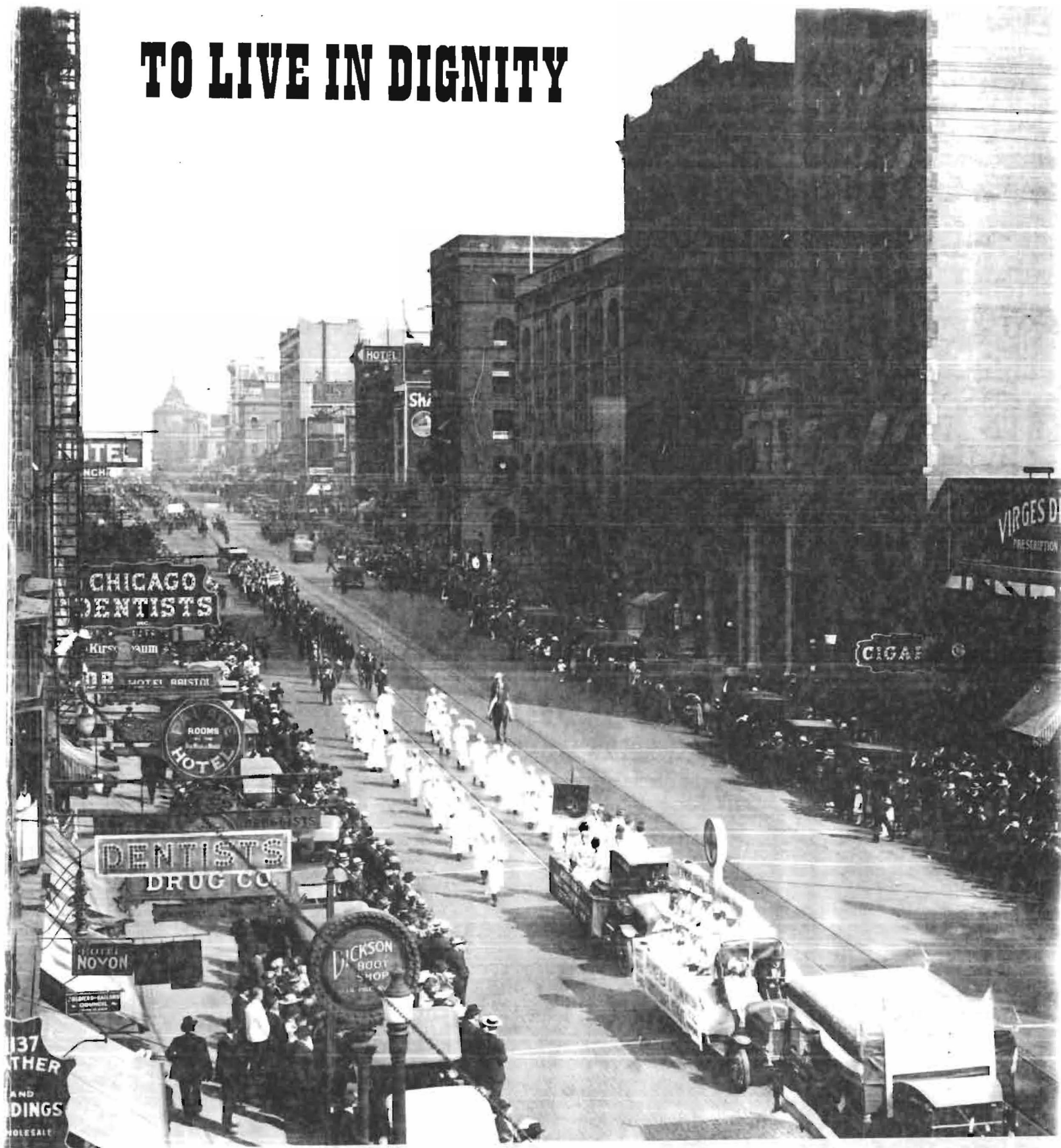


TO LIVE IN DIGNITY



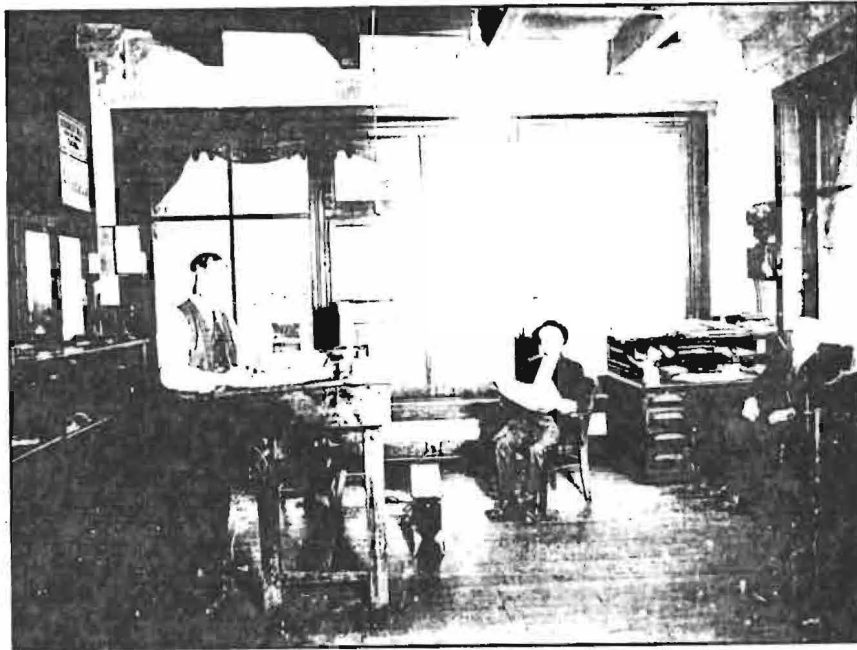
SEGMENT OF 1919 TACOMA LABOR DAY PARADE DOWN PACIFIC AVENUE, WITH UNITED GARMENT WORKERS' UNION LABEL ON LEADING TRUCK. (Boland B2273, Tacoma Public Library) Women in white on second truck belong to the Women's Union Card and Label League, an important support group that promoted union goods and services, organized boycotts, and raised money for strike relief and other union causes. Men marching in long white coats belong to Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen. (C-10)

