trying in those days to make herself accepted--I was looking at her on

WARD: TV the other night, this woman of seventy-five or so, and I remember when she conducted a symphony at the Greek theater--I would stay over for events of that nature, and my friends would too. There were four Italian gals, all from North Beach, who were going to Cal. We all lived at home so we would come home at eleven or twelve o'clock at night after attending these events. Once in a while we'd go to a dance in the gym at Cal, but we didn't have much social life. No boyfriends.

INTERVIEWER: You were starting to say something about the teachers who were really important to you in college?

WARD: Yes. Professor Adams, George P. Adams, was my philosophy teacher. I had read a lot about socialism and so on, because this friend of my father, Mr. Marzona, and his sister, the widow, were great socialists and we would talk about this at night when I'd go over there for dinner. We'd argue about Russia, communism, the U.S. role in the world. Then when I went to college, I took courses in philosophy and I read Marx and Engels. George P. Adams was a great professor because he was very liberal. There were no restrictions on books because they might have thoughts that were not for young people, even though the university was not progressive at that time--this was in 1927 to 1931. In the later years people like Lou Goldblatt and Aubrey Grossman and others began to come on campus.

I took a lot of Russian literature courses; I was in the humanities. Those were great because I had already read a great deal of Russian literature. I had learned from reading Gorky and Dostoevski of the plight of the Russian people in the years in which they wrote, and that Russia was a downtrodden country. So I was really rooting for them, from the very beginning. When people say to me, "How did you become a radical? Did your parents....?" No. I read my way into it.

Then I was fortunate enough to meet people in college through the son of the American family that lived next door to us. They had a son who was about five years older than I. He made contact with some of the socialists at Cal and introduced them to me. Before Cal, we were just close friends; we didn't do things together except when he would come to our house for dinner. It was a family thing. Then he went to college at the same time I did. His family was very poor and he had been doing all sorts of work, hard labor jobs, but he was a very bright guy. His parents could not afford to send him to college, so my father paid his first year's tuition to go to Cal. My father liked him; he liked the whole family and we were so close. So George went to Cal and he became a very brilliant student. His major was English. My father followed his career and helped him financially and morally and encouraged him all the time.

INTERVIEWER: He was from a working-class, poor family?

WARD: Yes. He worked as a plumber's apprentice for a while before he got into college. Then, when he went into college--he was ahead of me because he was older than I--on weekends, when he would come

WARD: home to see his family--he lived over in Berkeley--well, we would talk and so on. By that time he had made friends in a more liberal area than I would have, and he introduced me into that scene.

My professors at Cal, all of whom I liked very much, were: George P. Adams; Ira B. Cross in Economics, a splendid lecturer; Alexander Kaun, who was my Russian literature professor; Ben Lehman and Willard Durham, in the English Department. Now, George was Ben Lehman's protege. All these professors became important in my life because they were important in George's life, and he had a social connection with them. I recall that George would say to Lehman and Kaun, "You should come over some Saturday night and have dinner at Mr. and Mrs. Gizzi's house, Angelina's"--they used to call me Angelina--"mother and father; that's quite an experience." So George would go to my mother and he'd say, "Mrs. Gizzi, do you think....?" And he'd also ask my father: "I'd love to bring Professor Lehman over, and professor so and so. They'd love to meet you. I've told them how you are so fond of Shakespeare," and so forth.

I have these memories of Saturday nights when they would come to our house for dinner. Not that many times, maybe three or four, but they were great occasions. My mother would cook a great dinner, and we'd set the table in the dining room, with the white napery, the crystal and the silver. Here these professors would come and my mother would serve them these great dinners as only she knew how to fix. Then, after dinner, they would all start to discuss with my father, you know, Dostoevski and all. My father would read to them in Italian; he'd say, "This sounds better in Italian than it does in English." So Professor Lehman would say, "Read me something from Othello or Hamlet in Italian." This would go on until twelve o'clock at night, which was a great tribute to the evening because my father always went to bed at seven o'clock during the week. All this influenced me. Then they'd get into political discussions.

INTERVIEWER: Would you participate in those?

WARD: Very timidly. I was in such great awe of these great minds. (laughing) They weren't all that great, always. But Adams remained very great. Lehman--later on I came to see the flaws in his....They all had a great influence on me.

Another professor whom I liked very much and who gave me a real sense of being Italian, was the professor who taught the Divine Comedy. At Cal I took the Divine Comedy in Italian, which was a whole year. That was great. You know, when you study the Divine Comedy, you study life, you study politics; it's a different era, but it relates to man in our times, too. So I think those were the big events of my years, from seventeen to twenty-one, when I graduated.

INTERVIEWER: When did you first become active in politics? Was it after graduation?

WARD: Yes. On campus at that time there wasn't much. People like Lou Goldblatt were down at UCLA and they came up the year after I

WARD: graduated. They used to give speeches at Sather Gate, but I wasn't there anymore.
I became really active in politics on my own, expressing my anger at things. When I was around twenty-two, I came out of college and it was hard to get a job; I wasn't trained. I dreamed of going to work for the [San Francisco] Chronicle but who's going to hire a little university graduate who didn't know anything about the newspaper business? I didn't go for a fifth year at Cal into teaching or social service; I just quit. I mean I got my A.B., and then I went to business school for about eight months, just to get a skill so I could get a job. My family by that time had really lost a lot of money in the Depression, and things were getting rough.
In my reading and following things politically I started to become very aware of the rise of Hitler--that would have been anywhere from 1931 or 1932 on. Then I would read in the paper that there was going to be a demonstration downtown against the German Consulate, and I'd go and march. I didn't know anybody. This girlfriend of mine and I, we would go down there and march around the block with all the dissidents, and show our disapproval of Nazism, which wasn't even then called Nazism, but we marched against the rising fascism. Then I finally got a job with the Bank of America in 1933.

INTERVIEWER: Was that your first job?

WARD: Yes. It was in the International Banking Department. I was hired at this great salary of $65.00 a month, because I could speak Italian and I knew enough Spanish and enough French to work with the foreign currencies, which didn't require a great brain, but at least I could talk about lire and francs and so on and figure out the difference in relationship to the dollar. I worked in the office at Market and New Montgomery.
By that time things were getting very tense in San Francisco; the longshoremen were starting to organize and all. That's when I started to become active and very interested in communism and socialism. I'd go out and buy the Western Worker and read that. I was so naive I'd bring it in the bank and I'd be sitting there, eating my lunch and reading the Western Worker. It wasn't only naivete; there was kind of a, "Well, I'll show you guys. Why shouldn't I read the Western Worker, even though I work for this financial institution?"
The conditions were terrible in the bank. Here I was a single person, making $65.00 a month, and men with families were making, say, $150.00 a month. You could hear all this griping around you. Meanwhile, the unrest that was being created by the water-front problems was coming to a head. The more that happened, the more intensely I became interested in what was going on in the labor movement. I guess it reached its apex when the General Strike came along. I was reading everything I could put my hands on. Of course, my heart and everything were with the longshoremen. My mother was also; I'd come home at night from the bank and we'd talk about it. My father too said, "Yes, those poor fellows, the way they're treated like dogs. They deserve more," but he didn't know that they were going to carry it as far

WARD: as a General Strike. Well, when the General Strike came, that caused such consternation among the populace, especially people like my family. My mother was for them; she said, "Good for them. It's time." At the bank, right there on Market Street, they were all against the longshoremen.

INTERVIEWER: Every person you worked with?

WARD: It was just deplorable. If they weren't totally against them, they were so frightened that they wouldn't open their mouths. They would just say, "Well, I guess they have a point. But they're going too far. Look at what they're doing: closing down hospitals, no milk for the people, grocery stores...." The few people who were for them would say, "Yes, but...." Now remember, these were white-collar workers.
So anyway, the day came when the two longshoremen were killed. And they had this big parade up Market Street. Well, everybody was really tense. And I said to my boss, "By God, when they march up Market Street, I'm going to lay down my pen, and I'm going out in the street, and stand there and pay tribute to them; I'm not going to work." And I did. As soon as I could hear the muffled drums coming up Market Street, I said to my boss, "Mr. Carroll, you can dock me, but I'm going out there and stand at attention while they pass." He said, "You're going to lose your job." And I said, "I don't care." I did care, but I went out there, and I stood there for the two hours it took for this great parade to pass; it was the most spectacular thing I've ever seen. I looked down Market Street and I could see Harry Bridges--I didn't even know who it was--but I could see this man, all by himself, with his cap, his longshore cap, his hickory shirt, his black pants, and the white cap they wear. Behind him were these two coffins and then these muffled drum-beats, and then for as far as the eye could see, from sidewalk to sidewalk, masses of longshoremen in their black pants, their hickory shirts and their white caps with their hooks hanging from their belt. And they were coming on and on. It was the most fantastic thing I've even seen. It was greater for me than the Mooney parade, when Mooney was freed. And when they passed the bank my co-workers inside the bank were still fiddling around with their adding machines. Then when it was over I came back in the bank and they didn't do anything to me. They scolded me some, the big manager of the bank said I just better watch my P's and Q's and what did I accomplish by going out there and standing and watching. I said I needed to do it for myself. So that's how I became radical.

INTERVIEWER: I wanted to clarify some things about your work situation, and your work history. How did you get your first job with the Bank of America?

WARD: My brother-in-law worked for the Bank of America and my sister worked for the bank. I probably heard through my brother-in-law that there were openings; in the years of the Depression they seldom came. Apparently the bank needed people in the International

WARD: Banking section who had a command of languages, and they were able to get people for very low salaries because so many job opportunities were not available in those days.
I think probably my brother-in-law said, "Go to the bank, to the main office. They're taking applications." I think he told me where to go, or I read it in the paper. At any rate, I went to the bank and I don't think there was any other contact made, except when they asked me for references. Then I mentioned my family name. My father was rather well known in the old Bank of Italy; he was an investor in the Bank of Italy. I have no doubt that probably had something to do with my getting the job.

INTERVIEWER: Were there a lot of Italian people that worked there?

WARD: Yes, especially in the international banking, people who knew a few languages and were acquainted with foreign exchange matters--not that I was too acquainted with foreign exchange matters, but the Italian employees knew about a lire, they knew what a franc was, and many were bilingual. That had something to do with it because many of the bank's clients were of foreign extraction or native born Italians.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have much contact with Giannini?

WARD: I think my father knew him. I know my father knew him, now that I think back, but I personally never met him. I'd heard of his daughter, Ann Giannini, who later became Ann Giannini Hoffman; she married Biff Hoffman, a big football player from Stanford. She is even today, I believe, still on the board of directors of the bank--an honorary member, as it were, because now whe must be a good eighty-five years of age. We knew that L.M. Giannini was the brother of A.P. Giannini; this was common knowledge in North Beach, about the banking family and how they had started from scratch and built the Bank of Italy, which later became the Bank of America. In fact, you go in any branch of the Bank of America today and there's a picture of old A.P.

INTERVIEWER: Was there any kind of feeling that because he was Italian he should treat his employees who were also Italian better?

WARD: Oh, no.

INTERVIEWER: Was there any kind of expectations of that?

WARD: At the time that I went to work for them there were many more Italians in the top echelons. Today there just aren't that many. In those days, the hierarchy of the bank was primarily Italian. The Bacigalupis were involved, and the Pierottis, the Ferreris, and the diGrazias; it was a much closer unit, Italian-wise, than it is today. It hasn't been that Italian in personnel since those early days, let's put it that way.

INTERVIEWER: The fact that there were some cultural ties between the employees and the employers didn't make any difference?

WARD: No. When I think back on it, a lot of our family friends--what family friends we had, because my father was very remote--but the ones we knew in the neighborhood, and had even acquaintanceship with, were employed at the Bank of America--the Bank of Italy, at that time.

INTERVIEWER: When you first got the job, did you expect that you would keep it a long time?

WARD: No. I looked upon it as a transitory thing that I hoped I could get away from. I didn't like it, even from the moment I went to work there. But it was essential.

INTERVIEWER: A transition to what?

WARD: Oh, I don't know. I had very vague notions that maybe something better would turn up, or that I would go back to college and decide on something more specific in the way of what I wished to do, or maybe that I could write. It was something to tide me over until I found something that I thought would be better. Mostly I had these ideas that I'd like to work for a newspaper. But meanwhile I had to earn my living.

INTERVIEWER: Could you describe the work itself?

WARD: It was very tedious. It was handling foreign transactions, bills of lading, for big shipments to foreign countries. The letters of credit would go from the Bank of Italy--the Bank of America it was by that time--to German banks, French banks, Italian banks, Greek banks. You had to learn what they called the correspondent banks in these various countries. Then, for example, shipments of coffee coming in would come through with letters of credit from banks in foreign countries like South America; other items would come from Japan. We'd translate the yen into American dollars, the franc into American dollars. If the shippers from this country were shipping something to foreign countries, we'd translate the American dollar into the foreign exchange of that country where the shipment was going.

INTERVIEWER: Were most of the people that you worked with women?

WARD: No, men. A man of British origin was in charge and then an Irishman was in charge in my department. There were two men in charge and I did all the secretarial work. I also waited on customers who came to the window with their bills of lading. They would usually come in at four-thirty or quarter to five in the afternoon. And sometimes we had to work long hours overtime, of course with no pay. This drove me frantic because at this time I was getting very interested in going to meetings that I had read about in the paper, or to demonstrations that were coming up and so on. Sometimes I'd have to work until seven o'clock.

INTERVIEWER: And you wouldn't have any advance notice?

WARD: Oh, no. These big-shot businessmen would come in at a quarter to five with their big bundle of bills of lading, covering shipments which had been put on the ship, and the ship was sailing out through the Golden Gate; we were supposed to get these all out so they'd get to the next port of call at the proper time, and so that the foreign exchange rates would be in accord with the date of shipment. The shippers tried to time their shipments to be advantageous to them. Oh, it was terrible in the bank in those days; you never, ever had any advance warning; you were just expected to stay there and work and that was it.

INTERVIEWER: So the people you were working with were mainly the two men who were your supervisors?

WARD: Yes. In the department there were just the two of them and neither of them spoke any foreign language at all. Every morning I would get to work--I think it was about 8:30 a.m. I had to be there--I would call the central office and get the exchange rates for that day. They would tell me the value of the London pound, the French franc, the Greek drachma, and so on. I'd write it all down so that when the bank's clients, who were trading with these various countries, would call in to get the latest exchange rate for the lire, the franc, or the pound, Sterling--we could tell them, "Today on the London market, so and so...., on the French bourse, it's so and so...." That's how it went.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have much contact with the other people working in the bank?

WARD: Yes. You see, it was a branch bank, the one at Market and New Montgomery, which was more advantageous in some ways; I had more access to different types of bank workers. If I had been in the main international banking department, I would have been where my brother-in-law was, where they just dealt in foreign exchange and there was no contact with the public. This branch office had, I would say, about eight tellers--you know, it was a big branch; it was right across from the old Palace Hotel. They had many customers from south of Market, from the industrial plants, etc. I had contact with the tellers, the secretaries who worked for the cashiers, and the secretary to the manager of the branch. And the loan department was there, so I had contact with the people who worked in that department. I would say there were about thirty employees there at that time, in that particular branch. Upstairs was the Capital Company, which was a subsidiary of the Bank of America; it handled all the rentals and real estate items and investments for the bank. Well, that's later; that's where I was transferred after I was fired from downstairs. I was <u>transferred</u>; they didn't actually fire me.

INTERVIEWER: Did you socialize with any of the people you worked with?

WARD: No, they thought I was a little odd. We were friendly and we liked each other but none of them had had any college education and they thought my interests were a little peculiar. The women in the bank would go out to lunch, and when it was somebody's birthday they would take them out to lunch and buy them a corsage, and this sort of thing. I didn't socialize with them very much. I didn't participate in their activities; they belonged to clubs, women's clubs and groups and solidarities.

INTERVIEWER: Solidarities?

WARD: Those are women's religious groups where they get together in the evening and play bridge and do a little charity work for the church. I wasn't part of that. Most of the women were Irish-American, and they were very religious; they all observed Ash Wednesday. They would come to work with the ashes on their forehead, having gone to Mass; they observed all the religious holidays. On Good Friday the bank let everybody who was of Catholic persuasion have three hours off to go to the Stations of the Cross.

INTERVIEWER: It was only the top echelon that was Italian?

WARD: In this particular branch they were mostly Irish. I don't think there were any other Italians except me. But there was a great bond with the Italians in the bank, the upper-echelon people; the Irish and the Italians were always very close.
Occasionally I'd go out with the women. You know, it got to be embarrassing; they'd ask me out to lunch. Most of us were poor, so that we didn't go out to lunch, we brown bagged it. But they would ask me to eat with them in the women's lounge, which was a pretty scruffy place. I was always interested in going out to the bookstores and buying books if I could afford them on my salary. I liked to read on my lunch hour and I didn't want to get too friendly and become involved in social activities or bank affairs like the annual picnic or bridge tournaments. But I didn't feel very close to any of them.
The other thing was that at this period I also got a job ushering at the San Francisco Opera House, which was a non-paying job, of course. I got this through a printer who printed the programs of the opera and the symphony--the Pisani Publishing Company. Mr. Pisani was a friend of my father. One day when I was walking home from work at the bank--I always walked from Market and Montgomery to our home on Lombard Street--I stopped by and I started talking to Mr. Pisani. I said, "Say, what are the chances of my getting a job as an usher at the Opera House?" He said, "Are you a music student?" And I said, "No, but I play the piano and I've studied the piano and I love music and I can't afford to go, but I'd love to be an usher." So he said, "I'll see what I can do." The next week he called me and said yes, I could go to the Opera House as an usher. And that was the thing that bugged me at the bank. We had to be at the Opera House at seven o'clock for the performances and overtime work would interfere. Sometimes I'd go without dinner if I worked

WARD: until 6:30 p.m., which was an hour and a half unpaid overtime. Then I would dash up to the Opera House and stand at my post and do my job.

INTERVIEWER: They wouldn't pay you at all?

WARD: Oh, no. This was quite a privilege.

INTERVIEWER: No, I meant at the bank. I thought at first you meant they wouldn't pay you time and a half.

WARD: Oh, no. They wouldn't pay us anything. It was just--period. Your hours were from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., and I think your lunch hour was either a half-hour or forty-five minutes. Too bad if something happened where you had to work overtime; you worked overtime and that was it, period. Many a time I worked an hour, an hour and a half and never got reimbursed for it in any way. This was one of the big complaints of the workers in the bank, one which made it possible in the beginning to overcome their fears of the employer and join the union.

INTERVIEWER: Did that happen to people who were tellers as well?

WARD: No. The tellers would close their windows at three or four o'clock. I don't remember what the hours were then, but they would close well in advance of five o'clock so they had time to balance their books and their cash. I remember they would walk out of there at five sharp, and there I was sitting at this typewriter, getting out this work that had to meet a certain ship.

INTERVIEWER: Were you still living at home?

WARD: Yes. I always lived at home until I got married. This was traditional among the Italian women--or, as we were known at that time, the Italian girls.

INTERVIEWER: Were you contributing to the support of your family?

WARD: At first my father didn't want me to, but then when he lost his job, when he was fired from California Packing Corporation, the family went through a period of real [hardship], where we had to try to make ends meet. So yes, I only earned $65.00, but I think I used to give my mother about half of it. Of course, she always did all my laundry and I took most of my meals at home; she fixed my lunch and so on. It was a very good arrangement as far as I was concerned, as far as she was concerned, and the whole family.

INTERVIEWER: How did your family adjust to that?

WARD: Not very well. My father never did adjust to it. He was very bitter. But he was also a very enterprising guy; after he got over the shock of it, he took his examinations for insurance broker. He became an insurance broker and he sold insurance.

INTERVIEWER: Did he feel ashamed?

WARD: Yes, yes. But mostly bitterness, terrible bitterness. He was torn, you see; he wouldn't blame the company. He was such a....he didn't recognize that these were the forces of the capitalist system at work. It's difficult; he went into a period where he wouldn't discuss it with anybody. He wouldn't talk; you know, he had these silent periods. And his disposition, which was always very volatile, changed; he became very dour. I guess it reflected his shame, that he fell from this top position into virtually nothing. But he did pretty well as a broker; he managed to keep the house.

INTERVIEWER: When you were working at the bank and living at home, did you still have domestic responsibilities at home?

WARD: No, I never had any. My mother was a dear. I just got up in the morning, had my breakfast, and if I wanted to pack a lunch, she packed it for me. (laughing gently) And that was it. I never had to do things like make my bed or any domestic chores--she was wonderful.

INTERVIEWER: Was there much conflict with your family after you got involved in union activities?

WARD: Yes. But not with my mother--except that she worried that I'd get into some situation where I'd be arrested. "What would the neighbors say?" What effect would it have on my father, who was not at all sympathetic? I had a bad time with my father, because of his job at Cal. Pack. and the notoriety that might ensue from my activities which were becoming pretty well publicized: when I was fired from the bank, for example. And then, our family was very argumentative. We discussed things at the dinner table at night, politics especially. When we weren't discussing cultural events, we were discussing politics. The older I grew, and the more involved I became in politics and in union activities, the more the family conversation reverted to those subjects. We no longer discussed books or operas; we discussed politics: Mussolini and the Spanish Civil War. My father would become very irate with me, scream at me, and threaten to throw me out of the house. I would just get up and go to my meetings.

INTERVIEWER: I thought you said that when he'd visited Italy, he's been treated so poorly that his politics changed?

WARD: Yes, that amazed all of us when he came back. He told this saga of his treatment by the Fascists, but after a few months he reverted to his old stance: a great pride in Italy. What a great contribution it had made to world culture and world civilization. He kept downplaying the role of the Fascists and Mussolini. I would argue with him and say, "But you told me that they threatened you with castor oil, and you had to go to the American Consul to get protection to bring you from the

WARD: train to your hotel, to your home town." He would brush that off and say, "That was an incident." "Fine thing, to be called a renovated louse!" Then we'd get in these awful fights. He was very irascible. He would raise his voice and I'd raise mine, and the rest of the family would try to shush us up so the neighbors wouldn't hear. Then finally I'd get very angry and I'd walk out. If I didn't have a meeting to attend, I'd go up to my room, lock the door, and read or write letters or study Marx! The next morning he'd act as though nothing had happened and then the same thing would go on again.
I never brought people home to the house. No, I didn't; very rarely did I bring anybody to dinner. I tried to fix it so that I'd bring somebody to the house only if I knew he wouldn't be home. It was a bitter period, and not very pleasant.

INTERVIEWER: Where do you think you got the nerve to challenge your father?

WARD: To a large extent, as Mama often said, I am my father's daughter. My temperment, personality is volatile and impetuous. Impetuosity fosters courage , you know. My mother and sisters were constantly amazed at what I said and "got away with." As with many tyrants, my father must have recognized and even secretly approved the fact that I was not a mouse. In fact, in his rare, lighter moods he called me "dinamite" [dynamite] with a gleam of approval in his eye.

INTERVIEWER: Were the children ever punished? Who punished them?

WARD: Yes, we were punished when very young--three to ten or eleven. Usually with a whack of the ruler on our hands which we obediently held out on command. My father inflicted the punishment on his return from work. Nightly, he would inquire of my mother what our behavior had been that day. A negative report would result in appropriate punishment--deprivation of dessert for minor offenses and whacks with the ruler for more serious offenses.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever think of moving out?

WARD: Yes. (sighing) But then I guess my upbringing and that whole Italian concept of leaving my mother there to face this situation, and my sisters, who were younger than I, and my brother....I had a feeling that, well, I'd put up with it a little longer. I never did leave, until I got married.

INTERVIEWER: Were your sisters living at home, too?

WARD: Yes. And my brother; we all lived at home. You see, this was a culture that was really Old World. Italian girls did not leave home until they were married. Now my sister was married before I was; she was married in 1934. She did the same thing; she never left home. Sometimes I'd say to her, "I bet you're getting married to get out of this mess." But she said no, that wasn't the case. That is an enduring marriage--it's still going on. Nevertheless, that's how it was.

INTERVIEWER: I bet it's true that people did get married just to move out.

WARD: Oh, sure. Of course.

INTERVIEWER: When you started getting more involved with union activities, how did that effect your social life?

WARD: I never had much of a social life. When I became involved with union activities, I finally had a social life. (laughing) I met all sorts of interesting people and I had dates. Instead of going out with these old Italian fuddy-duddies in North Beach who were in a way friends of the family, I now was going out with interesting men and women and having a great time. That increased my independence; I no longer paid any attention to my father's demands that he know where I was going and who with. Imagine--with me at that age, twenty-five or twenty-four--and he was still wanting to dominate all the women in the family. Which he did all his life.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel that he successfully dominated any of your sisters?

WARD: Oh, yes, my youngest sister definitely. She never married and she still lives in the old house on Lombard Street--a very nice old house, but she won't leave it. It's a nine-room house and she lives in it all by herself because that's where Papa was and she grew up in it. Oh, she has friends and a job, but I think her life was and still is utterly dominated by my father.

INTERVIEWER: He didn't want her to leave?

WARD: Oh, no. When my mother died, all of us left except Maria--she is my youngest sister--when all of us were married, she was the only one left. She had a number of boyfriends and she fell in love with guys, but she never got away. And she took care of my father until he died, after my mother died.
A sociologist investigating North Beach Italian families would find that this was a very prevalent pattern. It's not unusual at all. You see, we're looking at this removed about thirty-five years. Thirty-five years ago this was quite common among Italian families. Particularly first generation Italian families. We didn't think it was odd at all. I did only when I became involved in all this political and union activity.

INTERVIEWER: Did your father disapprove of marriage in general?

WARD: No, no. I think he was just a typical Italian male chauvinist pig. That's all I can tell you. In addition to being an MCP, he was Italian, which made it worse, as far as his attitude toward women was concerned. I noticed this when I went to Italy, among my male cousins: wonderful people, but even the ones who were members of the Communist Party of Italy and still are today, their attitude toward women was simply not to be believed.

INTERVIEWER: It didn't correlate in any way with having progressive political ideas?

WARD: No. I'm not only speaking about my male relatives in Italy; Italian men generally have this attitude. The ones who don't are few and far between. I have male cousins in Italy who have been underground in the Resistance and have performed acts of heroism. I love them and believe they are great progressive people, but at my first introduction to them in Italy when I arrived there with my husband, I was utterly shocked. My cousin, whom I love and respect--who received the highest vote as the Communist Party candidate for the position of county supervisor in his province of Frosinone--met our boat in Naples when my husband and I took our first trip to Italy. We drove up to the family home, through this beautiful valley, and mind you, this is the first time I'd ever seen him or his wife, who is a school teacher. He's a lawyer. We stopped at Anzio and they showed me the Italian-American Cemetery, and Monte Cassino, where the Germans had attacked the American forces. Then we get to my father's house--this was my father's house we were visiting. He was the only son of this family. We get there finally in this hill town. Sancte drives the car up, parks it, and he yells out, "Michelangela! Raffaela!" I turned to my husband saying, "None of my cousins is named Michelangela or Raffaela." Here these two young girls came running down the marble staircase of this old family home. Sancte says to them, "Here, take the luggage." They were the servants--I think one of them was sixteen and the other one was fourteen. He had no more idea how it affected me. I had grown up in an Italian-American family, in a strict and male chauvinist environment, but when I saw this.... And my husband said, "Nothing doing," and he picked up the suitcases. Sancte said, "No, no, Raffaela and Michelangela will take them." We went up the stairs finally, got the luggage up, and his mother, Sancte's mother, and his father were waiting for us at the top of the stairs, saying, "Benvenuti! Welcome to Italy!"
Then the whole thing opened up to me: it was the same as in my home in San Francisco--the domination of the male over the female. The men spoke and, even though they were progressives, Communists, had been through all this hell during World War II, had defied the Nazis and the Fascists, and had done such a wonderful job, their attitude toward women was from the Middle Ages. I thought, it's just like Papa at home. And I was torn, literally, because I was so fond of this cousin of mine. I looked up to him because of his progressive ideas, his politics, and took pride in the role he was playing in post-war Italy. His sister had gone through the German lines--fifteen years old--disguised as an old woman, so she could locate the German machine gun nest which was firing on the advancing American forces. They filled us in with all these stories about their role during the war, and they were so great. Still, the relationship between male and female was incomprehensible to me.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find that men you came into contact with in political activities in the United States were more progressive in their attitude towards women?

WARD: Yes, I think the American men were. They still had great bands of male chauvinism in their personality make-up (laughing); I think it's inevitable. Human progress in that field has not been very good.

INTERVIEWER: Even within the Communist Party?

WARD: Oh, yes, even within the Communist Party. I used to have discussions with Caroline [Decker Gladstein] about this. We'd talk about our husbands, and how much better they were than our fathers, but still, how far behind they were. Now, in terms of the women's liberation and consciousness-raising that has occurred in the last decade, you can see that they are still very far behind. I know that in meetings I've been in, I've had to make concessions--and that riles me.

INTERVIEWER: In political meetings?

WARD: Yes, yes. In political meetings and in trade union meetings. I think oftentimes that the talents of women were not recognized, even in progressive unions.

INTERVIEWER: What kinds of concessions?

WARD: Well, when you were involved in a discussion over policy or theory and--it's hard to explain--you knew you were right, but you were worn down by the weight of the male argument, even though you knew it was wrong. Eventually they would admit it, perhaps six months later.
Then there was always what prevailed in the election of officers: women were seldom elected to key posts. We were elected as secretaries, treasurers--we always had to do the paperwork and keep the money.
I was appalled to see that my Italian cousins--these Marxists, these fighters for socialism in whose intelligence and political progressivism I had taken such pride--were the same as the old male chauvinists I had left in North Beach. And I wondered if these cousins of mine were less chauvinistic in their relations with women in the Italian CP or trade union than their counterparts in the U.S. had shown themselves to be. In my family the chauvinism was much worse than the chauvinism I saw and felt in the political and trade union field. That [the political and trade union field] was a level higher as far as my development was concerned, but even there, there's a contradiction. My Italian cousins expressed their best in the political and trade union field and still at home they were such chauvinists.

INTERVIEWER: You're saying that they might treat women in politics differently than they treat women at home?

WARD: Yes. For example, when I told my cousin Sancte--the one who was calling the servants down to pick up our luggage--that Anita DiVittorio--the wife, the widow now, of Giuseppe DiVittorio, who

WARD: was the secretary-treasurer of the Italian Confederation of Labor [C.G.I.L.]--had been a guest at our home in San Francisco and that I had interpreted for Giuseppe DiVittorio, he said to me, "You mean, you know Anita DiVittorio?? That wonderful woman??" She was a great political figure in Italy, along with her husband. Here were two Italians who occupied the top positions in the Italian labor movement, husband and wife, and here was my cousin, a chauvinist, expressing admiration and respect for the wife; not because she was the wife of Giuseppe DiVittorio, but because she was a great person in her own right and continued to make a contribution to Italian progressivism after her husband's death. There Sancte was perfectly fine, but when it came to treatment of women in his family, he was as bad as my father. That's what I'm trying to say.
I do think that the women in this country have made great progress in achieving a degree of equality with the men. It's been very obvious, say, from the days of the thirties to the present day. I don't like to use the expression "earned the respect", because the women were in every degree, I think, as capable as the men, considering the experience they'd been allowed to receive and so on, but now things are looking up, much more than they did thirty or forty years ago. That's a good sign.

INTERVIEWER: In what ways did they "earn respect?"

WARD: Well, I think by the contributions they made, in the labor and political movements. People like Oleta O'Connor Yates--one of the great women of this country and I think <u>far</u> ahead of the men under whom she worked--was, for my money, one of the most politically astute and humane; she reached out to more people than many of the top male leaders of the Communist Party. I remember her from the University of California when she was debating--she was a member of the Young Socialist League at the time. What an impact she had among the students. But she had to earn it. She was somebody in skirts so her intellect wasn't as sharp as a male's. I was always amused and highly gratified that in the last years of her life no one less than Archbishop Fulton J. Sheehan made a trip to San Francisco and tried to get her to go back to the Catholic Church, just after he had achieved his greatest triumph--getting Clare Booth Luce to join the Catholic Church. He came out here and he had a meeting with Oleta; he tried so hard to get her to go back to the Church, because she had been Catholic in her early youth, as was all her family. But she just handled him beautifully. That's what I mean: women like that "earned" the recognition and respect, but it took a long, long time for the top leadership, say, of the Communist Party and the trade union movement to recognize [them].

INTERVIEWER: Did men have to earn respect in the same way as women?

WARD: Obviously not. I have observed that one's qualifications were not the determining factors governing promotions, job opportunities, etc., not only in the business world, but in the "progressive" labor and political world as well.

INTERVIEWER: Could you describe the beginning of organizing white-collar workers and how you came to be involved?

WARD: I read in the paper about the AF of L calling this meeting at Scottish Rite Auditorium. That's how I started to get involved.

INTERVIEWER: This is close upon the 1934 strike?

WARD: I think it was about 1936. That's when the CIO was making its great industrial march across the nation and was organizing industrial workers. The fever and the fervor of that drive first of all began to affect the population, the working class, much of which was unorganized. Then, the second effect the CIO had was on the AF of L, this stodgy organization which had been organizing unilaterally, organizing everything on a craft basis; it began to see the march of history. And I know for a fact that the AF of L hierarchy in San Francisco began to hear rumblings that, "Boy, when John L. Lewis and the CIO get out here, they aren't going to organize just manual workers and industrial workers." They were going to take in, on the principle of industrial unionism, bank workers, insurance workers....in other words, if they were going to organize the janitors in one of these high-rises, they were also going to organize the white-collar workers. They were not going to do it on a craft basis anymore. So the AF of L decided it was better to get into this before it was too late. The AF of L Committee, which comprised a number of craft unions, set up a committee. Jennie Matyas of the Ladies' Garment Workers was one of them, along with Jack Shelley, who at that time, I believe, was Secretary of the AF of L Central Labor Council, and other notable top officials for the AF of L in San Francisco. This group called a meeting and it was an appeal to white-collar workers. An ad in the paper, in the commercial press, said: Meeting, White-Collar Workers, Join the Labor Movement, Scottish Rite Auditorium, Come and Hear Jack Shelley, Jennie Matyas....and so on.

INTERVIEWER: It was really early in 1936?

WARD: Yes, very early. This was actually before the Committee for Industrial Organization had been set up. But you know, already John L. Lewis was fighting the hierarchy of the AF of L and he'd make these great speeches calling for a tide of organization to sweep the land. At any rate, the craft unions called this meeting and I went. Oh, I thought it was great. It was a very disorganized metting, however. Jennie Matyas made a speech, a rip-snorting speech--"You people have to organize"--and she talked about what onerous working conditions we had. You know, it was an agitational meeting. But they didn't say anything at this meeting about, well, we're going to get a charter and establish a union of white-collar workers, and we've applied to Washington D.C. to the national AF of L for a charter--which is what you have to do to set up a union. They didn't give us any of that; they just gave us a general educational, agitational spiel on why we should organize and told us to go home like

WARD: good children and the group of sponsors would call another meeting at which more specific proposals would be made. Another meeting would be held within the month--two weeks or so, as I recall.
Anyhow, another meeting was called. I can't remember if it was called on this second occasion by means of a notice in the papers, but I think it must have been because at no time were meetings called by putting out leaflets at the bank doors or anything quite so undignified. Anyhow, we knew about it and we went to the Scottish Rite and it was a terrific meeting: I think there were about two thousand people there, and little booths had been set up--A to F and G to so on--and you were to stand in the line which carried the initial of your last name and you would then sign an application card. Naturally I went and signed my application card. Then we were given a handful of applications to go out and sign up our fellow workers. The sponsors did go this far: they said they were going to have divisions--bank workers, insurance workers, general clerical workers--and these groups or classifications would come from miscellaneous offices.

INTERVIEWER: And they would be in different unions?

WARD: No, they would all be in the same union, but would be set up in divisions, so that the bank workers would meet by themselves and discuss their demands, their grievances, and what they wished to present to the bank managements and so on. The insurance company workers would do likewise. In fact, the insurance workers were divided into salesmen--the men who go out and sell you life and automobile insurance was one category, and then the clerical workers who work, say, in the Metropolitan Life--those would be people who perform billing and filing operations--would be in another division.

INTERVIEWER: So they would be separate locals?

WARD: Yes. Then there would be what was called a general office unit. And that would be a miscellaneous unit taking in an accounting office or a small office, perhaps a legal office and offices with eight, ten or fifteen employees. That would be in a separate division. At this meeting it was announced that a charter application would be made to the national AF of L. Then meetings of these divisions would be called and we should be on the alert for notices to that effect.
Now I did not recognize it at the time, but I knew it shortly thereafter: the people who played an important role in getting the Office Workers Union started were precisely those office workers who were employed in union offices. Their bosses--like John Shelley or Jennie Matyas--would say, "Come on, you're all members of Local"--whatever the number was at that time--"and you're going to be pivotal forces in organizing these bank workers." But they didn't count on the fact that there were quite a few militant people--(laughing) like me, and others--who were eager to get things going and who came to those two meetings. I don't remember how they called subsequent meetings, but I was in on all of them.

WARD: Oh, at the second Scottish Rite meeting, the one....after we signed up, we all went and sat down and then Shelley introduced this man, Ernest Norbeck who was going to be the general organizer of the office workers. He got up and made a speech. It was very general and he didn't make any reference to a charter or when the union was actually going to start functioning as a union. Then when he got through speaking, the chairman--I think it was Shelley--said, "Are there any questions from the floor?"

I guess I was one of the first ones. I raised my hand. I was so scared my knees were shaking because it was a big meeting. I wanted to know when we were going to get a charter and when we were going to really start formulating the plans to organize the different branches of the Bank of America. I said I was an employee of the Bank of America. I could see that they were so pleased--(laughing) here was a bank worker getting up and announcing that she worked for the bank, and she didn't seem to be scared at all. I wanted to know what I could do. So anyhow they said not to worry, they were applying for the charter and we would start getting down to business very shortly. Then the meeting went on; it was still very general.

After the meeting a man came up to me and said he thought I'd made a nice little speech, and he thought it was wonderful that I had announced the fact that I was so interested in organizing bank workers, and that a small meeting was to be held near there in some apartment of one of the white-collar workers and would I like to come. I said, "Oh, sure," so I went. It turned out that this meeting was actually a group of communists: some of them were office workers in AF of L unions; others came from other areas. (sighs) Actually, I don't know what they were, if they were all "genuine" office workers, but anyhow, they were wonderful people, I thought.

I was introduced to the chairman and his name was Arthur Scott Kent. He was a very brilliant guy and very impressive. He was a man of about forty-five or forty years of age. They were very organized, this group. They discussed organizing the union and they hoped that I would play an active part and a leadership part in the bank workers' organization. They sort of instructed me on the things I should do, how I should talk to my fellow employees, and that this group met once a week and would I come to the next meeting and let them know what reaction I had from my fellow workers. They were very helpful. They asked me if I would come back with a format or a plan to tell them how many branches of the bank there were and how many key people would be required in each branch. That was a good organizing thing; you'd need somebody in each branch of the bank. The Bank of America was the largest and had many branches throughout the city. They said in the main office there probably are different departments, and I said yes and I gave them what I knew about the bank, which was not insignificant, having these relatives who worked there. I told them of the different departments: the loan department, the collection department, the foreign department. They gave me all these instructions on how I should try to recruit people in each department, in each branch, and then we could build an organization. They when the union was set up, and the charter received, we would already have key people spread throughout the bank.

WARD: Then they started to talk about the Communist Party and the role it played and how important it was in the organization of the working class. You know, it was a very long discussion; I think that meeting lasted until two o'clock in the morning. At the end they asked me if I'd like to join the Party. And I said yes. I had read so much; I was already intellectually and philosophically convinced that Marxism was the only way to....so I joined. I signed a Party card without any hesitation or any qualm. Then they told me the next Thursday night they would meet again and by that time we'd know when this AF of L group was going to call another meeting and we would work out our strategy. We would have people demand that things get rolling in the AF of L. They urged me meanwhile to sign up as many people as I could, always keeping in mind that it was important to get workers in each branch, or as many branches as I could.

I went to the next meeting and I had signed up about twenty-four bank clerks--not from my branch though. I spoke to people in my branch, but they thought, "Union??" They thought I was a little wierdo anyway because I was always very outspoken about my beliefs, political and otherwise. They would have nothing to do with the union in the branch where I worked. But then I went to the main office where I had some contacts and I signed up a whole bunch of people there--I think it was twenty-four.

INTERVIEWER: Was this in secret?

WARD: Oh, yes. Then I knew other people--maybe I'd sign one up in one branch, you know. I guess this group thought it was impressive. I had the cards and there was no union to turn them in to, except this group. Arthur Scott Kent said, "I'll take the cards, and as soon as the union is organized...." So I gave them to him, I was so naive. By that time others in the group had also been at work, and they had a couple of insurance workers from Metropolitan who had joined the Party. There were no other bank workers.

Well, we kept meeting every Thursday night and putting the heat on the AF of L. Finally the AF of L sent for a charter. We got a charter and my name was on it. You had to have about thirty people, I think--I forget the number--but I was one of the signatories to the charter. The charter arrived and the AF of L called a meeting.

By this time this group of Communist Party people was so well organized, we knew exactly what we were going to do at this open meeting that had been called to announce the receipt of the charter and to start drafting the constitution and by-laws and getting this union off the ground. After the first meeting when they announced the receipt of the charter, a local was duly formed; I don't remember if it was called United Office and Professional Workers--that might have come later when the CIO came. Anyhow, it was an office workers union and Ernest Norbeck was the guy in the top spot. He was very slow in moving; (laughing) he was already suspicious that this local was permeated with a bunch of Communists. He was very suspicious of everybody.

WARD: We kept on working and organizing. The meetings of the local union continued to be held. The Spanish Civil War was going full blast and we, the Communist Party group, would devise things to bring up in the local. It was important that it shouldn't just be a trade union organization; it had to be more than just an organization of office workers as such. It involved the whole Marxist theory--that if a progressive country, if the United States became an ally of the Fascists, this would retard organization. Political action by a trade union was mandatory. It all made sense.

We differed on tactics. For example, Mr. Norbeck didn't agree that we should leafletize the banks. I said, "Yes, you have to. How are you going to get in touch with the workers? You have to bring leaflets out there and pass them out in the morning when they're going to work. That's the only way we're going to reach them." Then the union took a vote on it and they said yes, that's right, you should put out leaflets. So I was given the job of writing the leaflet. We'd get them mimeographed: Appeal to Bank Workers--Local so-and-so of the AF of L has been formed to better your hours, working conditions....We put a little application at the bottom--Come to the Next Meeting, and all this agitational stuff.

I'd go down to the banks on Montgomery Street. My fellow workers would come with me. Not bank workers; (laughing) I was the only bank worker among them, but some of the Communist Party people, who were office workers in trade union offices and didn't run the risk of losing a job because the union would support them. They would come with me. We would go down to the Bank of America at California and Montgomery Street one morning at eight o'clock and we would start giving out leaflets. Then the next morning we'd go to another bank, the Powell-Market bank, and give out leaflets. This is what we kept doing.

We signed up a few people. I kept getting more and more of the men bank workers, the messengers--I signed up a whole slew of them. And twenty-four of them were fired like that (snapping her fingers). They were fired because Arthur Scott Kent had turned their names in! He was an agent.

And by this time the bank knew what I was up to. So they transferred me to the Capital Company, the real estate investment arm of the Bank of America. It was a terrible job. My immediate boss was a drunk. He'd go out at lunch and he'd come back reeking of gin. And all I did was write rent receipts, you know: Received from So-and-so, $30.00, July rent. Then I'd have to enter it in a big book. I stayed there because I didn't want to give them the satisfaction of getting rid of me. By that time I was becoming rather well-known as an organizer, pushing for the union, and it wouldn't have been good to quit.

Then at that point--these dates are a little vague in my mind--the CIO entered the picture and set up an office right next door to the Bank of America at Market and New Montgomery, and I was working upstairs at the Capital Company. On my lunch hour I'd go to the union office and help out with office chores--by this time it was CIO. I think there was a vote taken, whether we should go into the CIO or not.

INTERVIEWER: In June 1937?

WARD: Yes. Then I was elected president of the local. And shortly thereafter Lewis Merrill came out from New York--he was the national president--and I was hired as a full-time organizer at $25.00 a week. They said, "You're not doing any good up in the Capital Company, and you may as well come to work for the union--you'll have more direct contact with the bank workers."

INTERVIEWER: You weren't actually fired from your job then?

WARD: No, not from the Capital Company. I resigned; I just walked out on them. Then I filed a case with the War Labor Board, because I had been fired from my original job and this [the work at the Capital Company] was a big come-down. So my case and the case of the twenty-four bank messengers who were fired were put into one case and it went before the National Labor Relations Board. But you know, the wheels of justice grind very slowly. In fact, (laughing) they ground to a complete halt. We never did get anything out of the board. It went on and on and there'd be hearings. By that time the union became involved in sectarian struggles of all kinds.

I'll never forget one union meeting where I met Caroline Decker. She worked in the law firm of Gladstein, etc., and she was a member of the union. Oh, was she terrific. One night at the union meeting Norbeck started to red-bait, giving [it to] me and other officers of the union, some of whom were not Communists and were far from being Communists. There were quite a few bank workers at the meeting, and insurance workers; at that time it was still pretty representative. It wasn't large, because we had lost a lot of members in the fight between the AF of L and the CIO; office workers couldn't understand this. Caroline got up. She had been so grounded in her theoretical work and philosophically, she was just a great organizer. She got up and made the most beautiful speech. It was a well-organized talk in which she discussed the whole role of the working class and the white-collar workers and then very subtly how the injection of these extraneous issues raised by Mr. Norbeck--red-baiting and so on--were designed to split the union. She gave this speech in the most beautiful, organized manner and she was standing behind me as she made this speech. Then after the meeting I spoke to her; I was so impressed with this person who I knew had gone to jail and had just been released recently--I'd seen her picture in the paper--and the great role she played in the working-class struggle.

We became close friends after that. We'd meet for lunch. She had a great deal to do in educating me; I learned a great deal from Caroline. We've remained close friends even though her way of life changed later on. She was a terrific person and she had such a reputation. There were Caroline Decker branches of the Communist Party all over the United States; she was a real working-class figure for many, many years.

So that's how I became very active in the Office Workers, and I stayed with that union until I went into the Mine, Mill, and so on.

INTERVIEWER: Before the meeting in the Scottish Rite Auditorium had you ever approached the old AF of L Office and Professional Union for help in organizing the bank workers?

WARD: I do recall making an approach to the local union whose members were employees of AF of L unions--secretaries to the business agents, bookkeepers, file clerks. I cannot remember how I found out that such a union existed. It may be that I read something in one of the progressive papers mentioning such a union, or it could have been a criticism of the local for failure to organize in its jurisdiction.
With the knowledge that there was such a union, I sincerely hoped it would help to organize bank workers. I did make inquiries in person, but the cold reception and lack of interest--I was told that I myself was not eligible since I did not work in a union office--convinced me that I had come to the wrong place and confirmed for me the total limitations of the AF of L as an organizing medium for white-collar workers in private industry.

INTERVIEWER: What was the attitude of the AFL towards the Communists?

WARD: Oh, (laughing lightly) they didn't like them. It was a very bitter schism. There were very few people in the AF of L hierarchy who could even tolerate a person of that persuasion. I will say this: Jack Shelley was a pretty decent guy. He didn't red-bait as a rule. I would say that he was alone among the AF of L hierarchy who even spoke to Communists. But he was always very friendly to my husband and me. In fact, when we applied for a passport to go abroad in 1959 and the State Department made it very difficult for us to get one, he interceded for us. But on the whole the AF of L played a terrible role. I'm sure that many of them informed on people whom they suspected to be Communists, even though they didn't know for sure if they were or not.
I think this attitude was a real setback for the labor movement because the Communists played a very good role, especially in the formative days of the CIO. Had it not been for them, many of the unions that were built in those days would not exist now. Possibly later they might have spontaneously evolved but the Communists were good organizers. They were very sacrificing. Many of them knew that it meant their jobs and so on, but they had a long view of the situation.
Of course, we all made many mistakes, mistakes that I deeply regret. I can see now that we shouldn't have raised questions of the Spanish Civil War in an office workers union that was barely a year old; that we shouldn't have tried to get office workers coming from these pristine offices--the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and the Bank of America--to take an active role in the freedom of Tom Mooney, whom they had never heard of, for example. There were stupid strategic errors and tactical errors that we made--but we had good will. We weren't doing it for our own judgement. We were doing it for an ideal that we believed in. I still think it would have been great for the office workers to be organized in this town.

INTERVIEWER: To whom did the AF of L inform?

WARD: Names of suspected Communists would be turned over to the employers, supervisory personnel, who in turn gave the information the the FBI. During this period a certain Ernest Besig was head of the local A.C.L.U. chapter in San Francisco. He had a richly deserved reputation as a "Red Hunter" despite the fact that he headed a "civil liberties" organization. He was a member of the Office Workers Local 34 CIO and I had several clashes with him on the union floor. Besig was also known as Ernest Norbeck's mentor and advisor devising floor strategy to defeat the Reds, particularly when resolutions on the Spanish Civil War and Tom Mooney were introduced at union or executive board meetings.

INTERVIEWER: The AF of L didn't want you to bring up those kind of political issues?

WARD: Oh, no. And I think they were right. At least we might have tempered it more and not been so insistent that these issues be so closely tied at that time to the organization of white-collar workers, because they really weren't. I think it would have been better to have gotten the workers into the union first. But mind you, I'm not saying that if we hadn't done that, if we had, say, just pursued straight organizing [the battle would have been won automatically]. I still think the battle between the corporations and the union would have been a severe one. I don't think that the role of the Communists necessarily prevented the organization of the white-collar workers. I think we made stupid errors that hindered the organization substantially, but I think that the corporations would have succeeded in doing the same thing. The white-collar workers were not yet ready. I understand that now there is a serious effort going on by one of the big unions in San Francisco to organize the bank workers. They're taking one bank at a time and it's being done purely on the economic issues, which I think is good. But the AF of L isn't doing it; it's not the AF of L union that is doing it. I think the AF of L made too much of the fact that there were Communists. I think if they hadn't red-baited so much, many of the workers wouldn't have been aware of the fact that there were Communists in the union. Maybe I'm wrong.

INTERVIEWER: Was it a local decision to bring up political issues?

WARD: You mean the local union?

INTERVIEWER: No, the local Communist group.

WARD: The local Communist group, yes. But the national union, the United Office and Professional Workers, was a progressive union and I think the officers were very politically astute and left-oriented. I don't know if they were Communists or not, but they certainly didn't object when the local union, for example, presented a resolution to support the Anti-Fascist Committee.

WARD: They didn't say to us, "No, we think that's wrong; you should concentrate on...." As a matter of fact, I think they encouraged us. So I could assume that they were, if not actually Communists, certainly left-oriented.

INTERVIEWER: But also the Communist line at that time was to bring up political issues?

WARD: Right. Yes, it was, and if you were a member of the Party, you did that.

INTERVIEWER: I had one other question. Last time we were talking about how you would read the Western Worker and you would fill out the coupon at the end but that you never got any response. I just wondered why it was so difficult to get in touch with the Communist Party.

WARD: I don't know. It was astonishing because subsequently, as I mentioned, I was taken into the Party at that open meeting and here my efforts to reach them before had been to no avail. As a matter of fact, I knew the headquarters were at 121 Haight Street, and I said to a friend of mine--a girlfriend that I had at the time who was also progressive-minded, not as much as I, but she was interested philosophically in Marxism--I said to her once, "You know, I think I should go up to the headquarters and see why they don't answer my coupons." And she said, "Yeah, that's not a bad idea." Then we talked it over, and I said, "Then they'd get very suspicious; here I'd walk in at 121 Haight and I'd say, 'Look, I want to join the Communist Party'. And they'd say to me, 'Who sent you?'; they'd be suspicious, and when they found out I worked at the Bank of America, they certainly would kick me out, I'm sure." So we agreed that it was futile for me to make any attempt and I think that would have been true. (laughing) Even though they put this coupon in the paper, apparently they didn't pay much attention to them.
You see, this was in the period between 1934 and 1936. And I suppose there were a lot of stool pigeons as a result of the 1934 strike. I'm sure that was one of the reasons they didn't trust just anyone. They might have checked my name because I put down my name and my address; it would not have taken much to find out--even from the phone book--that I lived on Lombard Street [an affluent neighborhood]. They could have found out that I worked for the bank and thought, "Well, that's odd." So, at any rate, they never did approach me from that angle. Then I was a little surprised, to tell you the truth, when they signed me up so quickly that night.
Then I found out they did sign up people in that fashion many times, especially during the Browder period when the Party was more open. It was on an upstream at that point, with many of them playing prominent roles in the national organization of the CIO. It's no secret that many of these men who were in the top echelons of the CIO were members of the Communist Party and they played a great role. A lot of them gave their lives too, you know, in the auto workers strikes and the steel workers strikes.

INTERVIEWER: When you first got involved with the union, did you think that you would have a leadership role?

WARD: No, I didn't. I don't think I thought about it one way or the other. It just developed. I was earnestly wanting a union, because I felt very much exploited by the Bank of America and I thought it would help a great deal.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever feel discouraged or encouraged by others in terms of taking a leadership role?

WARD: At first everybody was encouraging me and virtually demanding that I take a leadership role. After all, it wasn't every day that you got a real honest-to-God Bank of America worker (laughing) to come out for the union, so that part was no problem. But I became discouraged many times when I saw that we weren't making any progress. Or we'd get these horrible blows where the people we organized and signed up into the union were fired. We couldn't understand how it happened that the bank knew who had joined the union. It was only much later that we knew how prevalent stool pigeons were in the organization even then, both in the Party and in the union. In fact, some of them operated in both spheres simultaneously.

INTERVIEWER: We've talked a bit about the conflicts in your family over your union activities. Did you get any support from friends you had or old friends in your community?

WARD: No. I broke with all the old friends I had from college and from high school. I had a little verbal support from a couple of my family's old friends, who had a socialist point of view and often argued with my father on political matters, but it was always on a certain level: they were not doers, they were talkers. They sided with me when we were having a dinner table discussion and then after when it became known that I was very active in the progressive movement, both trade union and political, then these people would say, "Keep up the good work," but they never came out and gave me any support that might have helped in my relationship with my father, for example.
My mother would deplore the fact that this rift was occurring in the family--a worse rift than was already there, a really bad rift. She'd say to me, well, she could understand why I believed that way, because she believed that way too, but she was afraid that I was going to get into some serious trouble. She was always worried that I'd be in jail. She'd read the paper first thing in the morning when I'd go out to meetings and come home late; she sometimes wouldn't even know that I was home because I'd come home at two or three o'clock in the morning and I'd creep up to my room. She'd go down and get the paper and she'd open it to see if anything had happened. If I'd tell her the night before that I was going to a demonstration against the Spanish Fascist Movement at the Civic Auditorium or we were going to go down to demonstrate at the Nazi Consulate or whatever, she would never say, "Don't go," but she would worry a lot. Of

WARD: course I never told my father that I was going here or there because I didn't think it was any of his business.

INTERVIEWER: But you had a lot of support from people that you met through your union and political activities?

WARD: Oh, yes, yes. Also, there were a couple of old family friends. I forgot about them--this American family....the young man won a scholarship to write a novel after he had been in college for a while, and he became involved in political activities, more on an intellectual level, but he did join organizations and donate money to progressive causes. My father never took issue with him. Maybe it was because this was a man; it was somebody he liked; he was like a son to him. You see, that's how it was.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get any support from other organizations besides the Communist Party in organizing office workers?