Picture D-1

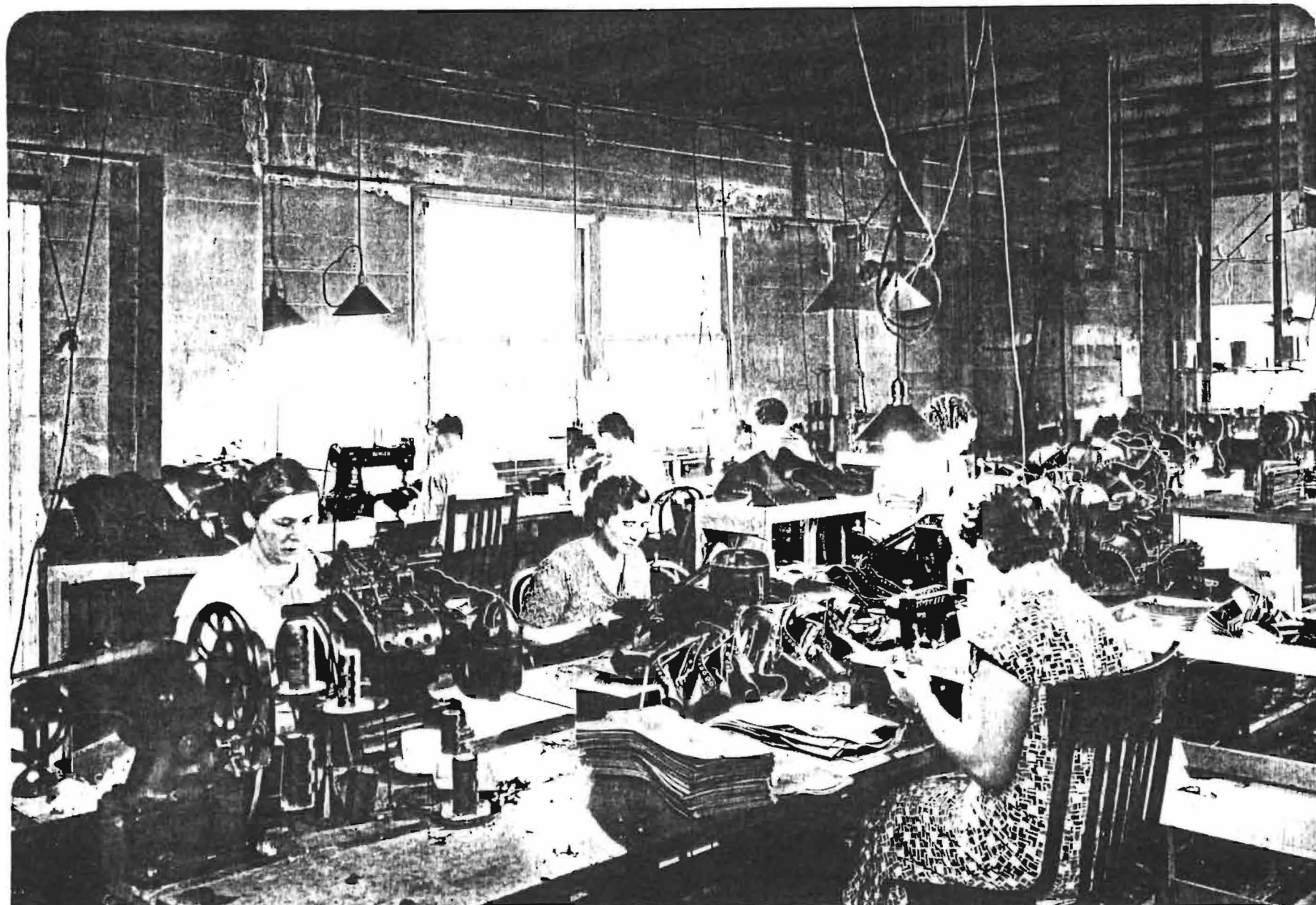
OM: The significance of that rather ordinary picture is that on the whole rest of the coast, the Longshoremen had no union. They were either working out of what they called a "fink hall", which is an employer's hiring hall, or in San Francisco, the casuals were shaping up on the docks. Here in Tacoma, they had their union, they had their hiring hall, this is what the men worked out of. So this is a very significant picture.