WARD: Oh yes. Other trade unions were very helpful. I remember one night I achieved what they considered the impossible: I was invited to speak to the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union, Local 10. That was when they were at the height of their power. It was after their big strike in 1936 and they were one of the most powerful unions on the west coast. I think we asked them--I'm sure they didn't invite us out of their hat--if we could come address them on the organization of insurance workers, primarily insurance salesmen who went around door to door selling life insurance policies. Our objective was to get to the people who were buying life insurance policies. They would pay ten cents a week, you know, and get a policy on their little children, on themselves and on their wives, and these poor insurance salesmen would go around trying to sell these policies. We decided it would be a great idea if the trade union movement in San Francisco would purchase these policies only from union members. I remember that--I was the president of the Office Workers Union then--we asked if we could come and speak and present this plan. And, by golly, they said yes, we could.

I remember entering this hall. They had these sergeants at arms who took me down this long aisle and all the longshoremen stood up until I got to the platform. I was new at all this. It was such an inspiring sight to stand up there and look down at all the longshoremen. Harry Bridges was on the platform and Henry Schmidt was the president of the local then. He introduced me: Sister Gizzi--pronounced Geet-stee; they never called me Gizzi--they all called me Gizzi, as if it rhymed with dizzy or Gizzi--guy-sigh--they could never pronounce my name. Anyway, he introduced me and I gave this little speech. They all clapped and made a motion to buy insurance policies only from union members who were wearing the UOPWA [United Office and Professional Workers of America] button, or who could show a union card. That was a big victory and a big moral support. I don't think anything very great came out of it because we were never able to organize enough insurance agents to do this, but the ones who

WARD: were organized reportedly did get some help. Then it was difficult: how could you know when you were ringing somebody's doorbell to sell them an insurance policy that that person was a longshoreman or not?
Other unions were very helpful and supportive through the San Francisco CIO [Labor] Council. We had fraternal gatherings with the State, County, and Municipal Workers, which was a white-collar union, and the teachers union. I remember once Rockwell Kent [prominent progressive artist of the thirties] came out here representing the Artists Guild. At that time there was quite a large unit of artists who had joined together into a guild and there was some talk that maybe they could join the United Office and Professional Workers because it was white-collar and they were white-collar and professional. We could hold joint meetings--they were actually mass meetings--and when a great name like Rockwell Kent was here, of course, you drew in a lot of people who weren't even union members. That gave the white-collar unions a boost. And then we had very close ties with the Federation of Architects, Engineers, and so on.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of support did you get for organizing clerical workers in particular?

WARD: The kind I just mentioned--like from the longshoremen--or we'd go to the San Francisco CIO Council. I was a delegate to the Council, and they met every Friday night. Either under Good and Welfare or under New Business, I would raise my hand, get up, and tell them we were having a campaign to organize the bank workers. I would report on the developments: people had been fired, cases going to the War Labor Board. Then either I or my fellow delegates--there were about three or four from the union--would present a resolution asking for support from the Council to the War Labor Board asking that the fired workers be reinstated. We had lots of activity like that. Everybody was very decent about it. They gave us money, made donations to campaigns that we were undertaking to print leaflets and so on.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get any support from the Women's Trade Union League?

WARD: No. I don't remember any.

INTERVIEWER: When you first got interested in organizing workers, when you were still working at the bank, there's a story about you going to the AFL local in San Francisco and asking them if you could join.

WARD: Yes, I did go to an AF of L local. However, the most vivid story in my mind, actually, the most vivid event was a really insane thing: Harry Bridges suggested that I go to the Sailors Union of the Pacific, which was AF of L. There was a story out that they were going to try to organize office workers because they saw that the CIO was having some success. You see, all these things intermeshed, time-wise. Anyhow, Harry Bridges thought we'd better find out if this Trotskyite or whatever--they called Lundberg all kinds of names--is really going to start in on this.

WARD: He could really destroy any kind of organization among white-collar workers, because he was way out in left field. I think we were pretty left, but Lundberg was doing this just from a malicious angle, to destroy the CIO as much as he could.
I was supposed to pretend that I was a white-collar worker, which I was, and that I was interested in getting AF of L support, but not telling them that I was already in the young CIO union, which maybe hadn't even been chartered yet. Anyhow, I was supposed to go there and try to talk to Harry Lundberg and find out what his plans were by indicating that I was interested in organizing white-collar workers. In those days it was really serious, you know. There were always these fights--physical fights--between longshoremen and Sailors [SUP] and they'd beat each other up. So Harry said, "Well, I'll send Joe Ring with you." Joe Ring was Harry's bodyguard. (laughing) During the 1934 strike he had emerged as one of these powerful people who would defend Harry and other leaders of the longshoremen. So he came with me.

INTERVIEWER: Lundberg didn't recognize him?

WARD: No, he didn't come upstairs. He parked the car downstairs. And I went into the Sailors Union hall. You had to go up this big black staircase and just go winding up and up in some barn on the waterfront. Finally I got to the reception room--if it could even be called a reception room. This woman who was an office worker said, "Whaddaya want?" And all these big sailors were standing around.
I said, "I'd like to see Mr. Lundberg." She asked me my name and I told her--I wasn't known at that time. Anyhow, I was led into his office, and sitting with him was this evil-looking woman, who turned out to be Norma Perry-his paramour or whatever she was. They knew all the time who I was and I think they divined why I was there. I'm sure they knew that Harry had sent me, or that there was some connection. It was like the cat playing with the mouse; as innocent and naive as I was--and new at this game--I had a very comfortable feeling that if I ever got out of there in one piece I would be very lucky. Otherwise, they were just making a mockery of me. I got very nervous, and I'm sure I wasn't in there more than ten minutes.

INTERVIEWER: It doesn't sound like it was such a good idea.

WARD: Oh, it was a terrible idea. You see, even a great strategist like Mr. Bridges can make some awful mistakes. I never thought much of this; you know, if Harry Bridges said it was the thing to do, I would do it because I thought he was without fault and that anything he suggested was bound to be good. Even though deep down inside of me I had feelings about it. Anyhow, I got out of there. Joe Ring was waiting for me; I said, "Let's get away from here."
Now, I think after that I did go to some really "nice" AF of L unions--you know, who were interested in organizing office workers. And I had fairly good relationships with them, though

WARD: I can't remember specifically--well, yes, at that time the city workers were in the AF of L still, groups of that nature and I guess the textile workers and groups like that--but not too much.

INTERVIEWER: Once the union voted to affiliate with the CIO, did that make any difference in the kind of support you got from the National Federation?

WARD: You mean the Committee for Industrial Organization?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

WARD: Well, yes, we got more--shall I say--vocal support. But you must understand that in this country--and white-collar workers are still relatively unorganized in large part--and in the trade union movement, the organization of white-collar workers was not regarded as a paramount job to be done. They didn't think it was that important. They gave us lip service.
It's interesting--when we organized the PG and E workers, we were no longer in a white-collar union per se. We were in an industrial union and the white-collar workers were part of the craft set-up and the industrial set-up; therefore we got maximun support. But when we were organizing the bank workers and the insurance workers and general office workers, sure, they thought we were real nice young people; you needed to have the white-collar workers in the labor movement. But when it came down to buttons, they were not that concerned.
You see, here were all these organized industrial workers who had families, daughters and sons, who were working in banks and in insurance companies. When I'd make a speech in the Council, I'd say, "Now, if you fathers and you family members would go to your homes and just take a census of how many white-collar people whose parents are in unions would come down and join our union...." We would have had a base. But this was never done. They'd get up and make a speech and say, "Sister Gizzi has given us a very good picture of why it's important to organize the bank workers and the insurance workers." But then they wouldn't do anything about it; they would never follow up. You can see for yourself what would have happened if in every family where the head of the family belonged to the union, if his children who were working all over the city in white-collar positions had followed their father's footsteps, we would have had a base. I have a hunch many of them were told to keep their noses out of it because they might lose their jobs and that's true. So I don't think it ever got the support, the <u>real</u> support, of the labor movement; it was token at best.

INTERVIEWER: Was it more dangerous to organize in places like the banks? Was it more likely that someone would get fired?

WARD: Oh yes. This was big business; they had a very strong spy system. And the white-collar worker in the United States has not recognized to this day that his interests lie with the working class. They

WARD: do not. They're working class, but they don't realize it. And I think that's one reason why it's so difficult to organize. Look at the banks, the money they spend setting up a network to ferret out anyone with union sympathies, anyone who would try to organize a union and this went for the insurance companies, too. There were always "mysterious" firings--I say mysterious in quotes--but now that you look back on it, there were so many stool pigeons in Local 34--that place was just honeycombed with stool pigeons. For every bona fide member, you had at least two who were in there spying for the company or the bank or whatever it was.

INTERVIEWER: I read that there was a Women's Auxiliary set up within the Office Workers Union.

WARD: A Women's Auxiliary?

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any contact with them?

WARD: No. There were women's auxiliaries in the Longshoremen, in all the big industrial unions. But why would you have a women's auxiliary?

INTERVIEWER: That's what I was going to ask you. I think that it was to aid in organizing insurance workers.

WARD: I don't remember that we ever appealed to the wives, say, of insurance workers. There may have been some suggestion to that effect or there may have even been a subcommittee set up, but I don't recall it.

INTERVIEWER: You also had a class for organizing, and a Speakers Bureau.

WARD: Oh, yes.

INTERVIEWER: I wondered if you found that women needed a special kind of training in speaking and whether that was recognized?

WARD: No, most of the members of Local 34 were very sharp. There were a lot of women who had had previous speaker's training in other organizations. Many of the women came from trade unions: they were office secretaries, with the machinists' union, the carpenters' union. In many cases these unions used their office help to record minutes and so on. So they had been in union meetings and they were progressive-minded people. They didn't need training; they could have taught us, who came from the outside, from the banks and insurance companies. A person like Caroline Gladstein, who was a tremendous agitator, she could turn a whole audience in the palm of her hand. Well, she was a member of the Office Workers Union and she was probably in the Speakers Bureau. She made better speeches than any of us, you see.
There were a few women who were naive and innocent, as I was when I first went in there, who did pick it up very fast. We had, I

WARD: think, a few sessions where we told people how to present the question before a trade union and the salient points that should be made and things of that sort. We may have had a class that met three or four times so that they would succinctly state the aims and purposes of the Office Workers Union, because most of the unions who let us speak to them would only allot us five or ten minutes in a crowded agenda and we just couldn't wander all over the map when we were talking to them. So, yes, we had an outline and suggested that the speakers stick to those points. We didn't have any schools or anything like that.

INTERVIEWER: How do you think your organizing experiences would have been different if you were a man?

WARD: We never thought about it in those terms in those days; I think at times, among the women organizers we talked about it, in a peripheral way. Certain jobs in the labor movement were not open to us because we were women. We didn't even think in terms of fighting for them or aspiring to them. Because in those days, definitely, the role of women within the labor movement was at a lower level. We were not expected to go beyond a certain point, so to speak. I'm trying to think if there were ever any women who were, say, president of an international union; I can't think of any. Even in the . . .

INTERVIEWER: I.L.G.W.U?

WARD: Yes, or in the Office Workers. Lewis Merrill was president and the vice-president was Richard Lewis, as I recall. The highest post in a local union most women ever achieved was secretary-treasurer. I know I was often elected secretary in a union--something that required keeping notes and being very careful that records were always in good shape and so on. The men then were very good about nominating women to these posts, but the crucial roles of leadership were not given to women--the opportunities that I believe many of them would have fulfilled. I never thought of it in terms of myself, because after all, (laughing) office workers....

INTERVIEWER: What do you mean, "after all, office workers?"

WARD: Well, I think the type of work we office workers did was not productive--not creative. An office worker in a bank just shuffled papers around and in insurance companies they did the same thing. You know, this is not productive work in a Marxist sense.

INTERVIEWER: But in actuality, it's very critical, isn't it?

WARD: The fact that machines have taken over so much shows that it wasn't really all that critical. It's not creative work. It's very deadening, actually, and I think that's one of the reasons why white-collar workers often can't see beyond their nose, because they're tied down to a desk. Now the computer is taking

WARD: it over and I think some changes are going to occur.

INTERVIEWER: You said that you just accepted that there were positions that you wouldn't aspire to?

WARD: Right. Both in the bank and in the labor movement. One would never have thought of a woman in a post of vice-president, even in a company like the Bank of America, which had more vice-presidents than you could imagine. In every branch there were at least two vice-presidents, and all they were were cashiers. But women at that time had not the slightest chance of becoming a vice-president in the Bank of America. Now, it's different today. Big changes occurred, both to the role of women in the banking industry, and also the role of minorities. You go into many branches of the Bank of America and you'll see Chinese, Japanese, blacks, many ethnic groupings in the bank. The Bank has been forced into that position. In my day you would never see anybody but a Caucasion, usually of Irish or Italian extraction, and northern Italian at that. Sicilians weren't too well accepted, you know; neither were Napoletani, or people from the south of Rome whose parents had come from that part of the world. In the Bank of America, A.P. Giannini was a Genovese [native of Genoa, Italy] as were many of the men who worked around him. Also there were quite a few Irish.

INTERVIEWER: And you think there was the same degree of restriction in the labor movement?

WARD: You're talking now about women? I don't think it was a restriction. It was part of the culture, the pattern which governed the status of women in that era. Women's lib was unknown and the men were chauvinistic. Maybe they didn't even know they were being chauvinistic, but the thing is that women had not yet emerged as being capable of performing these jobs. Any posts held by women in the labor movement during the thirties were mostly administrative or clerical; that was it.
There were women organizers who went out in the fields--Caroline Decker, for example, and the women who worked in the cannery unions--but they never became officers in top positions, even when they made great sacrifices and contributions. I don't recall any of them ever being....well, there was Luisa Moreno. I think she was vice-president of the United Cannery Agricultural and Packing House Workers [UCAPWA]. But they were rare indeed.

INTERVIEWER: Before, when you were talking about women in union meetings only being elected to certain positions, were they nominated but not elected?

WARD: No, they weren't even nominated. (laughing) I'm talking about important positions in the union. The general pattern was that women were elected to committees dealing with social problems--they would be elected to a committee, say, that handled visits to see the sick brothers and sisters in the hospital; a woman would be elected chairman of that sort of committee. Women were always

WARD: elected--especially in the white-collar unions--to the post of treasurer or recording secretary--not secretary, because secretary is an administrative post which calls for involvement with the officers in making policy. The recording secretary just keeps neat, accurate notes, takes down what people are saying and reads them off at the next membership meeting, records the motions that are made, seconded, passed, and so on. Women were called upon to handle the dues, because they're careful and keep good records. I know even in the Communist Party women were always elected to be dues collectors.

INTERVIEWER: A thankless task.

WARD: Yes, a thankless task. Membership dues. Going out after people who hadn't been coming to meetings. This was the general pattern in the trade union movement and in the political movement, though this trend is gradually lessening. You see this in Congress, and other areas, where women are getting recognition for more than what I always believed were thankless humdrum tasks.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned that you thought a lot of women's talents were wasted.

WARD: Yes, I think that's true. That's what I was saying about Oleta. She could have made a greater contribution if she had been in a position to make it--a position of substance, a top post, say if she had been state chairman of the Communist Party. I think she would have done better than any other chairman who served during my twenty years' membership.

INTERVIEWER: Was it unusual that you were president of your local?

WARD: Yes, but it wasn't a very important local and the labor movement, at that time, did not look upon the organization of white-collar workers as a primary goal or target in the organization of workers. It was always: "There's that nice little girl coming in asking us to help in the organization of office workers." But they didn't feel that we were essential or critical; we were given token support.
In fact I remember Harry Bridges--sometimes I'd get into some pretty (pause) nasty arguments with him, even though he did help us a lot in the utility workers' organization--but I remember once he said to me, "What are you doing fussing around with that? Office workers unions are nothing but a racket." That's what he called it, "a racket." I remember how stunned and hurt I was to hear him say that. And part of it was because the AFL Office Workers Union had this narrow concept of union organization where they just organized the people who worked in union offices, and that angered people. Harry had a point when he said that until you organize the bank workers and the insurance workers and get them on a four-day week, or whatever, and get them $35.00 a week--because $35.00 a week would have been great in those days--you shouldn't try to impose it on the union offices only; it's not

WARD: fair. I agreed with him; and the CIO [UOPWA] never did do that. But Local 29, AF of L, confined their organization to trade union offices and peripheral areas which dealt with labor matters. But these people weren't the white-collar worker who trudged along Montgomery Street and who worked in the financial district for abysmally low wages and long hours; those workers were not ever tackled by the AF of L, never had been.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that was because they weren't seen as a critical sector of the economy?

WARD: Yes, I think that was one of the reasons. And also it was a difficult area to organize because of the preconceived notions of what white-collar people, especially in the United States--that they're better than the blue-collar worker and that their interests lay with management and not with the working class. That's what it amounted to. Even today, white-collar workers are largely unorganized.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think the fact that the majority of white-collar workers were women had anything to do with the attitudes?

WARD: I don't know that the majority of them were women.

INTERVIEWER: But a large portion . . .

WARD: Well, when you look at the insurance field, at the hundreds and hundreds of insurance agents who went out selling life insurance door-to-door, for years and years, and they'd get ten cents for every policy they signed up--they were all men.

INTERVIEWER: I was thinking of clerical workers.

WARD: Yes, then of course there were the women workers who did the clerical work--you know, machine operaters, typists, stenographers and so on. But when you consider white-collar workers overall, I would say the number of men and the number of women was pretty equal. Many men did very menial work, especially in a bank. Now it's all done by computer, but in those days there was a crew of messengers who would take the sacks of checks to the clearing house, big bags like postmen carry, running around Montgomery Street and Sansome Street, bringing checks to the Federal Reserve and back again. So I would say it was pretty evenly divided between male and female as far as the composition was concerned.

INTERVIEWER: How did the workers finally get rid of unpaid overtime at the bank?

WARD: I think that just came eventually with the growth and progress of society. Actually they don't work overtime anymore, but it was never done by contract or agreement. You know, the banks and the insurance companies have had to do lots of things they they didn't do thirty-five years ago. Just witness, for example,

WARD: the minority hiring policy program. When did you ever expect to see a black manager in a branch of the Bank of America? Or women sitting at the front desks? And now banks just don't work overtime, because it would cost them money even though there's no union contract. The question of overtime was always very acute in industrial unions, and even among the PG and E office workers--they achieved payment for overtime, and double-time on holidays and all, through a union contract--but that was because they were with the industrial workers.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any success in organizing bank workers?

WARD: No. We had a few loyal souls who stayed with the union and paid their dues and actually helped in trying to organize smaller offices when we had to lower our sights. No, we never organized anything.

INTERVIEWER: So you never negotiated a contract?

WARD: No. I don't think there is one to this day, though I hear rumors that there's an organization of bank employees being undertaken right now. And I hope it succeeds.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any arguments that you used that seemed to be more effective than others in organizing bank workers?

WARD: Listen, there was no need for any argument. I mean, the bank workers acknowledged that they were the least paid in all the white-collar field, the most exploited--they all knew this. But one of the things was that we were organizing in a period when there was a lot of unemployment. When a teller was making $200.00 a month--that was really big stuff, raising a family and all. They weren't willing to run the risk of losing that job.

INTERVIEWER: Even after the hearings, when the workers were reinstated?

WARD: They weren't reinstated. We--none of us were ever reinstated. There were twenty-four messengers who were fired and never got their jobs back. We never won a single victory.

INTERVIEWER: I thought it was argued before the NLRB?

WARD: It was argued before the NLRB, but we didn't win anything. The bank had this battery of attorneys and all the money on their side. In fact, one of their attorneys was a friend of my father's, Mr. Ferrari. I sat across the table from him; we glared at each other.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that would have made any difference--if people thought they had the apparatus of the government to protect them?

WARD: Oh, I think if we had won a few signal victories that would have made a difference. I think it still would have taken years to achieve though, because when you're tackling a bank like the Bank

WARD: of America.... At that time it had at least 485 branch offices in California. You had to prove that it was an interstate commerce to be under the jurisdiction of the Wagner Act. We knew darned well that the B of A owned the First National Bank of Portland, for example, but they had set themselves up so that Portland was a separate entity. That was a big argument: the Bank of America claimed it was not in interstate commerce. That was one of the big points of the NLRB--they would not take cases unless the employer could be proven to be in interstate commerce.

INTERVIEWER: So you had to prove that before they would consider your case?

WARD: I don't recall now all the ins and outs of why the NLRB took this particular case. I don't know if that question was ever proved. Maybe it was part of a discussion that went on, and then it was ruled that the bank wasn't in interstate commerce and that's why we never got any further. Of all the obstacles that were raised by the lawyers for the bank in the hearing, goodness knows which one they rested on to deny the case.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you think that employees in other industries, i.e. auto workers, were willing to risk their jobs in a depression time but white-collar workers weren't?

WARD: Basic industry workers such as auto are subject to lay-offs occurring on a seasonal basis. This is true of coal miners, agricultural workers, etc. These classes of workers were, and still are, laid off for a variety of reasons: material shortages, cutting down of production due to a slow-down in the market, supply exceeding demand, over-production of a commodity, etc. Employees of great banking institutions and insurance company empires have a virtual life-time interest in their job until retirement age, <u>if</u> they toe the line and are totally subservient to their bank or company. If one has little or no job security, he is not taking such a great risk to organize a union. He is, in fact, improving his lot and guaranteeing a better future for himself and family by fighting for job security, seniority rights and better working conditions.

INTERVIEWER: What effect did the Wagner Act have on your organizational work?

WARD: In the early stages of organization the passage of the Wagner Act and the attendant fanfare did have an impressive psychological effect on the unorganized. Its enactment was even felt in the white-collar and professional fields. We cited the benefits of the Act and the protection it afforded against employer reprisals in all our literature.
But the cumbersome machinery set up by government to enforce the Act and the interminable delays mitigated, particularly in the white-collar field, the benefits which should have accrued to the workers. And while there were some spectacular victories, there were more unfinished cases relegated to limbo, as happened to the bank employees cases I discussed previously. On the other hand, the American Newspaper Guild's victory in the so-called

WARD: Watson case--he was reinstated with full back pay--initiated the successful drive to organize the newspapers of this country. There were defeats too--my husband is still listed as a "Guild martyr", a special category of workers honored by the Guild who were fired for union activity, but whose cases were lost in the legal technical maze of the NLRB.

INTERVIEWER: How did you meet your husband?

WARD: (laughing a little) Well, let's see. When I was the president and organizer of the Office Workers' Union in 1938, I was elected a delegate to the CIO convention at the Royal Palms Hotel in Los Angeles. I was elected secretary of the Constitution Committee and Estolv was the secretary of the Resolutions Committee. And we just knew each other by sight. Well, on Saturday night I had to go to the print shop. It was two o'clock in the morning and I had all these resolutions I had to proofread; they had to be printed and in the hands of the delegates by the morning session. I was in this print shop and I was proofreading all these things and he was in another corner of the print shop doing the same thing. He told me afterwards, he said, "Gee, anybody who would sit up at two o'clock in the morning...."--and that was Saturday night at the convention, when they were having dances and everything. I had been invited to the dance but I couldn't go because I had to do this. He came over and talked to me, and we then went back to the hotel.
Then, I guess, on Monday morning, I was going to go back to S.F. on the train--I was too poor to take planes in those days. I had a ticket to go back on the train and he asked me if I'd like to drive back with him. He had another passenger, Paul Schlipf, who was an organizer in the auto workers union in the East Bay. I said, "Yes, I'll take the ride." He said to me, "How much money have you got?" because he was dead broke too. So I opened my purse, and I was relatively rich: I had thirty dollars, I think, or twenty-five. I said to him, "Oh, I have twenty-five dollars." And he said, "Well, you don't have to pay. I was just kidding." He said, "But maybe if it's a long ride or something--and it will be--we might have to stop to eat and I don't know if I have enough money." I said, "Okay, I'll pay for your dinner." I was to meet him in the lobby the next morning. I was there on time, but he never showed up; he was late. Jack Montgomery and a bunch of auto workers from Oakland who knew him were in the lobby and they said, "What are you doing, waiting here? Don't you have to get back to Frisco?" I said, "Yes, Estolv's supposed to meet me here, but he's an hour late or something." They said, "Okay, we'll take you back." I said, "Yes, it's getting late and I have a meeting tonight and I have to be in San Francisco." Well, just then Estolv walked in. And he said to them, "No you don't." He apologized. Anyhow, I went with him and Paul and we came back to San Francisco. Well, as it was, we didn't get back until very late, and I missed my meeting; we had to stop for dinner. I think it was about nine o'clock at night when we got back, and I was still living at home in those days. You know, a nice little Italian girl didn't leave home until marriage. Let's see, I was

WARD: twenty-seven and I was still living at home. They took me to my home and naturally everyone was asleep. I invited them in for a drink. My father used to make his own wine and we had this huge cellar with barrels of wine all neatly labeled: White 19 so-and-so; Red so-and-so; Vermouth so-and-so. And then on the last barrel in this long row, where he had planted an American flag and a big picture of Roosevelt--because Roosevelt had signed the law repealing prohibition, so he was an ardent supporter of Roosevelt. (laughing) Anyhow, I gave them some wine and we talked and they went home.

From then on the romance flourished. We used to go to meetings together. We had to go to meetings up in Truckee, a Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers meeting; they wanted to discuss the political role of Labor's Non-Partisan League: who they should vote for in the coming elections and so on. Estolv was giving the speech. We went to this lovely little town of Truckee. In those days it was utterly in the hands of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers, which was a real red local up there. It was on a Labor Day weekend and they had a Labor Day parade. The parade was headed by the local of the Mine, Mill, and <u>everybody</u> in town marched in the parade--business men--and they even had a prostitutes contingent; they were marching with them. It was marvelous.

INTERVIEWER: Amazing. The Mine, Mill had organized the prostitutes?

WARD: Yes. It was a small village--not a village, but it wasn't a big town. The Mine, Mill guys were really terrific. They were from the old school--you know, they had been Wobblies and anarchists. They made a tremendous impression on me.

Now that's an example of how my life style differed from the people I was organizing. In San Francisco I was organizing bank workers, but on my day off, on this particular Sunday, there I was marching in a parade with the Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers and having a ball and thinking how wonderful it was.

It was a very new thing for me, because after all I hadn't been in the labor movement that long and my eyes were open wide to all this, and these Mine, Mill guys were so wonderful to us. They had a big dormitory in a small "ghost town" near Truckee, adjacent to the Boca Dam project which Mine, Mill workers were building. The men guests from the city who had come up to participate in this celebration and speechifying--they had beds in this dormitory. I guess I was the only woman. (laughing) So they gave me a bed off at one end. I think they tried to put up a little curtain. I'll always remember lying in this bed and these men were walking back and forth. I thought to myself, "What am I doing here?" It was different from anything I'd ever experienced. Then the next morning I got up, we had breakfast and Estolv asked me how I had enjoyed sleeping. I said, "Well, it was a little odd to have all these guys." But they were all very proper; there was nothing....Still they had such reputations as wild men. One of them, Red--I forget his last name; it was Adams, Red Adams. I think he was president of the union--he had set a bomb somewhere in the dim, distant past; he was one of the colorful members of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers.

INTERVIEWER: In what ways do you think you changed from that contact?

WARD: You mean this particular contact, or the whole contact?

INTERVIEWER: In general, like becoming a part of the union movement.

WARE: Well, (pause) I do believe that I had a lot of the rebel in me. Perhaps it would have come out in another way, I don't know, but I think my contact with the labor movement just solidified the rebellious instinct that I had within me and it changed me so that I became more positive that the direction in which I was going was the right one. I think it broadened me in my concepts about society and my relationships with men and with women. When I compare what happened to me with what happened to my sisters, who stayed within their orbit, I can see that my life was much more full, much more varied, and much more rewarding. My sister--my second sister, the one who's next to me, who has now become quite liberal--found her outlet in the Church, in the Catholic Church. Now she's moved away from the Church, because she realizes that it did not do for her what my direction did for me. I think it made me a much more whole person. I hope that doesn't sound egotistical. But I think it made me more complete. I never regret one bit--even though later on I had political disagreements with the Party and all, and left it--I have never regretted it. I think if I hadn't gone in this direction, I wouldn't have met all the wonderful people I met and made all the great friendships that still endure after thirty and forty years. I wouldn't have met my husband. It's been hard; we had really difficult times--economically and otherwise--but it's been a very satisfying life. Then, I think the fact that I had so many interests, you see, that I never would have had if I had opted for just marrying some nice Italian young man, and raising a family, and being cooped up in an atmosphere that really didn't go anywhere.

I had a long talk with my sister about that the other day. She married a young Irish guy who had come from Ireland; he rose to a very high place in the bank, and they are prosperous and all. She said, "Oh, Angela, you don't know what it's like to go to these fancy dinners and sit next to somebody like Hayakawa. So often I'm the only one, in a room full of people, who thinks Mayor Moscone is half-way decent." She's not a flaming liberal, but she has good instincts and she votes quite correctly (laughing) according to my views. But she has nobody she can talk to, not even her husband, though they love each other. But she's in a way all by herself. The only person that she can talk to who agrees with her is me. I think that might have happened to me, though maybe personality has something to do with it too--the fact that I was a lot like my father, even though I didn't like him. I had a lot of his spirit of not taking things lying down, and being a rebel. That may have led me into this path. Whereas my sister Irene is a more docile person and more accepting of things. Now she realized maybe she should have fought a little bit, too.

INTERVIEWER: Did any of the values that you were raised with change, once you came in contact with radical movements?

WARD: Oh yes; I felt, for example, that possessions were not important anymore. And I suppose in the early days of my conversion as it were, I went overboard on this. My husband and I always used to say, "All we need is a car, with a hi-fi in the back, and books. We don't want to own any furniture or anything." And we'd just go and organize and do our political work. Of course, then you do change.
Other values, moral values that are imposed on one growing up in a Catholic atmosphere, in the Catholic religion, I came to find out were not the ultimate thing--you know, questions of marriage and so on. So in that regard my values did change.
I was more inclined to judge people not by their external shell, but what they <u>really</u> were like inside, what they believed in. That was much more important than whether they were living in "sin" with a man; those things which might have shocked me ten years before no longer were relevant. So, yes, my values did change. I didn't think it was important to have a beautiful home or beautiful clothes. The only thing my values never changed on was, boy, I wanted to travel. That used to bother me, that I couldn't find the time or the money, until I was much older, to do that because I was interested in seeing how other people lived and how people fared in other countries and what made them tick.

INTERVIEWER: Were there different attitudes towards sex and towards marriage in radical groups?

WARD: Oh yes, I think it was much looser. Yes, even in those days. It was odd; you know, the communists were very moral in some sense. On the other hand, you knew darned well there were couples living together without the benefit of matrimony. That, the Party or the communists didn't feel was such a terrible thing. They did frown on promiscuity or any kind of aberration, such as homosexuals. That was frowned upon. I recall that the Party had the same view as the State Department on the question of people with questionable sexual standards being members: they would not tolerate anybody of that kind in the movement. They were very stiff-necked about it; that's what I think.

INTERVIEWER: Was this a written Party policy or was it just informal?

WARD: I don't think many of these things were ever written; they were understood. As I recall, there was maybe an instance or two where lesbians somehow were recruited into the Party, but they were dropped when it was disclosed that they were of that persuasion. Now I don't know how it was found out, but they were dropped from the Party.

INTERVIEWER: That happened in the organization you were in?

WARD: No, I heard it. It didn't happen in the group of which I was

WARD: a part, but I'm sure it happened because I knew the people; I mean, I knew of them. I had seen them at mass meetings and things of that sort. So I knew who they were by name. Then I was told that they had been dropped from the organization because of that. Now, I don't know if that still persists, because I haven't been in the Party for many, many years.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. (pause) Getting back to your marriage, I was wondering when you decided to marry?

WARD: Let's see, my husband was divorced when we met. Well, first we lived together and that was hard, because of my parents. We told them but--let's see, how did we do it? Well, when we went to the Mooney pardon hearing in Sacramento, that was a great occasion and we decided that we'd tell my family that we had gotten married that weekend. That's what we did. Even though we hadn't gotten married. We went to this wonderful pardon hearing of Tom Mooney and there was the Governor's Ball, and Olsen's inaugural.[1] Then we came back to San Francisco and went to my family's house for dinner. I was really nervous; I had on this little ring and nobody noticed it. You see, we bought this ring and we were going to say that were married. Finally at the dinner table I burst out and said, "What's the matter with you people? Can't you see that we're married?" My mother looked pleased, but my father....A shadow fell over his face, but then he said, "Well, this calls for a bottle of champagne." He went down in the cellar and got a bottle of champagne, but I don't think he was too pleased about it. But then we really got married about nine months later. You know, it was a marriage that was secret, because we couldn't let it be known after my family thought we were married in June. So I have several anniversaries. (laughing) Now it doesn't matter anymore. But it used to be, my sisters would say, "Isn't today your anniversary?"

INTERVIEWER: Why did you decide to live together rather than get married?

WARD: We lived together when we were not really married because we were in love and we thought that we would try it out. Then when we decided it was okay, we just went and really got married. Some of our friends were doing the same thing.
You know, funny things would happen. Estolv was the secretary of the Bridges Defense Committee, and we were living in this nice little apartment on Filbert Street, right above Leavenworth; and my family lived on Lombard and Leavenworth! You know, that wasn't very far away. One morning when we left the house to go to work, here was the FBI down at the corner taking our picture--Estolv was the secretary of the Bridges Defense Committee, and I was the president of the Office Workers Union! We thought,

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[1]These events, the election of Culbert Olsen, his inaugural as Governor of California, all took place in January, 1939. Mooney was pardoned on January 7, 1939.

WARD: "Uh-oh. This is going to get in the papers." Boy. It wouldn't have been so bad for me because I wasn't known, but for him it would have been bad. You know, it could have hurt the Bridges campaign. We didn't get married right away, but we stopped living together for a few days, a couple of weeks, until we found out it was okay to get back. Then we decided that it wasn't a good idea to keep this up and there was no reason not to get married. So we did.

INTERVIEWER: How did your marriage affect your work?

WARD: Oh, I think I worked better, because we were doing the same thing in different fields. We were so compatible politically and culturally, in our tastes. And then my husband had more experience; now maybe a women's libber shouldn't say that, but he was very helpful to me. I was relatively immature and he's older, you know--he's eleven years older than I am--and he'd had a lot of experience in the Upton Sinclair campaign. He was a newspaperman and he'd been fired from the Oakland Tribune for his reportage of the longshore strike in 1934 and for organizing the Newspaper Guild, and had been bailiff for the Supreme Court of California; he knew a lot and he could write very well. He used to help me in drafting proposals for the union.

INTERVIEWER: How did he feel about your working?

WARD: Oh, first of all we had to work, both of us, because in those days the salaries were very poor and he had to support his children. That's why we never had children of our own; he had three children to support and they were all pretty young. So that wasn't a question. In the first place, I wouldn't have wanted not to work. I mean, what would I do? I wouldn't stay home, crochet doilies, keep house and (pause)--it's true I like to cook. (laughing) But, oh no, there was never any feeling that I should stay at home. Those questions didn't even arise among (slight pause) comrades, shall we say? No. Maybe it was an unknown women's lib factor or something, that a woman had a right to work if she wanted to, not necessarily because it was economically needful but because it was needful for her development.

INTERVIEWER: Did Estolv's children come and visit you?

WARD: One of them did. She was a rebel and, you know, didn't want to go to school or anything. She would do things like go down to the Farm Workers Union and do the filing and she fell into the social part of the progressive movement. After all, she was only fifteen. Now she's a very fine, sober young woman--she's not young anymore--and has two children of her own. She lives down south.
I did find it difficult the year she lived with us because her upbringing had been so different from mine. I thought she was given too much freedom. I'd say to Estolv, "Are you going to let her go out tonight with that fellow, you don't even know??" And

WARD: things like that. I didn't interfere so much, but I would tell him that I thought it was wrong. She smoked, you know, and that was terrible, from my point of view--anybody smoking at that age. She was very mature. And I found it difficult. I didn't want to discipline her, but there were so many things that I thought she was doing that weren't right. I felt sometimes that she was more sophisticated than I was! I really did have that feeling. It was hard for me to relate to her at first, then we became very fond of each other.

INTERVIEWER: It was basically your husband's responsibility to discipline her and raise her?

WARD: Yes, I didn't try to, because I think I was still close enough to my own upbringing. While my values had changed there were certain moral, or certain disciplinary factors that had governed my youth and my early womanhood that I still felt were important. I didn't think a girl of fifteen should get home at three in the morning. I felt that she wasn't old enough to make judgements. He agreed with me, but I don't think he was as strict with her as he should have been, but she turned out all right. Maybe he was right; I don't know. Maybe if we had tried to curtail her more, she would have--well, I don't know what would have happened, but it didn't come about, so it worked out okay.

INTERVIEWER: How did you share the other household responsibilities?

WARD: Well, we always had sort of 50-50ish arrangement. He's always done--to this day, he always does the floors and heavy work. I won't let him cook, because I love to cook and he's just awful. So I do the cooking but he'd do the dishes. When I had a meeting he would, you know, make do for himself. I think we share; the household was not a difficult thing.

INTERVIEWER: Did you expect to have children?

WARD: No. At that time, when we were married, as I say, he had three children and we were very poor. I thought, well, I have enough: I have access to these three children and I can see them whenever he does, which was often enough. And I felt that our life and what we were doing was enough. I also had, with all my reading, very dire visions of the future insofar as the progressive movement was concerned: that some terrible times were in the offing and this would be no time to be raising children. There were periods where you would think, well, you might even end up in a concentration camp. I daresay it was a little romanticized, but at that time I had a feeling that people who were dedicated to making a better world had no business having children at that point. I can say I've never regretted it--people have asked me that. I think it's because I have the children. You see, I have the grandchildren: they were here yesterday, they're coming back Thursday. You know, I've been very close to them. So it's as though I had my own children.

INTERVIEWER: Was that a pretty general attitude?

WARD: Well, some people in the movement felt that way. Now Caroline didn't; she had four children, but her economic circumstances were different. Lawyers somehow did very well. (laughing) Some of my very close friends had two and then would have no more. Sometimes they'd say, well, they didn't know. Children grow up and get away from them and all. Yes, there were quite a few people in the movement who felt that this was no time in the history of (sighing) man to get involved. I know oftentimes I felt that way, when we were involved in struggles like the Mine, Mill in Nevada, and when actually dangerous events took place before the war. And then we were living and working during the Depression years; the future didn't hold out such rosy prospects.

INTERVIEWER: Was there any one time more than another that you felt pressure to have children?

WARD: That I felt pressure?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

WARD: Well, who would pressure me?

INTERVIEWER: Just from the larger culture.

WARD: No, no. I remember once that our doctor, who's a close friend of ours, came over to our house the day his child was born to look at our big dictionary and find a nice name for his little girl. He said to Estolv and me, "Why don't you two have a baby? You'd have a wonderful child." After he left we discussed it, and I said, "Oh, no. It's too late, I'm too old and I've got too many things to do." I guess that's the only time I ever expressed a desire--it wasn't pressure. I definitely had the decision to make myself and I made it the way I did.

INTERVIEWER: You didn't feel stigmatized in any way?

WARD: Oh, no. My mother used to say, "You're smart not to have any children." And my sister Irene, who had four boys, she always would say to me, "Don't you feel you'd like to have a baby?" Then she'd laugh and say, "Oh, the way you carry on, you and Estolv, with all your meetings and everything; I don't know when you'd have enough time to raise a family." No, my parents never felt that it was unusual that I didn't have children.

INTERVIEWER: I have one more question about your husband and your marriage. In general, what was his attitude towards the role of women?

WARD: (laughing quizzically) Well, how do you mean, the "role of women"? Do you mean whether they should have a career or not?

INTERVIEWER: Right. You mentioned that you never felt pressure from him, that

INTERVIEWER: your going to work seemed natural.

WARD: Oh yes. Sometimes he'd say, "Why don't you get one of these fancy jobs like some of these women, which pay good money?" No, there was never any question about a career. Even now he's the one who sometimes says, "Now you go down to the Bancroft and do that oral history of Henry Schmidt's." And I say, "Oh, I don't feel like it today." No, he likes me to be active.

INTERVIEWER: Why don't we just start with the basic chronology and the situation in Nevada where you were organizing.

WARD: Well, first we went to Los Angeles. I worked in the office of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers. I was a member of the union and I was an elected official of the Mine, Mill Local 700--Western Mechanics Local 700 of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers.

INTERVIEWER: What was your official title?

WARD: I think I was the Secretary-Treasurer in Local 700. And my husband was the organizer. At first there were these big organizing drives in the Harvill Aircraft Corporation which Local 700 organized. Then there were all manner of plastic factories; I think they had contracts with about twenty or twenty-five companies. The big one was the Torrence Aluminum outfit. I was elected as a delegate from Local 700 to go to Butte, Montana--maybe I was elected from Las Vegas; I don't remember which local it was. From Los Angeles we were transferred to Las Vegas to organize Basic Magnesium Incorporated.
The big thing which happened in Los Angeles, though, was my first real confrontation on a picket line. It wasn't even our union that was involved; it was when the United Auto Workers were organizing . . .

INTERVIEWER: American Aviation?

WARD: American Aviation, I think. No, North American. It was this <u>great</u> big corporation. All the unions in Los Angeles went to the picket line and they called out the National Guard. Let's see, there was Slim Connoly, who was the Secretary-Treasurer of the Los Angeles CIO Council, and all the officers of the Council, who were in the first row as we marched up the street, and I was right up front. When we got to a certain point the National Guard came at us with their guns. And Slim Connoly said, "We have to retreat, but retreat very slowly, one step at a time." We would step one step back--these soldiers with their bayonets were just young kids, and they were so nervous, their hands were shaking, their guns were shaking--and this retreat was taking so long they finally started to throw tear gas. We would pick up the tear gas and throw it back at them and it ended up in a wild melee. Finally it dispersed. That was my first confrontation. The experience from that (laughing) was to come in handy in Las Vegas later on.

WARD: Shortly thereafter we went to Las Vegas. Actually it was a small town about ten miles out of Las Vegas--Pittman, Nevada--and it was out in the desert. There was nothing there, except this beautiful plant; you could see it from forty miles away: this great huge Basic Magnesium plant, with the furnaces glowing over the desert. It was a great testimonial to man's ingenuity and technical advancement. It was also, as my husband always said, the biggest (laughing) government cost-plus contract of World War II, because they needed this magnesium for ammunition in the war effort and so on. It was a big hoax financially; Anaconda Copper owned the place and they built it on this cost-plus contract and made a fortune out of it. You know, it all came out of the workers' and the taxpayers' pockets.
So that's when we started. We had this little old office out in the desert. There was no running water and the temperature would often reach 110°. And I worked in the office, collected dues and kept the books. The workers would come in with their beefs and so on, and my husband was always running between the plant and Las Vegas.

INTERVIEWER: Were you the only two organizers?

WARD: Yes. This went on for about ten months. You see, an election had been won by the Mine, Mill, but the AF of L wouldn't concede. Before the election the AFL had had contracts on a craft basis; they organized the machinists, or the operating engineers, and they didn't give a darn about the mass of workers in the plant--I think at that time there were about ten thousand workers--most of whom were southern blacks, who had come there in the migration from the South to provide the manpower in this great plant.
The plant was segregated between black and white workers and there was animosity between the skilled white workers and the blacks. Of course, there were some unskilled white workers too, but the majority of the unskilled were black. Certainly there were no black workers in the crafts; they did the dirty work, you see. It was terrible work. You were working with this hot magnesium and the stench and the temperature in the plant was unbelievable. When you consider that outside sometimes it was 110°, you can imagine what it was inside that plant. When the workers got through with their shift they could go take a shower because they were completely enervated by the conditions within the plant. Well, the black workers maybe had two showers as against twenty-five for the white workers, and half of the blacks could never get a shower and they'd come out with their faces blackened worse--you know, more black than their skin--sweating and drenched to the bone. The conditions were just terrible.
Well, a large portion of our membership was black, though we had a lot of white guys in there too, and we had won the election. But when we got there we had to petition for another election to settle this question once and for all. These AF of L craft unions just wouldn't give in and the company was siding with them; they wouldn't negotiate with the Mine, Mill.

INTERVIEWER: And [the company] would only negotiate with and for the skilled crafts?

WARD: Right. So new demands were made at the War Labor Board for a new election, even though we had won the original one. That was the start of the conflict; and from there it got very bitter. (Speaking more slowly, sighing) In order to get the War Labor Board off the dime and get this election date set, my husband had to go to Washington to demand that the Board act. The War Labor Board chairman said to him, "Well," he said, "if you want an election, only way I think you can get one is to strike." And you know it was wartime and there was a no-strike pledge by the unions, and everyone--well, management of course was all for a no-strike pledge. That shows you how bad it was, though. Here the government was telling my husband the only way we could get an election was to call a strike in the plant.

INTERVIEWER: Knowing that there was a no-strike pledge.

WARD: Yes. The last time my husband went back--he had gone back a couple of times--it was precipitated by the fact that the union was handing out leaflets at this plant--it had a big wire fence around it--and the men--the members of the union, black and white--would go to the factory gates at the afternoon shift and in the morning shift. They'd go with my husband and they'd give out leaflets, urging the people to write to the War Labor Board, demanding an election, and all sorts of tactics to get this election under way. Or urging them to come to a union meeting, for example, where they were going to discuss what action was going to be taken next.
Well, one morning when these men were out there giving out leaflets, they were attacked by the Teamster [Union] goons with baseball bats and stuff. The men were unarmed; they ran off and tried to escape but some of them were beaten up and couldn't finish giving out the leaflets. That night there was a meeting in the union hall. I don't remember if I had discussed this with my husband before, but he said to me, "The only thing I can see is that we'll have to send the wives out to give out the leaflets and you could lead this." I said, "Yes, that's right; they'll never dare to touch us." And that's what we did the next morning; about fifteen women--we all went out to these plant gates.

INTERVIEWER: Were these women who were wives of workers?

WARD: Yes. Because, you see, this plant didn't employ women; it was all very difficult work here.

INTERVIEWER: Black and white?

WARD: No, none of the black wives came, only white wives, as I recall. No, there weren't any black women because the black women had just come from the South and they weren't....in fact, some of the men hadn't even brought their families yet.
Anyhow, we all got there and by God, if those damn Teamsters didn't come out with their baseball bats. We just stood there and kept giving out leaflets. They didn't have the nerve to come up and start a fight with a bunch of women, so what they started to do was to play baseball, <u>real</u> close to us. They'd swing these bats--

WARD: fsshhhewe--and they'd toss these hard balls; they'd come whizzing by. Well, we stood our ground and gave out those leaflets, but there were times when I felt--Gad, we're all going to end up with cracked heads. And then they'll [the Teamster] say, "Well, these women had no business to interfere with our ball game; we were just playing ball." We gave out the leaflets, but we thought, oh, this is going to be rough. You know, the next time it might lead to real violence like had happened to the men.

When we got back to the union hall we were telling my husband what had happened, all of us. We were saying, "Gad, they were just awful, these men." My husband, who's always great at this kind of stuff said, "Well, you know, I think we ought to get some hard hats and those knee pads," (laughing) and he was really going to do it; he was going to send out for hard hats and knee pads. We were all for that, too. There was an element of adventure in it and the fact that, by God, the men had to call on <u>us</u> to do something that required a degree of physical courage.

INTERVIEWER: You were ready for it . . .

WARD: We were ready for it. The wives were really mad, you know. After all, their husbands were working in this plant under these onerous conditions, and to have to be subject to actual physical abuse and violence for giving out a leaflet....Then the next day, the AF of L put out a leaflet that showed a coffin and my husband lying in it, saying This is what is in store for you. And then there were remarks about the men being cowards for letting women go out there and give out leaflets and all, and the situation was getting really very bad. That's when he was called back to Washington. The union officers in Denver, Colorado--that's where the national office was--called him up and told him to go into Washington and present all this material to the War Labor Board and show how serious the situation was and that it was bound to result in an explosion of violence and probably killings unless the Board took some action in regard to this election. And that's what he did. It was at that time and at that meeting with the War Labor Board that they said to him, "Why don't you have a strike? That might provoke some action on our part."

He called me up and told me that. We had discussed this even before he went to Washington and I said, "No-strike pledge or not, I think that it's going to be impossible to hold those blacks and whites in the plant. For my money, I'd just as soon see them walk out." Production was lagging, as it was bound to with this conflict between the unions and between the blacks and the whites going on within the plant, especially between the white skilled craftsmen and the black underdogs there was always this terrible tension and this racist atmosphere that was so horrendous.

INTERVIEWER: Was the animosity stronger from the AF of L leaders than from the rank and file?

WARD: Well, yes, it always is; the animosity was very great, but the

WARD: animosity of the skilled workers towards the unskilled was tremendous. It was complicated by the fact that it wasn't just animosity of white skilled workers against white unskilled workers; it was white skilled workers against predominantly black unskilled workers. There were white unskilled workers in that contingent and in fact they were our best union members with the blacks. But I don't think we had maybe ten or fifteen white skilled workers in the union--you know, who came over from the AF of L to the Mine, Mill. The skilled whites were men with very progressive ideas who believed in industrial unionism.

INTERVIEWER: Did they feel that if the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers had the contract, that they wouldn't bargain for the skilled workers as strongly as the AF of L?

WARD: That might have been an element. These skilled workers were so far advanced in their wage scales and in their working conditions though, that inevitably the major struggle or the major brunt of the negotiations would have had to be on behalf of the unskilled--black and white--because the difference in parity was so tremendous. All right, maybe the skilled workers would have gotten on a percentage basis only a 5 percent wage increase, whereas to lift the bulk of the plant, the unskilled would have had to have a 25 percent wage increase. I'm just throwing these figures out as an example. Yes, I suppose the skilled workers thought their demands would be disregarded, their position of affluence would be threatened. Yes, there's always been that fear in the whole conflict of craft unionism versus industrial unionism. The craft workers always thought they were going to lose out.

INTERVIEWER: Why don't we take up with the story of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers?

WARD: Where did I leave off?

INTERVIEWER: You brought us up to where the women had taken over the picket lines because of the Teamster [Union] harrassment.

WARD: Right.

INTERVIEWER: That happened once?

WARD: A couple of times. Then the situation became very difficult after that in the sense that we were not able to get any action on the part of the company in recognizing the union, which had legitimately won its election, or in getting the government--the National Labor Relations Board--to put pressure on the company to bargain with the union. The reason they were unable to do that was because the Teamsters Union was so powerful--it just defied the government.

INTERVIEWER: It wasn't the Metal Trades Union?

WARD: It was the Teamsters [Union] and the Metal Trades [Union]; it was a conglomerate of AF of L unions. Now I don't remember specifically all the unions that were involved, but the Teamsters were very important in this because they also had a bargaining unit in BMI. You see, they were organized on craft lines, and not on industrial lines as we were. They had a teamsters unit, a metal workers unit, a machine operators unit, and operating engineers--all different crafts. Those are some that I remember. Well, finally, since we were unable to get any action, my husband went to Washington,D.C. to meet with the War Labor Board, as it was called then. I was left in charge of this very explosive situation. And one day--oh, I guess it was about one day after my husband had left--about six-hundred black workers in BMI walked off the job, because they had been denied the right to have shower facilities and there was segregation and all sorts of abuses against them because they were blacks. Well, this was wartime and the CIO and all the unions had taken no-strike pledges. Here we were confronted with all these black members of the union, some of them weren't even in the union--but they united, union and non-union, and walked off the job. They were joined by some white union members from the Mine, Mill, but not an overwhelming number. However, it was a substantial number of people who walked off the job. And this was, you know, unheard of in wartime. It presented a really difficult problem, to put it mildly. I wanted to support them because right was on their side. However, we had this no-strike pledge. But I could see no way of urging these members to go back on the job, even if they would be accepted. We didn't know at that point whether the company was so happy to see them go that they would like to see them go permanently. We had no opportunity to even discuss that. I called my husband in Washington and told him what had happened, and he got in touch with the War Labor Board and reported that there was this breakdown at the Basic Magnesium plant and that almost one thousand workers had walked off the job on the question of segregation and discrimination. My husband said, "Now, how can we get the right to bargain? How can we go in with the company and start to negotiate for the solution of the grievances that these workers have, including this one which caused them to walk off the job?" And this man on the War Labor Board said to him, "Have them go out on strike. We'll only recognize a problem if they're out on strike." Well, they had already gone out on strike and the government didn't seem to care.

INTERVIEWER: The War Labor Board representative said that before they had actually struck?

WARD: I think it was during, you know, it was all very close, this action that took place. I may be wrong in the sequence, but the burden of it was that the government would do nothing until the workers went out on strike, not only on a so-called wildcat strike. Now whether he thought--after all, there were ten thousand workers in this plant, only close to a thousand had walked out who were primarily blacks and <u>they</u> had walked out on the question of discrimination.

WARD: The other problems that the workers had at BMI were wages, the intolerable working conditions under the most brutal heat environment, because they were making this molten magnesium--it was a brutal place to work. The white workers had problems too, but they hadn't gone out on strike. And the blacks--their problems were augmented, besides the heat and all, by the fact that they had the worst jobs in the plant; they took the worst beating. And then, on top of that, they had this gross discrimination to contend with. After you work in a plant where the temperature is 110° and 120°, you have the right to take a shower, which the white workers had and the blacks didn't. Then they were segregated where they had two showers for twelve hundred men, say, or fifteen hundred, and the white workers had, you know, a fairly decent set-up. So these were all problems.

What I remember of this terrible situation we had that night in Pittman, which was the little suburb of Las Vegas, was that we called a meeting in the church which the blacks attended; it was their church. One of my colleagues--a male organizer--and I went in this church and we walked down the aisle. Here the place was full of angry blacks. Neither one of us could get up there and tell those blacks to go back to work. We just couldn't. We listened to their grievances and in doing this I went against the policy of the national CIO. And I must say my husband agreed with me; he said on the phone, "Well, what can you do? You just can't...."

Oh, I'll never forget how moved this fellow--Joe Hausman, my partner--and I were as we walked down that aisle of the church and saw the angry faces of these blacks. It wasn't that we were frightened; if our position had been a correct position, I would have defied them and said, "Yes, you must go back to work." But I couldn't see why it was so important that they go back to work under these onerous conditions and that I be the instrument to urge them to go back to work. Joe and I both agreed on this, so we just let them talk, and when it came down to buttons and they asked us what we thought, we said, "Well, we think you're right. But we don't know if we're in a position to win this battle. You may lose your jobs; you may never be able to go back to work, but we'll do the best we can." Or words to that effect.

Well, by God, the next day when it was found out that the union was supporting the strikers, there was pandemonium in Washington because the situation was becoming explosive. They sent in the chief of the--I can't recall the name of it, but it was a national committee to handle problems of discrimination and segregation . . .

INTERVIEWER: The Fair Employment Practices . . ?

WARD: Some committee--I don't think it was the Fair Employment Practices Committee, but it could have been--or one of the War Manpower Commissions that was handling cases. Believe me, this problem was coming up in other industries, like shipyards and so on. So they sent the chief out there; he arrived in Las Vegas the following day. I went into town with Joe to meet with this committee that was coming in from Washington. We knew that

WARD: the chief of the committee was a liberal and, quote, "a good guy", unquote. We also recognized that he was in a difficult position. Anyhow, when we got into Las Vegas they had set up machine guns on the corners of the street.

INTERVIEWER: Who had?

WARD: The government, the army, to prevent any demonstrations or rioting. They were really building up a situation that didn't exist--which shows the role sometimes of the army, setting up the machine guns on the corner. They actually had them on the main street because we had threatened to have a parade through town.

INTERVIEWER: You had? A union-supported parade?

WARD: To have the union parade through town with signs saying why the men had walked off the job. Well, we were never able to hold the parade, because it would have been dangerous; we could see that there was a build-up. If we had moved one bit in the wrong direction there could have been rioting, bloodshed, and violence, which certainly the union was not condoning. So we didn't have the parade. But I'll never forget the sight of those machine gun nests: they were like little nests on the corners of the street. Anyhow, we didn't get to first base. We didn't win anything.

INTERVIEWER: The government stepped in to negotiate?

WARD: They stepped in to try to calm the situation down, but they had absolutely no say with the Basic Magnesium Corporation, which was in reality the Anaconda Copper Corporation. They just didn't have the oomph to tell them to obey the law, and they didn't.

INTERVIEWER: So you weren't in any kind of negotiating situation at that point with the company?

WARD: No. I remember that we used to have a radio program every night and my husband would talk on the air. He'd tell what the union was doing and what progress, if any, was being made. This was kept up the whole time he was back in Washington; I would write the script and go on the air. The night that he came back, he was on the plane flying in from Washington, and he heard me on the radio, talking. I was just explaining to the public and the union what had happened, why we were stymied, and that we were still in touch with Washington and hoping to get some resolution to this impasse in which we found ourselves. My husband said to me afterwards, "Your voice sounded so deep." (laughing) I said, "I was so scared." I really wasn't saying anything constructive. I was just trying to encourage the workers and not to have them feel let down. But I had nothing to tell them that was good for them, or for me, or for the union, or for anybody; it was a terrible situation.

INTERVIEWER: What was your strategy? To try to hold out as long as you could?

WARD: Yes, but then in the end we couldn't. The AF of L won--they didn't win anything--they just had the strength to go in there, and the Mine, Mill was defeated.

INTERVIEWER: The government never did come in to conduct an election?

WARD: No. The election had been conducted previously and we had won it, but they never enforced that election, you know, to say the Mine, Mill is the collective bargaining agent and you must bargain with them; at least you must bargain for the industrial workers that they represent in that plant. They never did; they never forced the company. The AF of L and the company were together and the government was not about to engage in any disruption in the flow of production in wartime. What did they care? As long as the plant kept running, they didn't give a damn if it was the Mine, Mill or who. It was of no great importance to the government, as long as the magnesium kept pouring out.
So we were defeated after almost a year and we left there. In order to try to preserve something for the union members we urged them to join the AF of L so they could keep their jobs, and to fight for union democracy within the AF of L.

INTERVIEWER: Did the AF of L accept the unskilled workers into the union?

WARD: Not all of them, I'm sure. Then many of the workers left in disgust. This was, let's see, in 1943, and the beginning of 1944. We came back to California without jobs and everybody was mad at us. The Communist Party was very angry with us because we had condoned strike action in wartime. We were criticized by a lot of the CIO leaders who were following the line: no strikes in wartime. Here were a couple of mavericks in Nevada who had defied all the powers that be. When we came back we were, well, (sighing) as I say, we were not in a position to do much of anything.

INTERVIEWER: I wanted to ask a few more questions about the strike. It was essentially a wildcat strike?

WARD: Yes. Spontaneous. The anger of the workers just came to a head.

INTERVIEWER: How did it start? Was there any incident that set it off?

WARD: Yes: when the men went to take their showers. I think where the blacks could shower there were only two, as against maybe twenty for the whites. One of the things that we had fought for, after we won the election, was that all the showers would be as one. The blacks could go where the whites showered and vice versa. Then, as the War Labor Board did nothing to enforce the collective bargaining rights that we had won, things started to revert to what they had been before and kept getting worse and worse, even though we were battling to get this recognition. Finally it came to a head this one afternoon, where this mass of black and white workers--you see, they all belonged to our union.

WARD: We had no discrimination; we took everybody in--they just blew their stacks and said, "If they won't let us, we'll walk off the job." And that's what they did. It was a beautiful manifestation of a wildcat strike. Nobody urged them; they urged themselves.

INTERVIEWER: And they knew that the union itself was behind them?

WARD: They knew we had a no-strike pledge, but they did it anyhow. Now that I look back on it, I think that a no-strike policy in wartime is not right. I mean it should not have been so universally applied. Especially in situations like this, where really I don't think it harmed the war effort at all. A no-strike pledge should also be accompanied by the rights of the workers being observed and carried out. It shouldn't all be on one side. That was the wrong thing about the no-strike pledge in wartime. The union movement was eager to help the war effort and gave that pledge in all honesty and sincerity and tried to carry it out, but it also carried with it the responsibility of the employers to fulfill their share of the burden, or to observe the rights of the workers to a minimal extent. At Basic Magnesium there was none of that. There was open defiance of collective bargaining, open defiance of recognition of the workers as a union. I'm never going to be sorry that we went back on the no-strike pledge. I think it was the right thing to do.

INTERVIEWER: And comrades of yours in the Party and also trade unionists felt that you weren't justified in doing that, even though the workers' rights were being violated?

WARD: Yes. They said, "This is wartime and we're fighting the battle against fascism and Nazism and there are injustices being done but we have to look at the overall picture." I think overall the American labor movement responded beautifully to their responsibilities. These small infractions [the strikes and stoppages], if you want to call them that, as occurred at BMI--and there were others that occurred in the United States--were not of such a great import that we should have given up all the rights of the working class for recognition and to preserve some of the decencies that we were entitled to have. I still get mad when I think about it.

INTERVIEWER: Had you already decided how you were going to respond before you walked into the church?

WARD: Oh no. I think Joe and I were in such a state of turmoil that, as I recall, we estimated that it was impossible to try to urge the workers to go back or to ignore the violations of their rights. From what we had seen that afternoon as they came pouring out of the plant, [we knew] it wouldn't be possible to try to convince them otherwise. The most we could do was to point out to them what obstacles lay in their path, and that the chances of their winning were very remote. I told them that I'd spoken to my husband in Washington, that the government had

WARD: given him this callous response to his plea for action and that the callous response was: "You'll have to take the whole plant out on strike before we'll do anything." So all we could do, Joe and I decided, was to give them an honest picture of the situation as we saw it and our evaluation that the chances of victory were very slim indeed. We pointed out to them that the Chairman of the Fair Employment Practices Committee was on his way out from Washington, would arrive tomorrow. I remember I said, "He's a very understanding person but he's not in a position to do a great deal, in my or my husband's estimation. The most he can do is try to prevent a tragedy or an outbreak of violence here. I don't think we can look to that avenue as an area where we can expect some action which is advantageous to us." That's all we did; we told them what the situation was. We also said, in conclusion, that we could understand why they did it and we certainly weren't going to oppose it in any way, but we also told them the union was in a bad position to try to effect a victory for them.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get any support from the International [Union]?

WARD: Well, yes, in a way. They were in a terrible state, too. (laughing) I guess they gave us all the moral support they could, especially some of the officers. The International Union had some very progressive officers in the top leadership and then there were a couple who were middle-of-the-roaders and fence sitters. So they had their problems too; they couldn't come to us and say, "The International Executive Board gives you 100 percent support." My husband was in telephone conversation with some of the officers of the union who, while they didn't say, "We think it's great; pull a strike," they also could understand that it was a situation that was beyond the control of any decent person. There was nothing we could do; there was nothing the International could do, even though they tried to get to the War Labor Board in Washington and add their voices to the ones already there--my husband and others--but they were unable to get any action.

INTERVIEWER: How long did the strike go on?

WARD: Well, it didn't last very long because the situation disintegrated; only a few days, I would say. Some of the men went back to work; I guess most of the white guys finally went back, but it wasn't anything where you could say, "150 people were accepted back on the job." It just sort of disintegrated. After a while we could see there was nothing to do; the union was broken. (quietly) So we came back here.

INTERVIEWER: You were about to talk about some of the response you got when you came back.

WARD: Well, I remember before we came back, while we were still trying to salvage something out of the union back at Basic Magnesium--and this all occurred within a period of a couple

WARD: weeks--our friends and trade union people in California had heard about this terrible struggle that went on. The International Union had, you know, conferences and talked about it. You see, my husband and I were paid very small salaries by the BMI local union. We were not on the International payroll. Well, when things started to disintegrate we didn't take any salaries, so that we could keep going as long as possible and try to effect some kind of solution within the short span of time which remained to us. We were just living from hand to mouth, as it were; the workers would have us over, you know; we'd eat at one guy's house one night, and so on and so forth. One very touching thing happened: one day in the mail there came a check which represented a collection that had been taken by our fellow trade unionists in Mine, Mill and other CIO unions in California, and even in the national office. You know, it was a spontaneous thing. They sent us--I don't remember exactly--but it came to a couple of hundred dollars, which enabled us to keep going for a while and finally drive back to California and come back here.

INTERVIEWER: I was interested in the response that you got when you came back.

WARD: Well, it varied. The [Communist] Party was very upset with us and took us to task for the role that we had played in the Nevada strike. We were criticized forthrightly, and told that we had committed a very serious act by condoning the strike.

INTERVIEWER: What did this involve? Was a special meeting called?

WARD: Well, we were members of the Party and we had not followed the party line, even by tacit agreement, or by our silence; if we had remained silent it would have been wrong. The Party's position was that we should have stood before these workers and urged them to go back to work and not strike, that the war effort was the primary thing. By the very fact that after consultation with my husband, I and this other organizer had gone before this union meeting and had just given them a resume of what the situation was, and had implied that the union members were correct in walking off the job--even if we didn't say it forthrightly; I think we said it pretty forthrightly--but the position was that we should have opposed the action taken by these workers with might and main. Instead we didn't; we gave our tacit approval by even making a speech pointing out what had led up to the walkout, telling the people that the government was not going to support them, and the War Labor Board was not going to enforce the collective bargaining rights of the workers. Whereas, according to the Party, we should have gone in there and said, "It's your duty to go back on the job. You should never have walked off. You have created a situation that can have such-and-such a result, etc., etc."
We weren't brought up on charges, but we were (pause) criticized. People were told that we had done the wrong thing. Now, I must say that there were quite a few people, Party members and union members--of course, the union members who were not Party members

WARD: didn't know about this action on the part of the Communist Party--but the union members, especially Mine, Mill members who knew what we had been up against, gave us their support. Some of them who were Party members defied the Party and said, "We think they were right in handling it the way they did." Then there were others--Party members--who thought we were wrong and said so. So we had a little bit of both. We had support, and in those days we were sufficiently "good Party members," in quotes, that even though we didn't agree, we accepted--how should I say--the discipline or the fact that they asserted their position.

INTERVIEWER: Was the party line more strictly enforced during the war period than previously?

WARD: Well, now that I look back on it I think it depended a lot on who you were. There were plenty of people who had close ties with the Party or who were Party members, but who held sufficiently high posts in the labor movement or in industry--there were some members even in industry or in a professional capacity--who were big enough to say to the Party, "We don't agree," or "The hell with your position." They weren't kicked out because they had a large following in their union and it was important to keep them close to the Party. But people like us, who had had a following but now had no union behind us anymore, we had to take more of the criticism.

INTERVIEWER: Who would have determined whether you would have been kicked out?

WARD: Oh, there were committees in the Party that handled these things. It never came to the point of kicking us out, but we were reprimanded--that's the word I was looking for. Now on the other hand, there were very top people in the CIO who thought we had done the right thing and who even offered us jobs in other areas. Without mentioning any names, we were offered a good post in Hawaii to organize the sugar workers. Anyhow, we didn't take it. We thought about it a lot, but we had family here. We had been through an awful lot and we weren't ready yet to go into another battle. The sugar workers and pineapple workers' battle was just shaping up and it was going to be a real tough thing. So we didn't take it up. But we were offered jobs. In fact, I got a job right away with the Utility Workers.
My husband wanted to write. He wanted to write the story of BMI, but then he got involved in political stuff. He started to write the story of BMI, but then he got the idea of writing about a "piecard," a "piecard" being a union officer who lives it up at the expense of the workers he represents. We have many examples in the American labor movement today. And he did write a novel called The Piecard, which was almost published in this country; it lost by one vote at Doubleday. Finally it was published in Poland, but it was never published in English. (laughing) Anyhow, he started to write and I went to work for the Utility Workers.

INTERVIEWER: Was the Party's position on the war effort that there were no exceptions?

WARD: Not that I know of. After all the Party was all over the United States and the period of the war was the heyday of the Party. Many people came into the Party because it was respectable to be a Communist Party member, you know, and work with the Russian War Relief Committee. People of very high stature weren't open members of the Party, but many of them were secret members; they gave money and they chaired meetings, you know, like the great meetings at Madison Square Garden. It was the period when Browder enunciated that the Party should be an American party. It was no longer a party; it was a political association, and there were all sorts of openings that were made to the middle-of-the-roaders. Being a Party member in those days was not such an onerous thing; if you were a Party member, well, that was okay; a lot of people were.
I must say that the bigshots in this country who were either very close to the Party or actual members never did acknowledge their membership. I didn't either, for that matter; it wouldn't have been wise to. It wouldn't have been wise to go into a union and say, "I'm a Communist." But they could see the role that we were playing; people suspected that you were a Communist and that you were supporting the war effort, which we were.

INTERVIEWER: But when it came into conflict with the interests of the unions, of the working people, was it the war effort that won out?

WARD: Yes. I'm sure there must have been other wildcat strikes during the war, but I don't recall one that was as sharp as this. Maybe it was because I was involved in it and so much was going on; it's quite possible that similar actions occurred in other parts of the country which the Party didn't approve of, but I never heard of any. It wouldn't be surprising if there had been others in certain areas.

INTERVIEWER: Were there other organizing drives that you were involved in with the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers?

WARD: Oh, when I worked in Los Angeles, before we went to Basic Magnesium, there was Harvill Aircraft. The local in Los Angeles had--let's see, it must have had contracts with about twenty-five or thirty plants, but none of them was as big or on such a mammoth scale as Basic Magnesium. Harvill Aircraft, as I recall, had about six-hundred workers. A lot of them were women so that that's where I first started to work with working women, even though I didn't have the title of organizer; I just worked for the union as an office worker--bookkeeper, secretary and so on. There were plastic factories which were just coming into being--you know, the invention of plastic--and they employed a lot of women. All these were under contract with the Western Mechanics Union, which was affiliated with the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers. And I was involved in the organizing drives in Los Angeles; I was a delegate to the L.A. CIO Council. Oh, there was the big action against North American Aircraft; we were involved in that, supporting the automobile workers.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned before in talking about Pittman that one of the policies of the union was that there wouldn't be a discriminatory racial policy against the blacks.

WARD: That was a policy of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, which was not a policy of the American Federation of Labor. In fact, the AF of L, in many of its unions, did not accept black membership. But the Mine, Mill accepted anybody regardless of race, creed, color, political affiliation, religious--you know, just like the Constitution of the United States.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have much success in organizing among the women workers, the war workers?

WARD: Well, yes, I would say that. But not by myself; it was a joint effort. I remember Jack Marcotti, who was the chief organizer for Local 700, would ask me to come and address the women workers when they'd call a meeting to try to sign up the workers at Harvill Aricraft, for example. At that time in Los Angeles all the organizers were men. They would put out a leaflet, which I would write. Then we'd mimeograph it and I'd have all these pretty pictures of women. They would give out the leaflet at the plant gates and say that there'd be a meeting for the women workers that night or the next night, and there would be refreshments. There'd be slogans about women joining a union and achieving dignity and so on. Women would come because they had a lot of grievances. We would pass out membership cards, and I'd make a speech. Jack always felt that--and he was right--it's good for a woman to talk to women. He relied on me a lot for that. But I was not officially an organizer. But I did help in that and I gained a lot of experience.

INTERVIEWER: What were some of the grievances?

WARD: Oh, equal pay for equal work. As the men were being called into the Armed Forces and women would take over their jobs, they weren't given comparable classifications to the men, for example, if they went into a higher classification. Women usually were just assembly line workers and did extrusion work and jobs with very bad conditions, heat and standing up at the job and so on, but when they took over some man's job, they weren't classified as Machinist B or C or A; they just held their old Assembly Line D or whatever it was and wouldn't get any raise in pay. If they got a raise in pay, it wouldn't be anything like what the job classification called for. That was one of the big grievances. Then some of the work was very hard. These women had come from their homes and they weren't accustomed to standing up all day, for example, or working in the plastic factories in heat and noise. There were things that could have been done that would have ameliorated the working conditions without lessening the output and the production and those were grievances that they had. Many of these women were coming from homes where their husbands were going into the Armed Forces and they were taking over. They had children, for example; who was going to look after the children?

WARD: We had the problem of setting up nursery schools and getting the factories to do something about that.

INTERVIEWER: Was the union responsive to that demand?

WARD: Oh yes. Oh sure. It was one of the big organizing weapons that we had when it came to the women. But you could see what a situation we had: here was a country where the main work force was the men, in men's jobs. Suddenly you're involved in a war that takes the male force out and sends them overseas, and the women are doing the work. Who's going to keep up the homes? The question of nightshift work was another thing, and swing shift: women who had to leave their families to go and work on a swing shift or a midnight shift. All these were very important questions that they had and measures had to be taken to provide for care for families, the children, when they were working, say, at night. All sorts of things.

INTERVIEWER: Was the union able to negotiate childcare?

WARD: Not directly. The L.A. CIO Council through political action would get the Board of Supervisors in L.A. to set up nursery schools. The labor movement would get employers to provide some of the funds and the union would put in funds too.

INTERVIEWER: But this wasn't through a contract?

WARD: No. There were a lot of committees at that time that were set up on a city scale, a county-wide scale, which took up questions of this kind, welfare questions. In many cases it was to the employer's advantage to cooperate, because otherwise they would lose their work force if they didn't. So many things were done. At this time health care bills started to burgeon, too. Not that anything very constructive or immediate was done. The whole question of health and welfare was raised, which took a more concrete form after the war, but the foundations were laid in those days. You know, women would get sick; their children would get sick: you had to have health care. Doctors' cooperatives were set up. In communities that were civilized it was great, but not in places like Nevada where you couldn't even get a blood bank going.

INTERVIEWER: Why would workers feel that they should join the union if you didn't have any power to enforce demands because you'd given up the strike power?

WARD: Well, before, when we organized BMI, we gave the workers all the reasons why they should join a union and vote for it, and then when the election was held they did vote for it. It was assumed that we could have gone ahead and bargained collectively and handled their demands through the collective bargaining medium without a strike at that time. It worked in most cases, but it didn't work at BMI. But that's why the workers joined the union, or they wouldn't have voted for us.

WARD: The Mine, Mill Union had a reputation for being a very militant union, and the workers felt, by God, if they voted for us they'd get some action. And they would have gotten it if we hadn't been up against this giant of Anaconda who just spit in our faces and refused to bargain. Just because it was wartime; believe me, it didn't mean that the government was on the side of the workers all the time. They certainly weren't in this case.

INTERVIEWER: Did the union have a policy toward layoffs?

WARD: Oh sure, layoffs based on seniority. But at that time layoffs were not a problem. Employers were seeking workers. There was this great migration from the South to go into the factories and to carry on the great productive efforts to win the war. The unions always had a policy on layoffs; this became very prominent after the war, when production lagged and they weren't building bombs anymore. Then the question developed of how layoffs would be made fairly, on the basis of seniority. All the white workers had the greater seniority and the blacks didn't. And that's when they started to work out all these theories about how--because the blacks never got into the work force until the middle of the war, or towards the end of the war--they could get a break so that the layoffs would not just affect the blacks. This was a point of great contention in the unions. It also affected women, you see, because women had the same position in this situation as the blacks did. And there were all sorts of experiments: you'd lay off one white guy and you'd lay off a black. Or you'd lay off two white guys and you'd lay off a black, to try to bring some equality.

INTERVIEWER: Wasn't it mostly women who were being laid off?

WARD: Well, in some places where it was mostly men's work, the women had never gotten up that far--either for physical reasons or whatever. For example, tool and die makers, which is highly specialized, were all whites. It takes about ten years to become a skilled tool and die maker; well, the war didn't last that long. So yes, women were laid off first because they were in the more menial and unnecessary jobs, but I wasn't so involved in that because by that time I was working for the Utility Workers and there were no women in the manual work force; they were in the office, in clerical.
Certainly in other areas of the labor movement in other unions they faced problems; the Auto Workers, for example, or the Shipyard Workers, where they had this problem in triplicate: blacks, whites and women. How were you to evolve a seniority and layoff system which would provide a measure of fairness and impartiality? Also how would it be necessary to provide for rehiring, and how much credit should be given for military leave of absence? You see, women didn't serve in the Armed Forces, except for a few women who had served in the Navy or in the WACS and WAVES, but that was a minor question. The question was, how about all those guys who had gone off to the front, and now they came back and their jobs had been filled by blacks, or

WARD: other whites, and even by women? So, how were you to handle that? The negotiations in this area were very complicated and produced real bitterness, not only in the Mine, Mill but every union that I can think of, possibly except the ILWU because they didn't have many women in the longshore force; in fact, they didn't have any.

INTERVIEWER: The Ship's Scalers did?

WARD: Yes, the Ship's Scalers. But the Ship's Clerks didn't. They're such a tight little union, a little isle unto itself.

INTERVIEWER: Well, what was the solution that the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers came up with?

WARD: Oh, it varied in different areas, depending. The Mine, Mill covered the copper mines in Salt Lake, in Utah, New Mexico, Arizona: there they didn't have problems with women because they were mining jobs and they were all men. They worked out seniority clauses where they tried to give equality or be fair to the returning vet; in the Southwest it was a question of Chicanos and Anglos. They tried to work it out fairly, because it's a progressive union, and they put their minds to it. Now other unions, like the Steelworkers, I'm sure didn't work out clauses that recognized the needs of women and blacks, or minority groups except in rare cases where the local union was under progressive leadership.

INTERVIEWER: I don't know if this question is relevant to your experience, but I wonder if you felt any pressure when the war broke out to work in certain areas?

WARD: Oh, no. Because I was working in the labor movement and I became very active in the war effort and promoting the participation of the working class in the war effort. I was a member of the War Manpower Commission--they called it the War Manpower Commission (laughing)--well, the War Manpower Commission was for the allocation of man and woman power, but they never used the term "womanpower". I served on the Commission here in San Francisco, and then when we moved to Los Angeles, my membership was transferred to the Los Angeles Commission.
I always remember that when we were in Los Angeles, and my husband was transferred to Las Vegas by the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, he was told that they would like him to go to Las Vegas to work for and negotiate the contract for the Basic Magnesium plant and naturally I was to go with him. There was no question about what I would be doing in L.A., you know, and my work. I was a member of the War Manpower Commission, but that wasn't really all that important. I remember one of the labor organizers said to me, "Oh, I hear you and your husband are going to Las Vegas." And he said, "What's going to happen to you, what are you going to do?" And I said, "Well, you know, said the chairman"--I was the chairman--"said the chairman of the War Manpower Commission, 'I'm going to Las Vegas with my husband: whither thou goest, I go.'"

WARD: And he just howled.

INTERVIEWER: You were the chairman?

WARD: Yes, representing the union on the Commission. You see, the War Manpower Commission had union representatives, industry representatives, and war production board representatives--different groups from the community. I was representing labor--the Los Angeles CIO Council; I was their representative on the War Manpower Commission. But as soon as my husband was transferred I had to resign and I went to Las Vegas.

INTERVIEWER: I wanted to ask you some questions about your work with the War Manpower Commission.

WARD: It wasn't very important; I was on another board, too. During the war there weren't too many men around and I guess that's why (laughing) I was on the Community Chest Board and the War Manpower Commission. We'd get together and discuss the pockets where workers were needed. Actually I wasn't representing the white-collar union; I was representing the CIO Council. Everybody was looking for workers: the shipyards were looking for workers; longshoremen were working overtime; women were working overtime. There would be discussions, for example, about the importation of workers from the South and the migration of black workers to the North and so on. But it was all in generalities, perhaps discussing the impact of these movements and how the groups of workers could be used to advantage, moving them from one industry to the other. This was easier said than done because longshoremen liked their jobs. By that time they worked six hours straight time and were paid double time for the last two; then when things got really rough they'd work ten-hour days.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any kind of implementation power for decisions that were made?

WARD: You mean in the War Manpower Commission or do you mean the Commission as a whole? There was a committee over us too, you know. Then the recommendations of the War Manpower Commission would be made to an industry-wide commission that was over the War Manpower Commission and they would implement some of the recommendations that were made.

INTERVIEWER: Did you oversee employment conditions in factories?

WARD: No, the unions for that particular industry would do that. They would give pennants to the factories that would produce so much more than their quota; they'd get to wave a flag over their roof. I forget what it was called--things like that.

INTERVIEWER: What was the daily functioning of the Commission?

WARD: It met maybe once a month. I think, like so many commissions, it was more of an advisory body. Commissions were set up in wartime

WARD: to get the people thinking about the problems that were faced by the great production needs that the war demanded of industry and the unions and the country in general. These commissions were set up to give a feeling of unifying the war effort.

INTERVIEWER: When you were chairman down in southern California, what kind of responsibilities did you have?

WARD: I just chaired the meeting. That was about it. I directed the discussion. You see, the war was on and men were scarce. That's why I was chairman. Probably in other circumstances a man would have been the chairman. (laughing)

INTERVIEWER: When you were organizing the utility workers and the clerical workers, were the majority of them women?

WARD: No, as a matter of fact, that was one of the reasons they were easier to organize, both the men and the women. First of all, men felt they were doing very important work computing whatever it was that they were computing; (laughing) I never did figure out why it was so important. Alongside of them at the same desk or in the same room were the women doing identical work, and the difference in their wages was absolutely astonishing. When we finally won parity some of the women got as much as $200.00 a month increase in wages. You see, for example, a male Clerk A at Pacific Gas and Electric Company, which was a top clerk--they were in their forties, grey hair, very dignified with their white collars, their natty ties and navy blue suits--would make $400.00 a month or, say, $450.00. And the women Clerk A's, just because they had an "F"--female--were making maybe $250.00 a month and they were doing the identical work, identical. Now the men hoped that if they got reclassified because they were men, with a new title, whatever it was, then they would get up to, say, $500.00 a month. And then the women were attempting to get what the present male Clerk A was getting and they'd get a big wage increase. This was very complicated and when it was finally decided--we had this arbitration hearing and so on, and they got parity--all these other classifications that the men had hoped to create for themselves didn't pass. The PG and E wasn't about to raise the classifications of the men to the point where they would lose money. Really true parity was finally achieved, in the sense that the women got what they were entitled to, but that was a bitter, bitter fight. It took a long time and when the victory came it wasn't one of these things where you could go out and say to the workers, "Well, starting tomorrow all the women are getting so much." What happened was that they set up a committee, a union committee, and that was the victory, really, where the women and the men sat down. It took so much education to get them to sit down and recognize that a woman's brain was just as good as a man's brain. Finally they [the committee] worked out the scale so that there was no longer any discrimination. Of course, the company had to okay it, but they okay'd it after the workers themselves worked out the achievement of parity. But it wasn't like, you know, when the longshoremen went out on strike,

WARD: they got what they wanted and there was a union meeting where Harry came in and said, "We've gotten a six hour day and double time after six hours and this means so much in so many dollars." We couldn't do that because the achievement was that the company agreed to parity. Then it took about six months to work out the actual figures. When it did come--by that time we [the union organizers] were on the verge of being fired, because we refused to sign the Taft-Hartley Act affidavits--but anyhow, they got it, the women got it: equal pay for equal work!

INTERVIEWER: Were you on the committee?

WARD: I worked with the committee, but technically I was not because I wasn't a PG and E employee. I was the overseer for the women's committee. I gave them advice, took the figures and brought them back to the research department of the CIO where we'd figure out if we were working it out properly. It was very complicated, you know.

INTERVIEWER: How did it function, with a women's committee and a men's committee?

WARD: They functioned very well. At first the men weren't so willing to admit that so-and-so's female Clerk A job was equal to their male Clerk A job, but then when we sat down and went over the figures, what each one did, how many hours it took to do this--the work that these people were doing was very deadly work. I never would have done it myself, but some people like to do all this--so they finally reached agreement; they had to.

INTERVIEWER: Why did you have the separate committees?

WARD: Well, because they had worked separately for so long that the women had to justify that what they were doing was equal to what the men were doing. Actually they weren't always separate; they met together, but there were a certain number of men and a certain number of women on the committee. In other words, there were representatives from the women and representatives from the men who formed the committee that finally worked out the actual application of parity to their jobs: A Clerks, B Clerks, C Clerks, D Clerks, Filing Clerks.

INTERVIEWER: In the local itself was it separated into men and women?

WARD: No. They were all members of the same union, the same local. For example, Local 134 was the East Bay local and there were men and women in it. But the women didn't like to come to meetings. Oh, they were terrible. They just wouldn't come to meetings. They took no interest in the union. That made it doubly hard for me, because I had to represent them at big local meetings. And when they were talking strike and all, you'd have to work so hard to get these women to come to a meeting. You'd tell them, "Look, you have to vote on this, whether you're going to strike or not." They could think of more excuses not to attend meetings and it was hard to get them to pay dues.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you think that was?

WARD: Well, they weren't accustomed to the idea of being in a union and being in a union with men because this was an industrial set-up. You couldn't have them in separate locals; that would have defeated the whole principle of industrial unionism. That's what had defeated the workers for so many years, that they were divided. The men would say, "Why should we go out for a bunch of women?" Here they were working in the same office. So we never did have that [separate locals] in the utility workers; it was a straight industrial set-up. They were all workers, regardless of whether they wore skirts or trousers. But it did take a long time to get them to accept the industrial union principle.

INTERVIEWER: Why was that?

WARD: Well, you see, there were the industrial workers: the cable-splicers, the men who went down in the manholes, the men who ran the transformers and the substations, and the meter readers. Then there were the white-collar men, who worked at 245 Market Street in the big PG and E office: the A Clerks, B Clerks, and the C Clerks. The women didn't do any of the manual work; there were no women cable-splicers in those days--maybe today there are; I hope there are--and no women climbed poles, you know. So there was a difference in the type of work performed, no question about that. The women were definitely only in clerical posts. Then there was this great disparity between men clerical workers and women clerical workers. And then in the industrial workers--the cable-splicers, the meter-readers--there were all sorts of disparities; the PG and E had created a monster as far as their wage classification system was concerned. So that in itself was also [a problem].
I'll say this for the Utility Workers, though. I was an organizer for the utility workers; I was not an organizer for just the women. Of course, the only way you could get the women was to have a woman speak to them, especially at the beginning. But then I also used to get the men organizers and say, "You have to come to these meetings where we're trying to get the women interested. We don't want them to think they're going to have a little women's union, and then we're going to have a liason with the men's union. It has to be one big union of PG and E workers, period, and one group's going to support the other group."

INTERVIEWER: How would the men react to that?

WARD: Oh, they went for it, especially the manual workers. They were great. They were really tremendous because they recognized that if the women got a break, then the men would benefit too.

INTERVIEWER: Once the women did come to union meetings would they participate?

WARD: No. They'd always say, "Angela, (whispering) get up and say this

WARD: for us." They would never--oh, I guess there were a couple of them who finally got up the courage to speak at union meetings. Now, I had been organizing at least five or six years, and I was accustomed to making speeches in public and representing the union and going to council meetings and so on. These women had never been in any kind of organization, except possibly some little women's club of some kind. To them [it was difficult] to get up in a big hall with all these men who would make motions to strike and would talk about this monster, the PG and E, which controlled everything. You know, some of the men would speak in very radical terms. We had to sort of tell them: "Take it easy; these people are new. They don't understand." They certainly had no concept of the class struggle that we so-called Marxists had. We were pitted against the company. No, the women workers were very backward as far as taking part in activities. In fact, in organizing the women, the way I first got to them and got them to sign up in the union, was to get names from the men. The men would give me the names of these women and they'd say, "You know, so-and-so is pretty good. I was talking to her at lunch time the other day and she said she thought a union would be a good deal." He'd say, "Here's her name; here's her address and phone number." I would call them up and make dates with them. I'd have lunch with one to start in with, and talk her into it; then I'd get her to go back to the office and organize a dinner meeting. The union would pay for this; we'd invite them out to dinner and I'd arrange to take them to a restaurant where we could have a room to ourselves. We'd invite maybe ten women. Lynn Hames would come--I'd get Lynn to come because I didn't want it to be a women's thing--and we'd talk union. Then we'd pass out application cards and get them to sign. The next time we'd call a bigger meeting and we'd invite some of the male clerks. Maybe that would be in a sort of social hall. We'd rent a hall, have a meeting and then have coffee and donuts or whatever. The women would come in, see somebody they knew, and that way they became involved.
In those meetings they'd talk; they were very vociferous in making their demands known--Mary Jones thought her job should pay the same as Tom Jones' job, and why was she being discriminated against? She had worked for the company longer than he had--they pinned the men down so the men would say, "Yes, you're right. It would be better for us if you came up to our level." Always there was the threat to the man that if the women could do their work for less money, then the company could get rid of the men. So for the men it was also a question of job security. It wasn't only a question of trying to make more money; it was a definite threat that the company held over these men. So that's how this thing burgeoned.

INTERVIEWER: Did the demand for parity come from the women themselves?

WARD: Oh, yes. Well, some of the men told us in the first place. Very few, but there were a couple of leading men in the office at 245 Market Street who were progressive-minded and in their own way they felt like this was an injustice, plus the fact that it

WARD: was a threat to them, that these women could always take over their jobs. So they gave us the entree.
Then we gave out leaflets and we had little coupons at the end of the leaflets. Some of the women answered directly, gave their name and address, and we would then get in touch with them. Some of the women would find out that they knew each other, even though they worked in different departments.

INTERVIEWER: But the women themselves felt that they deserved parity?

WARD: Oh yes, we couldn't have done it without them. After all, they were willing to fight for it. It was never a violent thing though, as it was in other areas where I organized. It was a very discreet fight, compared to the fight we had in Las Vegas with Basic Magnesium. Nobody got fired; PG and E was too smart to fire anybody.

INTERVIEWER: I'm curious where the idea came from in the beginning, because it seems like such an unusual idea for that period--that the women should get equal pay.

WARD: Well, this was around 1946, 1945. I think Lynn Hames, when he hired me knowing that I had organized office workers before, had gotten reports from the industrial workers. Now that I think back on it the union was founded first with mostly industrial workers because white-collar workers, whether they were male or female, weren't interested in unions; they were above that sort of thing. But the struggle with PG and E advanced and some of the demands of the manual workers, the utility workers who did the real work of running PG and E, got to the white-collar workers, both male and female. Certain alliances were made, say, between the meter readers, who were semi-white-collar and semi-industrial, and the industrial union.
When the union came to formulate their demands for the opening of negotiations, they had a big mass meeting. Most of the people--I would say 99 1/4 percent of the people--were industrial workers. Possibly a couple of male white-collar workers came who had been invited by the meter readers. That way, they would listen to the discussion, and become interested, and there was talk about how the male white-collar workers ought to join the union, not form their own union, but join the utility workers. Then [they would say], "Here are these women. They're out there and they're a threat to us. If only the men white-collar workers join the union, the company could take action against us and then use the women to do our work." So then they became interested in getting the women.
They [the male industrial workers] started to talk to them first. Then the union decided as a policy that it was important to organize the women and the rest of the male clerical workers. In other words, [it was important] to have one cohesive unit, to present one face to the company in the negotiations. That's when we started to make plans and formulate tactics and strategy to organize all PG and E workers, regardless of classification. And, with that decision, they decided maybe it would be good to

WARD: have a woman organizer, too, with some experience to bring the women into the organization because the men felt they didn't know the [best ways to organize women]. I guess it is important to have women face to face. I'm certain they [the men] couldn't have even drafted a leaflet that would have appealed to women. We did draft some pretty beautiful leaflets: Equal pay for equal work--that was our motto.

INTERVIEWER: And that was from the very beginning?

WARD: Yes, pretty much. Because this was true in all fields of the white-collar industry: you just knew automatically that the women never had the same pay as the men, doing equal work. That was true in the banks, in the insurance field; it was true in every possible field of white-collar industry. It was bound to be true at PG and E, and it certainly was. When we got the women together at these small meetings and would say, "What are your demands? What do you think are the injustices that have to be corrected?" the women always said, "We don't get the same pay as the men do and we're doing the same work as they are." That was always the first thing they said.
Then questions arose, you know. The men would say, "Under the state law the women get rest periods, ten minutes in the morning, ten minutes in the afternoon; we don't get that. The company can't force the women to work more than forty-eight hours a week, after which they have to pay them overtime. The men don't [have that protection]. The company can make us work seventy hours a week and we don't get any of it." Then the men would say, "Why should they get equal pay? Maybe they should get a raise, but not equal to ours because they have these other breaks that we don't have." And then there'd be discussions about, "maybe we should do away with that state law. If women are going to be equal to the men they should not have any special privileges." Then questions would come up, "Well, a woman can't lift a typewriter," which is true. So we always ended up saying, "There's no reason why the few benefits women have gained over the years should be taken away or why they should get a hernia lifting a typewriter just because they're getting equal pay." It took a little doing with some of the men. All sorts of things came up.
That's why we opposed the Equal Rights Amendment, when it came up at that time, because it would take away certain things from the women that they had already gained through very tough struggles. A lot of these laws--like the ten minute break in the morning and the afternoon--originated in factory work and then they came to be applied to office work. The question of lifting heavy loads--that didn't necessarily refer to a typewriter; it referred to women lifting bags and heavy objects in factories and industrial plants, but then it came to be applied to office work, because women were lifting adding machines weighing twenty-five pounds or more I know to this day that lifting an electric typewriter is no joke. So, you had to get the men to understand at that time that women shouldn't lift big machinery. Nowadays, I think there's more a feeling that we can do anything a man can do, and that's why we're

WARD: supporting the Equal Rights Amendment, in some ways. You know, women are doing physical work that men do whereas they didn't do that before.

INTERVIEWER: So some men would argue that the women had the protective legislation so they shouldn't be getting equal pay.

WARD: They would say, "Well, they're entitled to a little more than they're getting; but then we have to figure out what percentage of an advantage they have through this legislation which has been passed in their favor. We don't have it, so we have to figure out just how much they should be raised toward our level, but they shouldn't get complete parity." That was tough, fighting that one.

INTERVIEWER: How would you counter that argument?

WARD: I know what I used to say: "We'll get you a ten minute coffee break and let's forget this business of lifting, and the forty-eight hour week. It would be a retrogressive thing to remove this legislation just to satisfy the men and it was bad to lose a gain that had been made for women, that could be extended to men. For example, the forty-eight hour week business could have been extended to men as well as the rest periods or the coffee breaks. And those were the two important things. After all, women weren't going around carrying typewriters everyday, and most men were gallant enough to pick up the typewriter anyhow; that was silly.
I'd say, "When we go into negotiations, we'll say that we want equal pay for equal work, and that applies to the work that you're doing side-by-side and it doesn't apply to anything else. Then if the company says that women are getting coffee breaks, we'll say, "The men are entitled to it too; they're entitled to be guaranteed a forty-eight hour week and not a fifty hour week. You know, parity works both ways." And in the end, the women would get the wages that were equal to the men's. So that's the argument that was used before the arbitration board.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have much success in getting some of the protective legislation passed on to the men?

WARD: Well, when the contract was finally signed, it probably included a work week, after which overtime should be paid, but it wasn't put in that way. You know, you negotiated for a certain work week after which overtime should be paid; if you worked holidays, double time should be paid; and this would be paid to everybody, regardless of sex. That was the thing.
So, in writing one contract covering all categories of workers, governing wages, working conditions--we got the best we could in negotiations, and that was for everybody. So in the end, the men benefitted too, you see, from the forty-eight hour week or whatever it was lowered to. When we had a forty hour week it was for everybody. That state law didn't really apply anymore, because you had a union contract that covered this question.

INTERVIEWER: You felt then that on a national level with the Equal Rights Amendment the unions wouldn't be strong enough to keep the employers from taking away the protective legislation?

WARD: Well, at that time, the Equal Rights Amendment wasn't a key thing. We were trying to get as much as possible for workers--getting equality and justice for all workers regardless of sex, political affiliation, religion, national origin, and so on. That was in the bylaws of the constitution of any good progressive union. We didn't talk about the Equal Rights Amendment or any struggle between men and women. It was: organize for the benefit of the working class, and that included men and women. Both would get whatever the union could struggle and fight and win for them or they'd win for themselves, by their participation.

INTERVIEWER: When you said, "We were against the Equal Rights Amendment," I assumed you meant the union had taken some stand.

WARD: Oh no, it wasn't that we were <u>against</u> it. Let me put it this way: we were against anything that would take away that state law which gave these fundamental rights to women, which had really originated in the factories but had now been expanded to offices. We didn't want anything to take that away; we thought that the progress should go forward, not back. Today it's on a different basis entirely. I don't think that law is even in existence anymore.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, in California they changed the protective legislation to cover men and women. But <u>then</u> you thought that the unions wouldn't be strong enough to keep the protective legislation from being taken away, that you would lose it?

WARD: It was something that had been gained before industrial unionism, really, and we weren't about to give it up. What we wanted to do was organize men and women on an industrial basis and whatever we could get for them would be above and beyond this law. We didn't want to agree with an employer, for example, that the law could be dispensed with, and in lieu of the law we would have a contract. No, we wanted it on the books, because there were still a lot of unorganized workers who needed that law. Just look at all the white-collar workers who hadn't joined unions yet, and still haven't. Why take away the benefits of that legislation? So we fought against its repeal when the question came up, at least in the negotiations that I participated in. And if there had been an Equal Rights Amendment as such, as we've had today, I think we would have opposed it if it meant that women would be subjected to inequal treatment.

INTERVIEWER: At one point, you were talking about the kind of picture that you were careful to create in organizing white-collar workers. Could you elaborate?

WARD: Yes. We didn't want to create the impression, or to <u>give</u> the impression to the workers--particularly white-collar workers who

WARD: are very sensitive on the subject--of presenting their company--which they considered themselves still a part of, that they had a chance to rise in--as a bloated capitalist who was greedily taking in all the profits and not wanting to share them with the workers. That would be a very crude way of approaching the white-collar workers. You had to do it in a very calm manner, and present the company as very cold hearted people who knew what they were doing and were still interested in the profit motive at the expense of their workers, but not in the sense that they were holding up a bloody whip. Do you see what I mean? You could write a very inflammatory leaflet if you used that tactic; on the other hand, we just presented figures. The PG and E earned so much last year--and the profits were listed in the Wall Street Journal. We just showed the profit picture of the company--their expenses, their assets, their liabilities--and that a decent wage increase was available to the utility workers of PG and E, both clerical and manual, if the company would be reasonable and would sit down and negotiate with us. You see the white-collar workers especially, and even the utility workers, the manual workers, are much more conservative than other industrial workers who are, say, like steel workers or auto workers.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you think that's true?

WARD: Because the utility workers traditionally have been paid better, and they also don't have to work so hard with their hands. You know, they're not in the factories; they work in substations, and they're in some ways more skilled. They're not like hod carriers for instance, or manual laborers digging ditches. Many utility workers that I had contact with--the manual workers--thought that they were a little better than the guys who dig ditches and so on. They need a little more education too, to operate a substation.

INTERVIEWER: Did you develop the technique of using more rational persuasion? Did you have that technique from the very beginning or did you try different techniques and found that one worked the best?

WARD: That's difficult to say, but I think being a white-collar worker and coming from an essentially middle-class background, even though I didn't like to admit it at the time--I always tried to figure out a way how I could say I was of a working-class background--I think it was inherent in me to be more--by education and by my environment and all--to be more inclined not to take to the streets with a banner. I think in organizing office workers, since I was one, I had a kinship to how they would feel; I thought I knew that would offend them if we were too blatant, you know, too violent in our approach. Because I wouldn't like it myself. I would prefer an appeal to reason rather than (pausing) an emotional appeal. Even though my nature is emotional, I would prefer to be approached--and I felt most white-collar workers would prefer to be approached--on a rational basis.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find that sometimes there would be emotional response?

INTERVIEWER: That you were tapping some kind of anger or resentment?

WARD: It depended. I think that was more true in the Mine, Mill, where emotions were easier to tap, because it was a different kind of worker that we were working with. There I would say that my emotional nature came out more, and I didn't have to hold myself back and say, "Oh, I have to be careful with my terms and my language and so on. I'm talking to real workers who would like to be appealed to on a much more down-to-earth basis." So it depends on who you're working with, really. Certain groups respond better to one way than other groups. You don't use certain techniques with white-collar workers that you would use with the longshoremen or smelter workers. You have to have your own approach to each one.

INTERVIEWER: In the course of your organizing, did you become close with the people you were working with, the workers?

WARD: You mean socially?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

WARD: Well, not so that we developed--any of us--any strong social contact. You have to understand that we were so busy that we had no time for the frivolous things, "frivolous" in quotes. We had meetings every night practically. It would have been nice to have gotten to know some of the people. I know once I had a big dinner at our house, a buffet dinner, and we invited all the stewards, about thirty of them. I had a reputation as a cook (laughing modestly). Lynn, Jim and I, and a couple of the stewards who were very active in the union issued invitations and they came and spent the evening there; we had a real nice time. The only other time when we had any relaxing events would be when we would go to conventions, for example, and there'd be a banquet on Saturday night, or a dinner or luncheon. Also I would have lunch with the women sometimes, but it would always be mingled with business. We'd talk about the union and I'd try to get them to sign up more members and so on. No great friendships were formed except among the ones that we already knew. Lynn and Jim and I were close.

INTERVIEWER: Did you see yourself in any way as different from the people you were organizing?

WARD: (long pause) Well, yes, I thought I was different in that my orientation--political, (speaking slowly) cultural, and even social--was on a different level entirely. First of all because of my political beliefs and then my circle of friends and my husband. Culturally we were much more--let's see--maybe we were square. We didn't go with the trends. We didn't have time. Well, our cultural life was like going to hear Paul Robeson and, if we had the time, going to a concert of classical music. No. We didn't go to baseball games, and I certainly never knew anything about football scores or the latest dance tunes. You know,

WARD: it was a different world; the books I read, the things we'd do. When we had the chance we'd go hiking on Mt. Tam, but we didn't do any of the things that most people did. We weren't interested in the sports and that sort of thing. I guess we were alien in some ways. (laughing) Sectarian, shall we say?

INTERVIEWER: Were there other things, like lifestyle, that would have been different?

WARD: Yes, I think our lifestyle was different in that we worked so hard during the week. Sometimes my husband would have three meetings in one night; I'd have two meetings. We rarely saw each other, you know. We would go to work in the morning; he'd go to his office and I'd go to my office at 150 Golden Gate where the union headquarters for San Francisco were and we'd work all day. Or we'd get up early in the morning and hand out leaflets. Then we'd go down to the office, work all day, go to meetings, write leaflets, meet with committees. We both served on other committees. I was a delegate to the CIO Council in San Francisco, for example. Then we'd rush home and have a quick dinner. I'd go to a meeting and he'd go to his meeting, and then we'd come home at eleven, twelve o'clock. So we didn't have much time. That wasn't a lifestyle that the white-collar workers in PG and E had. On weekends we didn't go to nightclubs, for example. Oh, once in a while we'd go to the Hungry i and hear Mort Sohl or something, but it always had a political overtone to it; it had to be something that was a little cerebral in content. (laughing)
Then we had our friends. If we did have a night off on Saturday night, we would have our friends over for dinner, many of whom were Party members. Lynn and his wife would come over for dinner or my husband would invite some of his workers. They were all in the union movement, but they didn't come from the workers that we were organizing. Oh, once in a while, some that were very hep and more or less went along with our lifestyle. But, yes, it was a different lifestyle.

INTERVIEWER: Did your attitudes about manual workers or white-collar workers change as you had more contact with them as an organizer? In what ways?

WARD: I would say that my contact with manual workers affirmed my basic belief that manual workers, whether male or female, are clearer in evaluating their role in society. One doesn't have to break through so many shibboleths and phoney attitudes to get to them. Since I'm from the middle-class and was a white-collar worker, I do have many points in common with them. I like white-collar workers and I enthusiastically went into the organizing drives. Since many of them were women who were badly discriminated against on the job and in a larger sense by society's attitudes, I put more of myself into the work.

INTERVIEWER: What was the nature of the workforce within PG and E?

WARD: Well, I would say the majority of the clerical workers at PG and E were concentrated at 245 Market Street and 445 Sutter Street. The PG and E had offices scattered around the bay area and in the north county area. They had offices in Santa Rose, Petaluma, San Rafael. But these offices were small; they may have had at the most five or six women clerical workers. The Oakland office was larger; it all depended on the population of the different areas. San Francisco had the majority of the clerical workers. Then the south counties, San Mateo, San Jose, had a proportionate number--and now we're speaking about clerical workers, both male and female. They were never the dominant numerical strength of the PG and E.

INTERVIEWER: Among the clerical workers themselves, were the majority women?

WARD: I don't think so, no. I would say maybe close to 50 percent might have been female clerical workers in the big offices, but then you had the men who dominated the accounting department. The women worked for them in the accounting department; they were doing essentially the same work as the men, but the men were in the top positions. Here the men may have outnumbered the women but not by too large a number. That's all I can tell you without having the figures at my fingertips.

INTERVIEWER: It must have been difficult to organize when you had so many scattered groups of people in small numbers.

WARD: Yes, it was indeed, because the process used in organization was to get a key woman, particularly, and a key man, say, in Santa Rosa; another pair in Petaluma; and several pairs in Oakland, which was a relatively large office. You had all these offices--Berkeley, Oakland, Emoryville--and they were spread out all over the northern and southern areas of the bay counties. It was very difficult getting key people and we had to seek alliances. If an office worker in San Francisco had a cousin or friend working in Santa Rosa or Petaluma, then we would get that name and we would make a special trip just to contact one office worker.

INTERVIEWER: What areas were you responsible for?

WARD: All of this northern California area that included Santa Rosa, Petaluma, Novato, San Rafael, San Francisco, and South San Francisco--there are quite a few offices in the San Francisco area--and then to the east: Contra Costa, Concord, and so on.

INTERVIEWER: Would you go to these places by yourself?

WARD: Some of them, yes. But to the out of the way places, I would go with one of the male organizers who had a car. It was convenient to go that way.
When I went to Los Angeles--because I was also later involved in the organization of Southern California Edison white-collar workers--then I would either fly or take the train to go down

WARD: there for a meeting. They would organize a group of people to come to the meeting and I would go and speak to them and tell them what we were doing up in the north, what progress we had made, and what the possibilities were of their joining forces with us.

INTERVIEWER: I noticed in my reading that they negotiated for maternity leave in one of the contracts. Were you involved in that?

WARD: Yes. The main demand was equal pay for equal work. Then we took certain other standards we thought were important--maternity leave being one, and the continuation of the rest periods, and the reiteration of the California State Labor Code regarding women employees, which meant that if we achieved equal pay for equal work they would not be required to give up these other advantages which had been established under the California Labor Code--namely, not lifting weights, having no work in excess of forty-eight hours a week, rest periods and some other minor things.

INTERVIEWER: Was maternity leave a demand that originated from the women workers themselves?

WARD: No, I don't think so. The age level of most of the women was from thirty to forty-five, fifty, and almost retirement age. So a lot of the women had established families. But for new employees coming into the employ of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company who would be in the younger age brackets, we felt this would be an important condition for them to have.

INTERVIEWER: Was that paid maternity leave? What exactly was the agreement?

WARD: I don't remember the details. That particular condition was probably taken from other agreements that governed women workers, probably in industrial areas like factories and so on. We felt it also could or should apply to office workers. You misunderstand; this was a new field. We couldn't go and get conditions or agreements that pertained to office workers; we were really pioneering office workers contracts because there were none. You couldn't, say, go to the library or to the Department of Labor Statistics and get a copy of a contract governing office workers in an insurance company. We had to pick here and there and talk to the workers and see what they wanted. I think that condition of maternity leave was one that women at that time felt was important to have, even if it didn't directly apply to them at their age level.

INTERVIEWER: They saw it was important for other women?

WARD: Yes. They saw no reason why it shouldn't be in there, because even though the majority of the PG and E women workers might not have been interested in it per se, they still could see where it could apply to new workers coming into the field, and that it was a good thing to have.

INTERVIEWER: I know that sometimes if it's only going to apply to a portion of the people, the other people feel that they're paying for something . . .

WARD: You mean the men?

INTERVIEWER: Well, or older women--that they're paying for something they're not going to benefit from.

WARD: No, I don't think we ever had anything like that. I do believe that the women had a feeling that if they could get their main demand, which was equal pay, then they went along with these other demands, even though they didn't directly apply to them. For example, on overtime work: no woman ever worked a forty-eight hour week but they were interested in the fact that we wanted to maintain the established conditions that had been won through the efforts of the state Department of Industrial Relations and that we didn't want to have any deterioration of those conditions. So even though that wasn't a pressing thing with them, they went along with it.
You see, when you presented the contract, you had a union meeting. The people came and you read off the different articles which had been created by a small committee which had been elected by the workers. Then we sat down and worked out the different articles that should go in the contract governing office workers, both male and female, and we had the conditions that applied to women within this general contract. We voted on each clause--clause by clause. It would be read, and then it would be explained--I don't recall that any clause was ever turned down. They were all good clauses that pertained to improving the working conditions.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any that were more controversial than others?

WARD: Well, I think there was low-key opposition on the part of the men--but more on an individual basis--to some of the classifications which called for equal pay in certain categories. Maybe some male Clerk A would get up and make a speech about how his work required some special technical knowledge that might not be available to the female or that her job didn't encompass that particular facet of the work. But it was all quite silly--they were voted down. In fact, one of our major arguments against this kind of thing was that if we got into a negotiating session with the PG and E and started to argue whether Clerk A at 245 Market, male, had to punch a few extra keys on a calculator, as against his female counterpart who didn't have to use a calculator in making certain computations, we'd never get any adjustments. It could go on forever. So we--even the male organizers in the PG and E, like Lynn Hames and others--would just take these men and tell them, "You don't know what you're getting into when you start arguing with these lawyers on the PG and E staff and you fall into the trap of arguing minutia as against the broad principle." That was always our position--never to get involved in these little technical things. We felt first

WARD: of all that they could be handled by union stewards. Once we won the contract then we had the whole apparatus set up for people to be elected steward in the various departments--and if anyone felt they had a justifiable grievance, they'd take it up with the steward. Then it would come eventually to the union, where the union committee would meet with management and say, "In such-and-such a department, at such-and-such an office, Clerk X and Clerk Y are doing the same work, but Clerk Y feels that...." and then we'd get down into the minutia.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have as much trouble getting the company to come to those meetings as you did to get them to negotiate the contracts?

WARD: You mean with union stewards? Yes, they were prone to delay. The grievance meetings, as they were called, were held in the offices themselves--they wouldn't be with top management; for example, the superintendent in charge of the office at Shotwell Street. When we had demanded a meeting to handle certain grievances--these would be for male and female, industrial workers and craft workers; they all would be melded together--the company would say, "Mr. Jones, the superintendent, is going to be in Sacramento tomorrow, or next week," and they would try to stall the meetings. That's true, but eventually they were held. Some grievances were won; some were lost and some were put in abeyance.

INTERVIEWER: Did you negotiate maternity leaves in San Francisco?

WARD: Oh, yes. The contract covered the whole bay area--north bay, south bay, east bay, San Francisco. So, when we finally got the contract, I'm pretty sure it included that.

INTERVIEWER: Was the agreement that when women were pregnant they would have so much leave and then they would be guaranteed their job?

WARD: Yes, it was a leave without pay. It was a matter of returning to your job, just like military leave. The men had military leave if they were called into the armed forces; the women had maternity leave. They could come back to their job. I don't recall if they had to come back within a certain period; that I don't remember.

INTERVIEWER: You have mentioned that there wasn't any problem in terms of layoffs in the utility industry; that there hadn't been a large influx of women during World War II.

WARD: When the union negotiated with Southern California Edison, they negotiated seniority clauses which involved the men only; for example, covering the field of returning war veterans. In the PG and E at that time there were not many minorities; in fact there were <u>very</u> few and the Utility Workers were a very conservative group. People had long years of service with PG and E, you know, like twenty to thirty, thirty-five years. The main question was working out a system that would give seniority to

WARD: the people who had been away at the war, give them enough seniority so that when their pension calculations were made they would not be deprived of a decent pension. Many of them got their jobs back, you see.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any people who had worked during the war who felt that they had been mistreated by the policy?

WARD: You mean the men?

INTERVIEWER: Or the women.

WARD: No, that wasn't such a burning issue, particularly among the women. Because it wasn't a question, say, that a woman was promoted to an A Clerk while the A Clerk was overseas; she never was promoted to that. That didn't come up as a major question. There might have been isolated cases, but very isolated. The question was: here was a woman who had worked for PG and E twenty years and she was rated a C Clerk, and here was a man who had worked for PG and E twenty-five years, twenty years, eighteen years, and he was rated an A Clerk, and he was doing the identical work that she was doing or she was doing the identical work that he was. It was a discriminatory practice based solely on sex and nothing else. That was the major question in the organization of the clerical workers. It was not seniority so much. Though later, when they did achieve equality in pay, then if somebody died or if some person left his post, would a woman be entitled to the job, would she be next in line for it? That was one of the things that we worked out in the contract, that women had the same right to promotion. The line of promotion should be based on years of service, all else being equal, meaning that if they did the work, they should be entitled to the job. But first, in order to achieve that, you had to get equal pay for equal work, and then the next thing was seniority. It all came in the same contract, but the first objective was to get equal pay.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned at one point that you thought that women were very conservative when you first started organizing. You would bring in some of the male industrial workers to help you and you contacted the women through them?

WARD: Yes, because I couldn't get to them. They were very fearful of being seen in my company, for one thing. The only way I could get to them was to give out leaflets, you know, We'd write up these very fancy leaflets. They were all printed. Nothing chintzy like a mimeographed leaflet. And they had photographs. I wish I had kept them.

INTERVIEWER: I do too.

WARD: They were really very good leaflets, if I say so myself. We gave these out at the offices: 245 Market, 445 Sutter, in Oakland. The men would help, because I couldn't get them all out myself,

WARD: so the men industrial workers would put on their suits and ties and go out there. The women did pay a great deal of attention to how I dressed, if I went schlepping around, which I didn't (laughing). I mean I always had my gloves and all, so that they would see that I wasn't a freak. The women at first were fearful of taking the leaflets. They'd look around to see if one of the bosses was entering the building at the same time. If they did take them, they would do so very surreptitiously and put them in their purse right away. Sometimes they just threw them down. Little by little we started to make contacts in the office, especially with the men, I must say, the male clerical workers, because they had their own fish to fry. They wanted more security, job security. They also felt that PG and E was a great company that wasn't paying well for the work that they were doing--a big financial empire which was squeezing them. The more militant male clerical workers were finally the key. They gave names of women and they would talk to them on the job. They would say, "Now, there's going to be a meeting. The union is calling a meeting just for clerical workers. The industrial workers won't be there at all." We always had those meetings in a restaurant or some rather nice place. Costly, too, because we had to buy their dinners. It started out with maybe ten people coming, and pretty soon they got bigger and then we stopped buying dinners, but we would have refreshments. They'd be held in a hotel or something of that sort. Then we started signing them up.

INTERVIEWER: How did the women's attitudes change once they got involved with the union?

WARD: Well, I think they became more militant and more outspoken as to what they wanted. It was so difficult to get them to run for a place on the negotiating committee; they never wanted to confront the boss. This is a white-collar trait; now they're much better, I must say. You know the dialectics of the situation have changed. At that time, I know, when it came to the top negotiations, I was almost always the only woman. And you know, not being a PG and E worker and being an outsider, as it were, made it difficult. Toward the very end, I think, Margaret Frank came in and sat in on some of the grievance meetings, because after we got the contract we had established a grievance committee where workers took up their grievances. Particularly in line of classifications, adjusting classifications, and certain minor seniority problems--then the women became a little more outspoken because they already had the contract and the company had accepted the fact that they were union members. But getting them to a union meeting, you know, a regular union meeting, when we were taking strike votes, for example, they wouldn't come. They didn't want the company to know that they were even <u>involved</u> in such a question as taking a strike vote.

INTERVIEWER: Did the union have any policy towards developing rank and file leadership?

WARD: Oh, yes, we wanted that very badly, especially among the women.

WARD: Because, as I say, it wasn't a good thing that I was the sole spokesman when I never worked for this company. (laughing) Oh yes, we tried to get them to run for office, to become officers in the union, like the chairman of the clerical division, to be a delegate to the CIO Council or to serve on committees.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of techniques did you use to develop or encourage leadership?

WARD: Oh, we'd recommend certain material to read. For example, when a major figure would come to San Francisco--say Rockwell Kent--we would try to get the people to attend such meetings, when there'd be symposiums on professional and white-collar people.

INTERVIEWER: And how about the Labor School?

WARD: (laughing) We never could get them to go to the Labor School. In fact, one year my husband was teaching a course there on Mark Twain and I was teaching a course on the Bill of Rights. You know, the Labor School was very red-baited after the war; it became a real bone of contention. Well (assuming a whisper) they wouldn't be caught dead near the Labor School.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned there was one woman who came up from the ranks, so to speak, and was active in the negotiating?

WARD: Yes, the one person. It was also very difficult to get them to donate any contributions to other causes, say, another union that was out on strike and was really fighting for some very fundamental things that would affect them [the utility workers] eventually. The only way you could get a contribution was for the union, as such, to make it from its treasury. Since most of them didn't come to meetings, they wouldn't object because they weren't even there.
The industrial workers were much more articulate, and even the male clerical workers, though by the time I was fired for failure to sign the Taft-Hartley Act, we hadn't had time to develop the women as much as we would have liked to. After all, I started to organize them in 1944, and by the time we got a contract it was about 1947, and in 1948 all the officers of the Utility Workers were fired because they refused to sign the Taft-Hartley Act. But they couldn't understand that; they'd say, "Well, if you're not a Communist, why don't you sign it?" They didn't see the broader picture and what it involved, that it was a policy of the union--well, of the Mine, Mill--not to sign. The Utility Workers, on a regional basis, voted not to sign and instructed us not to sign. But the national office thought we should sign. And when we didn't, they took care of us.

INTERVIEWER: (laughing) You were getting reprimanded right and left.

WARD: (laughing) Yes. That's been the story of my life. No, not in the Mine, Mill: they were wonderful. A great union.

WARD: Now, in the white-collar field we had a lot of men and the male white-collar workers were clashing with the female white-collar workers. There you saw the real chauvinist attitudes of the white-collar male who felt so superior to the white-collar female and there was not a recognition by the male to the female that they were equal, mentally speaking. I think, as I said before, the only reason male white-collar workers went along with our program was because they recognized that the only way they could insure and protect their wage scales was to see that the women's wages were not lowered but brought up to theirs. Then they could go ahead and ask for more. In other words, they would assure a higher wage level for both by insuring their own, you see. I'm sure that was the primary reason that the men went for parity. Let's put it this way: they went for parity so that they could improve their own position, and at the same time insure--during a very serious economic period--that their wages would not be lowered because the women's wages were being lowered. That was one of the things in the negotiations: if you asked for parity then the company could say, "Well, we'll equalize them between the two groups; we'll have the men's wages brought down to the same scale as the women's." And they tried to do this by the ruse of classifying the jobs. They'd say, "We have a Clerk A, and we'll decide with the union committee what a Clerk A's salary scale should be." If you agreed to that, you would have brought that discussion into the negotiations and then the company could say, "Well, Clerk A performs these duties and regardless of who performs it, it's worth $1.75 an hour."--that's just to quote a figure--then the men might lose on that, you see. We had to be very careful that that did not happen.
The reason I'm going into this is to show that the motivation of the men white-collar workers was not so much that they thought the women were as good as they were and deserved the same amount of money, but they were protecting their own interests. They were trying to avoid negotiations that would involve the classification of jobs with salaries to match, and the salaries would apply whether they were male or female. If you allowed that to happen, then you would have opened the door to re-evaluating the jobs, and they might have been lowered in the negotiations with the company.

INTERVIEWER: Isn't it true though that in some unions part of the work force would feel that if they separated themselves off that they could get a raise, whereas the rest of the people wouldn't get such a raise?

WARD: Oh yes, that was true among the skilled workers, for example, in the Mine, Mill. The tool and die makers were the elite of the industry and they were really great craftsmen. They always had an enormously handsome wage scale and they always liked to be off by themselves. In some respects they were like white-collar workers or professional people; they considered themselves professional. They were very skilled and had gone through involved and lengthy apprenticeships, and surely they deserved handsome remuneration. And I guess as a class they did like to feel that

WARD: they could be set apart and look after their own interests and the hell with the others.

INTERVIEWER: But there wasn't an AF of L union there for the men white-collar workers to join so that they could separate themselves from the women?

WARD: That's right, that's right.

INTERVIEWER: When you were talking about negotiating with the utility companies, what factors do you think determined your success or failure? What kinds of power would you have against the companies?

WARD: Well, in the utility industry it was very difficult, because while we threatened strike and actually took strike votes in the PG and E, we knew deep down that we could never carry it through. Even the most militant workers would have been very hesitant to pull the pin because of all the dire consequences that would have been visited upon them. In the utility field in this country it was always such a big to-do about utility workers going on strike, that they could cause such terrible and disastrous things to happen to the economy and to human life itself. I think I mentioned to you how we were told that if we pulled out the electrical workers then all the switches would be off, and how in San Quentin Prison the doors wouldn't function anymore.

INTERVIEWER: Was that true?

WARD: Well, they're all operated electrically, you see. The company spokesman talked about all the things that could happen if we went out on strike, including the prisoners' cells would all become inoperative and they could wander around and cause riots and even escape from prison. I'll never forget that one. Of course, there always was the question of all the people who were in lung machines, and how if the power went off those people would die. Also the dialysis machines, the kidney machines, and in the operating rooms. The surgeon would be stuck there; he'd be cutting someone's gizzard (laughing) and all of a sudden the lights would go out. It was ridiculous, because most hospitals have their own generating plants, but nonetheless, they painted such a horrible picture: such a horrendous and disastrous scene would occur if we went out on strike. It struck me several years later when we were living in Paris, how the French utility workers went out on strike at the drop of a hat. Many a time I'd have a roast in the oven in our little apartment in Paris, and our roast would be ruined because they pulled the switch. They were very smart; they'd pull the switch for an hour, then put it back on again, then take it off. Utility strikes are very commonplace in Europe, and they're very effective.

INTERVIEWER: You really believed that you couldn't go on strike?

WARD: Oh, yes. You know, we were made to feel like monsters, that we were just reducing the populace to the most abject condition by the fact that we were going to pull the pin, as they called it. I realized later that this was a lot of nonsense. I think I said to Lynn once, long afterward, "Why did we fall for that? Why were we so intimidated?" And the workers would do it too, you see. The men who worked in the substations--line men, the cable splicers--would say, "My God. If we pulled the switch on Shotwell Street, for example, on Bryant Street--that's going to throw out all the power, there's going to be an outrage all over. Doors that open mechanically will not open, or they won't close," (laughing) or whatever. We were made to feel that we would cause a great catastrophe--like an earthquake or a flood or something. The workers themselves felt that way; they felt that their power was enormous and that they could never use it. I think this is part of the American tradition in the labor movement; French and Italian workers don't feel that way. They pull the pin whenever they think they're being abused and they want to claim their rights as workers, and they don't have all these reservations.

INTERVIEWER: It's a real responsibility on the part of the workers towards a larger society.

WARD: Yes, I think it's pecular to the American labor movement; I really do. I think they're much closer to the management in that regard.

INTERVIEWER: Well, what kind of threats would you use?

WARD: (sighing) Well, like you wouldn't read the meters; that wouldn't hurt anybody, that was real nice. The people should appreciate the fact that we wouldn't prepare the billings, for example. Then we could cause a lot of commotion and really bollux up the company's accounting system just by losing a few papers, or doing incorrect calculations, or forgetting to mail out bills. There are a lot of ways that you can impede the horrific paperwork that a company like the PG and E has. That was a weapon that could have been used.

Then there were instances where we did discuss with the manual workers, "Well, we don't have to go out on strike, but we could do a little, you know, inject certain things that would make if difficult, like you could pull off the power for five minutes and then restore it." I don't think they ever seriously thought about doing this though.

Apparently, however, there was enough dissatisfaction among the workers that they would have been quite willing to carry through minor impediments. But it was never necessary at that point. I think the company felt that enough disruption was occurring just by the fact that the workers in the offices and in the substations and in the plants of PG and E were in a state of constant turmoil. They were discussing things; they were having grievances. They weren't operating at maximum capacity and they weren't producing. In other words, we had an effective slowdown, so that

WARD: the operation of the company was not at its best. It was discernable to the management, and therefore they finally....well, the government stepped in and set up the arbitration board and they had to come to negotiations, which was good for us. (laughing) We got a good settlement.

INTERVIEWER: Did you participate in any of the negotiations?

WARD: Oh yes. In the negotiations at 245 Market with the company; we were negotiating regularly before we came to an impasse. Then it was relegated to the arbitration board, with Nathan Feinsinger sitting in as the arbitrator; he was designated by Washington as the arbitrator. The arbitration hearing in 1946 for the PG and E workers was a very high level thing. We had our statisticians from the research department of the CIO who presented our case--you know, volumes and volumes of material on the different job classifications and what they merited and so on. The company had J. Paul St. Sure, the great lawyer. He was the lawyer who represented the Oakland Tribune, the Pacific Maritime Association; he was always Harry Bridges' great opponent. Harry Bridges and Paul Pinsky of the CIO research department represented us. Paul really carried the ball for us in this. You know, they were two top statisticians who were presenting each side and presenting all the arguments in favor, pro and con; it wasn't an exciting hearing really. The negotiations down below which had preceded the arbitration hearing were much more exciting because then you were face-to-face with the company and you were using the material that you had right there, and you had the workers right from the negotiating committee which had been elected from the ranks of the workers. You had a couple of white-collar workers, a couple of utility workers--the manual workers as we called them--and then there were the organizers--Lynn Hames and myself. We often had Don Stofle, our publicity man who sat in, so then he could write up stories for the Labor Herald and the press and so on.

INTERVIEWER: What was your responsibility?

WARD: Well, I'd speak for the white-collar workers. I'd present all the material for the white-collar workers, and then the two white-collar workers who represented the office workers in the PG and E and who had been elected by the white-collar workers, would substantiate. I would open the discussion, for example, and give all the reasons and then they would come in with the facts. They could speak very cogently to this because they were actually talking about their jobs, what they did. And one good thing was we had one woman office worker and one man.

INTERVIEWER: They were elected?

WARD: Yes, they were elected. I made sure that they elected a woman, too. They might have just elected a couple of men, but I pointed out to them that it was important to have a woman upstairs because,

WARD: after all, that was one of the big demands: parity.

INTERVIEWER: Did you feel that the other people on the negotiating team gave you support in your arguments for parity?

WARD: Oh yes. Oh sure. It was a great team that we had. I mean, the white-collar workers supported the demands of the manual workers and vice versa. I don't ever recall any breaks in that unity; it was splendid, splendid. Yes, that was good.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any kind of directives from the International?

WARD: We didn't get along with the International. They were very, very conservative, the leadership of the Utility Workers, and very suspect by us as to their motives. Most of the men in the national leadership of the Utility Workers--and they were all men--were from the old AF of L school; a little bit (pausing).... I don't want to say they were crooks. (both laugh)

INTERVIEWER: (laughing) Yes you do!

WARD: (laughing) They were a little crooked around the edges. Lynn and the rest of us always spoke of them as being very....we didn't trust them as far as we could see them. We always hated it when they came out here to visit the local. They felt that we were a bunch of Reds out here on the west coast and we felt that they were a bunch of crooked AF of L bums on the east coast. (laughing) We had very little to do with them, very little.

INTERVIEWER: Were these the original leaders when the UWOC was founded?

WARD: Yes, I believe so. They were entrenched in Con Edison in New York; that was their big base; they organized Con Edison and they were very chummy with the top leadership of the AF of L.

INTERVIEWER: Even though this was a CIO union?

WARD: Yes. The skilled workers had originally been in the AF of L and during the big organizing drives when the Utility Workers organizing committee was founded, they were swept up in this organizing drive, but they still retained their old AF of L principles, if you can call them principles. You know, when the CIO started its big organizing drives, they had to use a lot of the old entrenched AF of L. They moved over into the CIO because they were swept up into this progressive organizing--the unionism of that period--but they didn't change their habits.

INTERVIEWER: They just had a larger membership to pay dues.

WARD: Yes, that's right, and they always retained their essential conservatism.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of control did they have over the local?

WARD: Well, we were always fighting with them, in our own way. We tried to keep out of their way. They were in the east and all they did was pay the salaries of Lynn Hames and myself and Jim Daugherty, who was the Southern California Regional Director. They paid us very poorly too. We found out later that the eastern organizers got way....oh, much more. They didn't pay me anything like the men. I got three hundred dollars a month, plus minimal expenses. They let me take the train from San Francisco to Los Angeles when I went down there to organize the Southern California Edison white-collar workers. They would pay for my train fare and my hotel, but I had to be very careful not to put in any expenses that exceeded that. And they were getting salaries in the thousands. There certainly was discrimination from the top offices of the UWOC. It was ridiculous. Even the fellows out here thought it was awful.

INTERVIEWER: Were other women organizers paid less than male organizers?

WARD: Well, there weren't any others in UWOC. The United Electrical Workers, which was a marvelous union, very progressive, was chintzy with everybody. (laughing) You know, it's the first thing they would say about the UE; all the organizers and the national officers always got very modest salaries. This was true throughout the union: east, west, north, and south. Everybody received a very modest salary and it was not a question of discrimination between men and women, or colored, or anything like that. It was just that they felt that no organizer should make more than the highest paid worker. That was an ILWU tradition, too, and I think still is. Well, in the Utility Workers I certainly never made more (laughing) than any of the office workers in the PG and E and when they got their big raises, when we achieved parity, I didn't get parity with the national union, not by any means. In fact, I was fired shortly thereafter for refusing to sign the Taft-Hartley affidavit. Along with all the fellows too (barely audible) who lost their jobs because of their refusal to sign the affidavit.

INTERVIEWER: What was the response of the members of the union to that?

WARD: (sighing, speaking sadly) Oh, it wasn't very good. They thought on the whole that we should sign the affidavit, particularly the white-collar workers who couldn't understand why we refused to state what our political affiliation was. They would say, "Well, if you're not Communists, then why don't you sign?" They could not understand the principle behind the people who refused to acknowledge, sign, or betray in any way the fundamental principle of the labor movement, which apparently didn't exist anymore, in many areas, because many unions just went along and signed. That's what started the rift where a lot of the unions then went back into the AF of L-CIO, and only the most militant remained independent--like the ILWU, the UE, and the Mine, Mill.

INTERVIEWER: Was there ever a vote in your union in terms of retaining its affiliation with the UWOC?

WARD: Well, as I recall, we were fired, and then after that the UWOC local started to go back into the IBEW. There was a group in the UWOC who was pushing for a return to the IBEW and saying that the UWOC was losing its power and its strength because of the fact that the top people, the organizers, were communists or followers of the Party line.

INTERVIEWER: What was the response of your union membership to your being fired?

WARD: Well, the response was to the three of us being fired, that is, Lynn Hames, James Daugherty and I. A lot of the women were very timid about it, but they would call me up at home or ask to have lunch with me, in a place where they were sure they wouldn't be seen by anybody from the company. They'd tell me how sorry they were.

INTERVIEWER: Why were they afraid of being seen by the company?

WARD: Well, because they would be labeled as being in the company of a person who had refused to sign Taft-Hartley and who was being labeled as a Communist. This wouldn't enhance their position in the PG and E, and you know, white-collar workers are timid. They're not only timid, but they're also very self-seeking generally, and I can't say I blame them. Many of them had worked for the company for twenty years and would shortly be retired. And they weren't going to give up their pensions and their security in order to fight for one organizer, whom I'm sure they secretly felt was a Red--but a nice Red. (laughing lightly) You know, they would even say that to you. They'd say, "Well, it's your business what you believe in and we recognize that it's your right not to have to speak to anybody or to sign affidavits, but...." That's the way it went.

There was one incident I'll never forget. Shortly after we were fired, I was walking down Sutter Street one day. I had to cross the street, and there was one of those little PG and E fences they put around the manholes when the guys go down there and repair a pipe or something. These fellows were working around there and they recognized me. One of them came up and said hello. Right near there was a flower stand--you know, the little flower stands they have in San Francisco. One of the guys went over and bought a red rose and handed it to me. It was very touching. They said how they missed me and they wanted to know what I was doing.

After that it was hard for me to get a job. I went to work for the Progressive Party; I think it was at that time. I had so many jobs in between that. I know I worked for a period for the Lawyers' Guild. They set up a defense committee for Richard Gladstein, who had been sent to jail on contempt charges by Judge Medina--you know, when he was acting as a lawyer for the defendents in the Smith Act trial. After I lost my job with the Utility Workers, I went to work for the Lawyers' for about six months. Then I went to work for the Progressive Party; Charles Garry was running against Shelley in the Fifth Congressional District and the Wallace campaign and all that.

INTERVIEWER: Did you hope that the workers would fight to have you reinstated, that they would really stand behind you?

WARD: I don't think any of us--and while I don't want to speak for Lynn, I'm sure he'd say the same thing--Jim Daugherty or Lynn or I expected that we'd be reinstated, because these men back east were adamant. They had set out to get us and they had agreed with the national CIO; you know, they wanted people to sign the Taft-Hartely affidavit. It was so futile to try and get reinstated--like asking to go into heaven when you knew darn well (laughing) there wasn't a chance. We got the word that they would have liked us to resign, which we wouldn't give them the satisfaction of doing, so then they just terminated us. The workers didn't hit the bricks to support us. In fact, I don't recall any union where the workers went out in support of the people who were fired. The union--like Mine, Mill or UE and UCAPHWA [United Cannery, Agricultural, and Packing House Workers]--just went independent. It was a decision by the membership and the national union. We happened to be working for a very conservative union which was more than willing to get rid of anybody who was of questionable political coloration.

INTERVIEWER: Can we move on and talk a little bit about your political activities after 1947?

WARD: Well, after I was fired from the Utility Workers, I went to work for the Progressive Party. We supported the candidacy of Charles Garry against John Shelley, which was a stupid thing. I don't know why; John Shelley was a good Representative in Congress. But anyhow, that was one campaign I was involved in with Dave Jenkins. Then I was involved in the Wallace campaign. What else? All losing fights. (laughing) I took on the Progressive Party campaign with misgivings, particularly on the Shelley candidacy, but since it [the campaign for Garry] was part of the overall Wallace candidacy, which the Communist Party was urging, I overcame my doubts in order to work for the Third Party Movement which the Wallace campaign symbolized and which I supported. I deeply supported the Third Party Movement and the Wallace candidacy. The Cold War politics of the Truman era were frightening and threatening to the country and the only solution I could see was the formation of a third Party committed to return to the policies of the Roosevelt period. I daresay my recent firing by the UWOC for refusal to sign Taft-Hartley affidavits made me an enthusiastic advocate of any candidate who opposed Harry Truman.

I was the San Francisco County Chairman--we didn't say Chairperson in those days--of the IPP and, as such, directed the campaign on that level: organizing mass meetings for Wallace, Garry; setting up the precinct organization to get support for the candidates--in other words, all the "hoop-la" associated with political campaigns, the most onerous task being the fund-raising aspect and getting out the vote on election day.

INTERVIEWER: If we could skip back to the thirties again--I read where you were a delegate to the CIO Convention?

WARD: I was a delegate to the one in 1938 in Los Angeles; I was a delegate to most of the state conventions. I was a delegate to the national convention of the United Office and Professional Workers; I was a delegate to the big peace convention in Chicago, where Marcantonio and Paul Robeson were sort of the moving forces and I did attend as an observer the national convention of the CIO in San Francisco where I had my picture taken with John L. Lewis.

INTERVIEWER: That was the 1940 . . .?

WARD: Yes, I think so. They passed a resolution to endorse the drive to organize white-collar office and professional workers. So some of us had our pictures taken with John L.

INTERVIEWER: Did they follow through on that endorsement?

WARD: Well, no. I don't think anyone ever really--national CIO or state CIO or any CIO--really ever gave us money and forces, the same way they organized the auto industry, for example. White-collar workers were not regarded as essential to the class struggle. The only white-collar union that really made headway was the Newspaper Guild and that was because its members were so articulate. Most of their members became Council Secretaries in CIO unions, you know, and counseled, including my husband. But the other white-collar unions--I remember Lewis Merrill would just be treated as a nonentity when he came into the councils of the national CIO. Oftentimes there were no white-collar officers on the national executive board. Later on that changed when they became a little more democratic, when they had one from each international, but even then they would select, for example, the president of the Guild, the Newspaper Guild, to be on the National Executive Board. I don't recall that Lou Merrill or any from the other white-collar unions--the United Federal Workers, the State, County, and Municipal Workers--had much to say in the National Councils of the CIO. Now it's much better. I read where the State, County, and Municipal Workers' national president is very much a part of the national scene.

INTERVIEWER: During this period, did you feel any conflict between the Communist Party line--for example, with the Nazi-Soviet Pact in 1939--and your union activities?

WARD: (sighing) No. I pretty much went along with the Party. I'm afraid I was very uncritical and accepted the explanation that was given. You have to understand that it was also a question of personality. With my background, my embracing the political ideology that I did was almost like embracing a religion and I was very loyal to it. I gave it the same fervor I would probably have given the Church if I had been a Catholic. So for many years I thought they were right. It took a long time for me to raise

WARD: questions. During the early times, when I first joined the Office and Professional Workers Union, I would try to carry through resolutions on Tom Mooney, Spanish Civil War--all questions which were utterly extraneous to the organization of white-collar workers and which caused the union problems. I wasn't the only one. The Communist Party group in there--we were constantly raising these questions when we should have been raising other questions of organization instead, you know, the organization of white-collar workers. The Nazi-Soviet pact was too esoteric a subject to raise in the white-collar union even for us Reds!

INTERVIEWER: Did the ILWU have a lot to do in determining the future of the Office Workers when Ernest Norbeck was kicked out?

WARD: Oh, they tried to help us and salvage the situation.

INTERVIEWER: So the ILWU really felt like the Office Workers were sort of under its wing?

WARD: Yes, but they didn't do anything very material. They gave us their moral support, for example, when we were organizing, say, the Bank of America--trying to organize the Bank of America--or the Prudential Life Insurance Company. Sometimes they'd give us a hundred dollars; sometimes they didn't even do that. But it was not the coordinated effort which they employed with sister unions. For example, if the Auto Workers had tried to organize a plant, or even the Retail Clerks when they were organizing Woolworth's--well, the ILWU would send men to their picket lines and so on.

INTERVIEWER: You really weren't part of their "march inland?"

WARD: Oh no! (laughing) We passed resolutions in the union supporting them. A hundred office workers would pass a resolution endorsing the ILWU's drive inland or we'd urge to boycott some candy factory that they were trying to organize--the Warehousemen, for example.

INTERVIEWER: When did you leave the Communist Party?

WARD: 1957. Over the Hungarian thing. I started to have grave doubts about it before, starting with the DuClos letter in 1945. It got worse and worse. However, I was always active in the professional section of the Party. Then the irony of it is I resigned in January 1957 and in May 1957 I was subpeoned by the House Unamerican Activities Committee. I was already out of the Party, but it showed that the Party was just infiltrated with agents. There were only five people at the meeting when I resigned from the Party; one of those people was an agent. I don't know who it was; it's so hard to believe, you know--when I go over the list in my mind, I can't believe that any of those people....One person who had a great influence on me was Oleta O'Connor Yates. I loved her and thought she was a great person.

WARD: She had the same background that I did, you know; she was a very strong Catholic until she broke with the Church. She was a wonderful person, a very brilliant person and we were close friends.

INTERVIEWER: In what way did she influence you?

WARD: Well, I worked with her very closely and I admired her. I remembered her from college days when she was a public debater. We worked together. I was on the County Committee and she was the chairman of San Francisco County. We worked with professional people, white-collar people, in the Party. She taught classes in dialectical materialism. She resigned from the Party one year after I did.

INTERVIEWER: Were you ever looked down on in Party circles because you were not a worker? Did you feel that the Communist Party treated intellectuals differently than they treated workers?

WARD: This attitude was never expressed in an open and forthright way, but in a more subtle manner. For one thing it was expressed in the theory of Marxism and constantly emphasized in the literature and discussions of the Communist Party. The workers--the manual workers, those who produced the commodities--were the vanguard and without them socialism was impossible to achieve. White-collar and professional workers were allies of the working class, but not essential.
It was inevitable that this basic theory should affect the attitude of the comrades and unionists so that reverse snobbism was a result. But then again, as a believer in Marxism-Leninism, I did acknowledge the crucial role of the industrial worker. However, I often found myself perplexed over the fact that the overwhelming majority of the leadership in the Russian Revolution was made up of intellectuals: Marx, Lenin, Engels. No one in the movement ever explained this phenomenon to me in a satisfactory manner.
Also it is ironical when you consider that the C.P.U.S.A. was composed largely of professionals and intellectuals. Many an hour was devoted in Party sessions to discussing ways and means of enlisting into our ranks "real, honest-to-god" workers--people who labored with their hands. Yes, I think the Party did treat workers differently from the intellectuals--whether these workers were Party members or not. Short shrift was often made of intellectuals who veered from the line, while workers were allowed much more leeway when they strayed from the straight and narrow.

INTERVIEWER: Looking back on it now, could you say whether your experience was basically a positive or a negative one?

WARD: Oh, it was positive. It certainly wasn't negative, by any means. I made some of the most enduring and wonderful relationships with people that I respect and am very close to, like Caroline Gladstein and others--I don't have to tell you their names--but

WARD: I would say practically all of our friends that we have today and whom we've known for the last thirty or forty years are all people who were either members or were very close to the Party. We've developed some very fine friendships. Also it was an experience, an educating experience. I'll grant you, it took me a long time to come to realize that, to shuffle off the baggage that I had. But on the other hand I also learned a great deal. There was a comradeship and a unity of purpose that was very helpful. And I think some of the reason that I was--if I was--successful in organizing workers was because of the support I did get from the Party in thinking, and in organizing my ideas and so on. I still believe in socialism. I don't see how you can have a society that's based on anything but an equal distribution of the means of production; I don't see how you can have a society that has any degree of fairness or justice unless we learn to distribute what the working people produce, to distribute it with some degree of fairness. I think the Soviet experience has been a very disillusioning one, but that needn't mean that socialism can't work. I don't think today they have socialism in the Soviet Union.

INTERVIEWER: Your beliefs in socialism haven't changed so much, but you came to feel that the Party wasn't the instrument for that transition?

WARD: That's right. I certainly don't think it was the instrument or is the instrument for the American people. I think it's too far removed and too insular. I do think that something will come along, and probably is even now forming, where people will realize that there has to be more equality. Maybe capitalism can do it--I don't mean high finance--but I can see now that the capitalist system does organize things well. Now the fact is that they're not able to share their wealth on a more equitable basis and they're so blind that they'll probably never see that. I think we have the means to do much more than the Soviet Union, for example, which came from a very feudal, undeveloped industrial society. Whereas we have all the means of really doing things. So maybe something will come along. I have faith, and I try to do what I can in my own small way now, without any organization. But you'll see me at all the meetings that I think are worth attending.

INTERVIEWER: Were there other women organizers who were close to you?

WARD: Let's see, in the Utility Workers I was the only woman organizer. There were no women organizers in the Mine, Mill that I can recall. There were women organizers in the United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers, like Sandra Martin, to whom I was close. Then Ruby Heide, who was the secretary of the Alemeda County CIO Council. When the regular secretary was drafted into the Army she took over. And during the war I was close to Claudia Williams, who was in the agricultural organizing group, and of course, Caroline Gladstein. At that time she was no longer active, but she was very helpful to me, because I was doing the things she had done in the past, and we would discuss the problems I had; she was very helpful.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of problems?

WARD: Well, just organizing and making contact with the workers and getting the people aroused enough--I'm talking about the Utility Workers now, primarily; in the Mine, Mill I didn't have so much trouble, because I really was secondary in there. As I told you in our previous interview, the men were organizing the men and then when things got rough they called on the women, the wives. Outside of myself, who was a paid employee of the Mine, Mill, all the women who joined in the campaign were the wives and sisters of the workers in the Basic Magnesium plant, so we would discuss things together with the women . . .

INTERVIEWER: You and your husband?

WARD: Oh, my husband primarily. We discussed tactics and so on, in the Mine, Mill campaign. But you were asking about the women organizers that I knew....I think I've mentioned most of them.

INTERVIEWER: Were you close to Marcella Ryan?

WARD: Yes, Marcie, Marcella Stack.

INTERVIEWER: I thought since she was organizing the UE with the Clerical Workers too . . .

WARD: I didn't know that she was with the Clerical Workers. Yes, I know her very well. What companies were they? Do you know?

INTERVIEWER: I don't have that right in front of me, but I can look back in my research and see.

WARD: Well, I remember Marcie as mostly in agriculture. She was, as we called it, (laughing) an ag-organizer. She was closer to Claudia Williams and Elizabeth Sasuly, who's now Elizabeth Eudey. (pausing) Elizabeth was, if I'm not mistaken, at one time the regional director of the Agricultural Workers in this area, or she held a top post in that.

INTERVIEWER: Did the women among themselves give each other support?

WARD: No, because....well, we had support in a general way. You would go to the councils and report your campaign and the struggles you were having, and representatives from the other unions would express support if they were delegates to the council. For example, Sandra Martin would be a delegate from the UE or Claudia Williams--I don't remember Marcella ever being a delegate to the council. And we worked together if there were boycotts or anything like that; then the unions would mesh together. But just the women organizers didn't get together and discuss the problems of their unions because we were really working within our own organizations and expressing cooperation between the organizations. If one was on strike, our union would support that union. But it wasn't done on a woman-to-woman basis, or a

WARD: man-to-man basis. It was a union-to-union basis, which was how it should have been.

INTERVIEWER: How do you think being a woman affected your organizing?

WARD: Let me think about that a little. (sighing) I believe that from the very beginning there was (pause) an attitude on the part of the men organizers--even the most dedicated ones--that they were training the women and that the women were not up to standards. There was this feeling....oh, yes, I'm sure that the men felt that they were much better than the women at this.

INTERVIEWER: In what way were they training you?

WARD: Well, since women had not been too active in that field, you could detect a sort of a patronizing attitude. For example, Lynn Hames thought (pause) that we were doing a great job, but there was always an attitude that the men could tell the women organizers how to really get results. But they were more experienced and knew more than we did.
In certain areas, though, some of the men, like Harry Bridges.... (pause) he didn't have much respect for women, either as organizers or any other way; that was my feeling. He was a very poor person to work with, he thought himself so far above all of us. He was a great negotiator and it's true that he was much better than we were, but there was always this patronizing attitude and very little respect for the white-collar workers as being essential to the working class. You know, Take 'em or leave 'em was his attitude; and a lot of other men had that same attitude; that the white-collar workers were not really that important to the labor movement or to the progressive movement.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you think that?

WARD: I think that's something that's innate in the western man; that's how he's developed and looking at it from that period it's going to take a long time for them to recognize that women are capable of being their equals. I do think really that their egos were so overdeveloped at that point that I don't think they could appreciate the fact that women were capable of doing certain things.
Now I never had any problems, really, except with Bridges, who didn't want to support the organization of white-collar workers; he didn't think they were essential or strategic to the labor movement. His opposition might even be characterized as a theoretical opposition, or one that he felt was part of the Marxist interpretation.

INTERVIEWER: He saw them as professionals?

WARD: Yes. That they were not key to the great struggles that the labor movement was engaged in and would be engaged in. The other men organizers and labor people were supportive, but always with a kind of patting you on the shoulder sort of thing

WARD: and saying, "You're doing a great job, sister, and we're with you," then saying in a patronizing way, "Oh these white-collar workers are so dumb. You've got such a job ahead of you." They weren't very encouraging. I don't know if I'm making myself clear; it was more of an attitude.

INTERVIEWER: Can you think of any specific incidents with Harry Bridges?

WARD: Yes, I think of one incident where he told me to my face that organizing white-collar workers was nothing but a racket. I'll never forget that phrase of his. And mind you, he was a personal friend and I had great admiration for him. But I never once detected in his attitude any kind of real respect for the women organizers in the CIO, and for the organization of the white-collar workers or the semi-skilled workers. He had a very rudimentary approach to this problem: that only the guys who worked with their hands and did the toil of this world were really essential, in the long run, to the struggle for the emancipation of the working class.

INTERVIEWER: It's almost seeing things in brute terms.

WARD: Yes. The other men were never that crude, but there's an attitude you can detect: well, you're a nice little girl and you're doing a good job and we're with you, but always patting you on the shoulder--not as an equal. And I think that's because the white-collar workers probably didn't strike them as being important people in their struggle, in the struggle of the labor movement. They were not essential, that was it.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned that they didn't think the women organizers' work was up to standards.

WARD: I didn't mean to give an impression that there were standards, no. I guess they just felt that women organizers could only go so far. I'm talking now about organizing white-collar workers. I don't know if they felt that way about women organizers in the agricultural fields. They probably didn't because people like Caroline and Claudia and Sandra Martin, who I think was at one time in agricultural organizing, all made a great contribution. As a matter of fact, the male organizers could not have achieved what was accomplished in the agricultural area without the women, because so many of the agricultural workers were women and it took a woman to organize them.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of women that you knew that were active in either organizing or in unions, why did they drop out whereas others stayed?

WARD: I think Caroline dropped out from being an active agricultural organizer because she was put in jail. Then, when she came out she decided she wanted to have a family and not such a disorganized life. She was getting on in years even though she was still very young. A lot of the women I knew stayed in the movement, like Claudia Williams and Elizabeth Eudey, who was

WARD: Elizabeth Sasuly. She worked for years and years in one capacity or another; and Sandra Martin, in the Electrical Workers.

INTERVIEWER: They all continued their work?

WARD: Yes, and Ruby Heide worked until she died. Some of them did retire, so to speak, to have families. But some of the women leaders, like Edith Jenkins--she was very active in the Rosenberg fight and in the peace movement. She was one of the delegates to the World Peace Conference. She was not so much in the trade union movement because she was a teacher, but she was active in the Teachers Union. Today she's still active; she's a professor at Merritt College and she's active in her union and all sorts of progressive causes that involve her profession. There was a period where it was mighty difficult for a women to continue in an organizational role in the trade union movement. Opportunities just died down. For example, when I was fired from the Utility Workers, I had no other union to go to and I started working more in the political field, in the Progressive Party, and then I worked within the Party. That's where I did my work, not organizational, but political.

INTERVIEWER: There wasn't work in the union movement?

WARD: No. Marcella Ryan Wood Stack was in the Agricultural Workers and then the UE and then stopped. A lot of these jobs ended for women when the war ended. You see, they were given organizer's jobs during the war, when the men were away. But when the men came back (making a sweeping gesture and whistle) out went the women. Marcie was another one who was never called back into the union movement. She got a job at the Jewish Community Center, and worked there for the rest of her working career. She just retired this past year.

INTERVIEWER: The ones who remained, why were they able to stay within the union movement?

WARD: Well, who really? Now, Sonia Baltrun was always active, that was her union. She came from the textile industry and I daresay she worked there until her retirement. There was never a man in leadership in that union, I don't believe. You see, Sonia was always the one, so she carried through. But for a lot of women who worked in the trade union movement--including myself; I don't think I would have stayed--I think there would have come a time, in the Utility Workers for example, where women would not be that welcome, shall we say.

INTERVIEWER: Well, you mentioned Elizabeth Sasuly before when you were talking about women who had stayed with organizing. What happened to her?

WARD: Well, when the Agricultural Workers was taken over by the AF of L, she was out, too. She became involved in work with the Housing Authority. I don't know if you know her; you may have heard of her. She's gotten a grant to do some research on the Italian

WARD: labor movement and she's going to write a book on that, but she's not in the labor movement, as such. Then--who else that I knew? I can't think of any right now.

INTERVIEWER: I was just curious whether there was one period where a lot of women became inactive and there was a more general reason, but it seems as though it's really peculiar to each case.

WARD: No, I think with the end of the war there started to be a shift, when the men were brought in. I remember when Ruby Heide was Secretary of the Alameda CIO Council, and she had become the secretary when Paul Schlipf was drafted into the armed forces. He went overseas for quite a while. Then he came back and there was some ruckus about her not wanting to leave. He said, "Okay, if she wants it,"--and I don't think he ever got that job back. Maybe he did; I really don't recall. But that was one case where the war's end determined whether a woman would remain in leadership or whether a man would take over again.
Now another great woman organizer was Rosa DeBemis Grey [better known as Luisa Moreno]; she was the organizer and the national vice-president of the United Agricultural Workers of America. She was a great organizer. She started in organizing the cigar makers in Tampa, Florida. And there were all sorts of charming stories--some of them may have been a little apocryphal, but I think on the whole they were pretty accurate--of how she used to read to the workers in Spanish as they were making cigars; read literature and so on, because they were mostly illiterate. I think that's one of the things she used to do when she started in. She spoke beautiful Spanish, of course. Then she rose to leadership in the United Agricultural Workers and became a national symbol. A really tremendous person.
Her real name was Rosa Rodriguez and she came from Guatemala from a very high middle-class family. Her parents were in the government and she broke with her family because of her radical activity. When Luisa was threatened with deportation, until the very last moment, we resorted to all sorts of demonstrations to get her citizenship restored, to have her remain in this country: petitions signed to the United States Government, to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and meetings, and funds were raised. At the time that Luisa was deported, her daughter was married and living in Los Angeles. Luisa and her husband--his name was Gray--went to Mexico, I think Tiajuana, so that her daughter could visit her and bring the grandchild across the border into Tiajuana, and Luisa would be able to see her periodically. For a long time, she lived in that miserable Tiajuana so that she could be near her daughter. She was married to a wonderful guy, who became ill in Mexico later on and died there. She eventually went to Guatemala and became a very important person in the Guatemalan government. Then, when the Guatemalan government, which was very progressive, was overthrown --due to U.S. intervention as it later turned out--she had to flee the country. She took refuge in the Mexican Embassy there and she's still in Mexico today. Her husband died. We hear from her--about once a year she writes us a nice letter--and we have

WARD: many memories in common. She was a wonderful woman and a marvelous organizer. She was a national officer of the CIO and was on the State Executive Board of the CIO and so on. There's a woman whose oral history would make a fine contribution.

INTERVIEWER: How would you compare the trade union movement of today with that of the thirties?

WARD: Oh, today I'm kind of disappointed. It's very, I think, employer oriented. There's no real working class--even in the longshore union, which was one of the great militant unions. I don't know if that's what prosperity does, but it's fat and lazy, the labor movement today. It plays no political role. I take that back: it plays a very reactionary political role, the national AF of L-CIO. Look at the leaders, retiring with half a million dollars. We heard the other day that Joe Curran of the National Maritime Union retired and his membership gave him one million dollars, plus his pension. Compare that kind of thing to, say, the Italian labor movement or the French or the Spanish, where top leadership in those labor movements earn only as much as the top skilled worker. I remember Giuseppe di Vittorio used to tell us when he came out here right after the war--he was the national Secretary-Treasurer of the Italian Federation--how he turned in part of his salary so that he wouldn't earn more than the average Italian worker. And in this country. That takes away from the militancy that is required to lead the working class into any kind of a struggle.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel that organized labor is meeting the needs of the working people?

WARD: Certain segments of it are trying to, let's put it that way. But I think (sighing) leaders like Goldblatt are few and far between and the way Bridges was in the olden days. Now he's gotten too conservative for my taste. There isn't that vitality. A man like, say, Jimmy Herman[1]: he gives one some hope. But on the whole the labor movement in this country has not taken up the fight for equality with the minorities. I think, well, it's very disappointing but I think it will change. Circumstances from down below will force the leadership into some kind of action. But right now (long pause)--I guess this country does give the workers a better deal than any other country. Yes, enough to make the labor movement quiescent and not ask for more.

INTERVIEWER: What about your attitude towards the women's movement?

WARD: Oh, I think it's great. And I think it's made very striking advances in the last couple of years. Though they have a long way to go yet, because of the prejudice that prevails throughout the country. When you see the attitude of the average woman towards a person who wants to express themselves--you know, have a career and so on, there's still a lot of opposition to the

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[1]Present International President of ILWU; succeeded Bridges in 1977.

WARD: liberation of women, but I think they've done remarkably well.

INTERVIEWER: Well, what was your attitude towards the women's movement in the thirties?

WARD: I don't remember that there was such a terrific women's movement. You see, that was after the vote had been won and concentration was not on women having domestic independence and independence as females opposed to males. At least I didn't run into that kind of expression of it. There might have been; I'm trying to think.

INTERVIEWER: An issue like the ERA?

WARD: Well, the only time I ever came up against it was when we were opposed to the ERA because we were afraid that it would remove what few gains the women had made in the industrial field. Because of other changes that have occurred, the issue is much sharper today. You want the Equal Rights Amendment because other gains have been made, and you know darn well that women won't lose what they've achieved so far. That's only been achieved in the last decade.

INTERVIEWER: So you would support the ERA now?

WARD: Oh yes.

INTERVIEWER: In concluding, just thinking back, what would you say were your most satisfying experiences?

WARD: (long pause) Well, I think my most satisfying was my days with the Mine, Mill, and secondly, the organization of the women in PG and E. But I preferred Mine, Mill because it was earthier and it involved both sexes, really. One could see the burgeoning of real class consciousness that affected women and men alike, so that in that process the women gained equality, more equality. It wasn't just a question of equal pay for equal work; it was the question of achieving a dignity and a comradeship with the men that was much broader than just the question of equal pay. And I think it was brought out so beautifully in the film, The Salt of the Earth, where the woman--well, she embodied a great deal in her relationship with her husband, as a husband, and as a trade unionist and how he developed to the point where he could begin to understand what her role should be. I don't mean to glamourize or romanticize that movie, because that movie was really the way it was, the way I remember some of the struggles, like the BMI struggle. That's why it was the most satisfying: because men and women worked together and not in a competitive fashion. The men weren't saying: "We should do this for the women so that we'll get something out of it." I think maybe even unconsciously it affected their psyches and made the women and the men better human beings. I think when I compare myself to my sisters, who had a much narrower life and weren't opened up to this world--however many

WARD: faults that it had--to this movement that I participated in, I think my life has been much richer because of it. At least I've learned to read a book and in reading it, to question what I'm reading or to have a much broader concept of what it's all about than people who live in a little narrow world governed by all the small things that really don't matter in the end.

INTERVIEWER: If you could change any part of your life and relive it, what would that be?

WARD: Oh, that's a good question. Well, I've often talked about that with my husband. I said, "I wonder if I relived my life if I would have joined the Communist Party." I think I would have preferred to be very close (laughing) to it, but not to have been so subservient to it. I would have preferred my thinking processes to have been better so that I would have challenged, sooner, some of the theories and some of the positions that the Party put out. Then I think I wouldn't have joined the Party--hoping, however, that I wouldn't have lost all the richness of the experiences that I had and the friends that I've made and the relationships I've developed. So I think, well, maybe if I didn't join the Party then I wouldn't have had the opportunity to do all this, to have earned this rich background and experience, that I consider very wonderful. I don't know. I'm certainly not satisfied. I wish I'd had a more meaningful education, in my university career--in other words, not have accepted the narrow options that were open to women or I thought were open to women, because of my background, for example, to be a school teacher, or a social worker. It would never have occurred to me to do something that was of a broader nature.

INTERVIEWER: But you did it anyway. (laughing)

WARD: (also laughing) Well, I don't know. I think I would have wanted a better education. I mean, I would have preferred to pursue my university education further, not just stop at an A.B., because I do like the intellectual life, the academic life. I think maybe, if I had to do it over again, I would go for more schooling. On the other hand, I think I gained a lot of experience in the labor movement and in the Party. That's a difficult question to answer.

INTERVIEWER: I think you've answered it very well.

Angela Gizzi Ward

Born 1910 in San Francisco; eldest child of immigrants from Italy who became prominent citizens in the North Beach district. Graduate of the University of California at Berkeley.

Worked at Bank of America until fired for attempting to organize a union among bank and insurance employees throughout the Bay Region. President and organizer of United Office and Professional Workers Local 34, San Francisco.

Later became secretary-treasurer of Local 700, Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers, in Los Angeles; joined her husband in a dramatic but unsuccessful effort to organize workers for Mine Mill in war plants in Southern Nevada, 1943.

Returning to San Francisco, she became an organizer of clerical workers at the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, achieving a first major victory in the local office-worker field, with equal pay for equal work for women.

On retirement she has assisted her husband in the preparation of oral history and other manuscripts.

Estolv Ethan Ward

Born 1899 in Los Angeles; father a Socialist lawyer out of Rhode Island; mother an ardent feminist, daughter of a San Francisco Quaker merchant, and possessor of a Ph.D. from Swarthmore and an M.D. from Boston Medical School. The infant was removed to San Francisco at age two weeks, and with lacunae has lived in the Bay Region, mostly Berkeley, ever since.

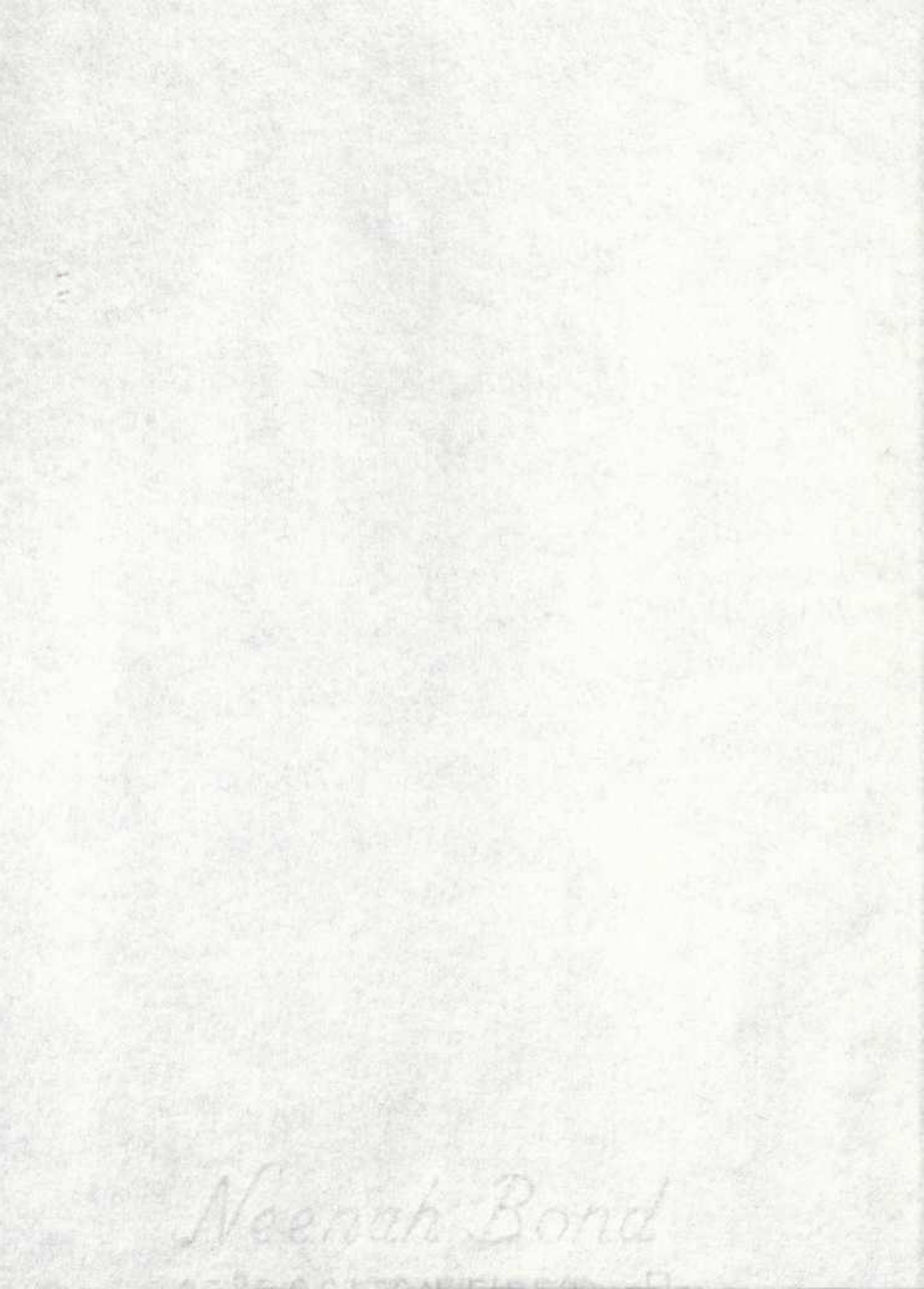
Three and a half years of institutionalized instruction; otherwise his education came through tutors, travel, and daily family discussions.

Became campus reporter at U.C. Berkeley for the Oakland Tribune, proceeding to top rewrite, general assignment, and assistant city editor. Covered the San Francisco general strike in 1934 and in those three days learned things that changed his life. Became a founder of the local chapter of the Newspaper Guild and was fired and blacklisted by his publisher, Joseph R. Knowland. Became bailiff and court reporter for the California Supreme Court, meanwhile being active on his leisure time in the burgeoning CIO labor movement. Resigned his court job to become founding executive secretary of the Alameda County CIO Council.

In the next eleven years, he became successively first vice-president, California State CIO Council; CIO legislative representative, Sacramento, 1939; executive secretary, Harry Bridges Defense Committee, Angel Island trial, 1939; executive vice-president, California Labor's Non-Partisan League, 1940; radio writer, Los Angeles CIO News, 1940-41; organizer, Mine Mill and Smelter Workers' Union, in Los Angeles and Southern Nevada, 1942-44; San Francisco CIO radio writer, 1944; CIO-PAC director, San Francisco CIO Council, 1945-48. Following that, odd jobs and labor journalism.

Author, Harry Bridges On Trial, Modern Age, 1940; a labor novel published only in Polish translation, Renegat, 1953; The Gentle Dynamiter: A Biography of Tom Mooney, Ramparts Press, 1983; numerous labor and travel articles.

Interviewer-editor, Louis Goldblatt, "Working Class Leader In the ILWU, 1935-1977," two volumes, Regional Oral History Office, 1980; Henry Schmidt, "Secondary Leadership in the ILWU, 1933-1966," Regional Oral History Office, 1983.


Noenah Bond