KF: Much more organized then.

OM: Totally organized. And this was a basis for the rest of the coast becoming organized. They sent this little bunch here, this union of some 600 odd members kept the whole coast wide organization together, sent this marvelous Irishmen Paddy Morris out as organizer. Some of these young fellows would go with him and talk to other ports. They went down to Portland, they went up to Everett and then when the New Deal came in and people began to take hope that they could organize, then it spread to the rest of the coast. But this is where it came from. Absolutely. Local 38-3 was a very significant bunch and this continued during the whole strength of the union movement. Paddy was president of the Central Labor Council for years.



DISPATCH OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL LONGSHOREMEN'S ASSOCIATION LOCAL 38-3 IN UNION HALL AT 15th AND COMMERCE, TACOMA, 1920. (Longshoremen's Union Local 23) During the open-shop years of the 1920s and 1930s, while longshoremen on the rest of the Pacific Coast endured the indignities of the fink hall and shape-up, the two Tacoma unions controlled the work of the port and equalized earnings through their union hiring halls. (D-1)



WORKERS REORGANIZED THEIR UNION WHEN BONE DRY SHOE COMPANY REOPENED AFTER THE DEPRESSION. (Richards Collection, Tacoma Public Library) By 1937 Boot and Shoe Workers Local 173 had eighteen union repair shops besides the Bone Dry factory. In succeeding years the factory went out of business, and the repair shops closed or changed hands. The union disappeared. (E-20)

OM: The State Labor Council for about four years now has been holding a labor summer school for high school students.

KF: I read about that.

OM: Okay. Different unions sponsor them and these students have to be going into junior or senior year in high school the next year. They have been held at Western Washington college in Bellingham. And, they tried to get it more centrally located this year, so they got it down at Pacific Lutheran University. We were the host labor council, so it was up to us to plan something to do with these kids. We took them on a tour. And first of all, Brian Kamens and Walt Waisath and I went up into the old Carbon River Coal Camps. Gary Reese is very familiar with that country. He's been active in scouting and has had Boy Scout troops and has hiked all over that country. He gave Brian some directions and we went up there and worked out a tour that would take them to Wilkeson, where the remains of the coke ovens were, that's a historical sight; and to where the remains of this quarry is and then to a graveyard up in Carbanado where the victims of a horrible mine disaster, at the turn of the century, are buried and a lot of other working people and their children are buried. Shocking to see the infant mortality by the [number of] children's graves. So we planned that tour and chartered a bus, a union bus, not Greyhound, union bus. And took these kids up one day a whole bus full of them and their instructors had come out of the Labor Council and out of the labor movement and it was a marvelous trip. Gary Reese went with us to describe the mining industry up there and the country. He was fabulous. Then I gave a little of the union background up there because it was very interesting union background when the mines were working. They were all locals of the United Mine Workers and it was just a great tour. So, this was one of the points and this was one of the pictures [referring to the picture of the men in the quarry] I had.

KF: Is the quarry still accessible?

OM: You can see it from the road at one spot. If you go into Wilkeson and then past, a little ways farther onto a side road, you can see across a kind of ravine. So you can still see fragments of the quarry and some of those buildings that were connected with it. But it is a marvelous history. The miners were organized here. Everybody else was organized in a federal local. The whole town. These little towns in those days would be like that. Sometimes, and I imagine back in other parts of the country where there was a single strong and dominant union, then everything else was union. They had some terrible struggles when the unions were broken in 1921.



MEMBERS OF AFL FEDERAL LABOR UNION LOCAL 14441 AT THE WILKESON SANDSTONE QUARRY, c. 1920. (Tacoma Public Library) Miners at Wilkeson, Carbonado, and other coal camps on the Carbon River reorganized in the United Mine Workers beginning in 1907. The Federal Labor Union, organized in 1913, included all the other workers in Wilkeson. In 1921 mine owners cut wages and smashed the miners' union. (C-12)

These two pictures I love. E-1, E-2

He is so typical up there...

KF: On the box.

OM: Ranting. Yes, and they were busy.

KF: It's amazing to me. They don't look like blue collar workers there do they?
They have their coats and their hats on.

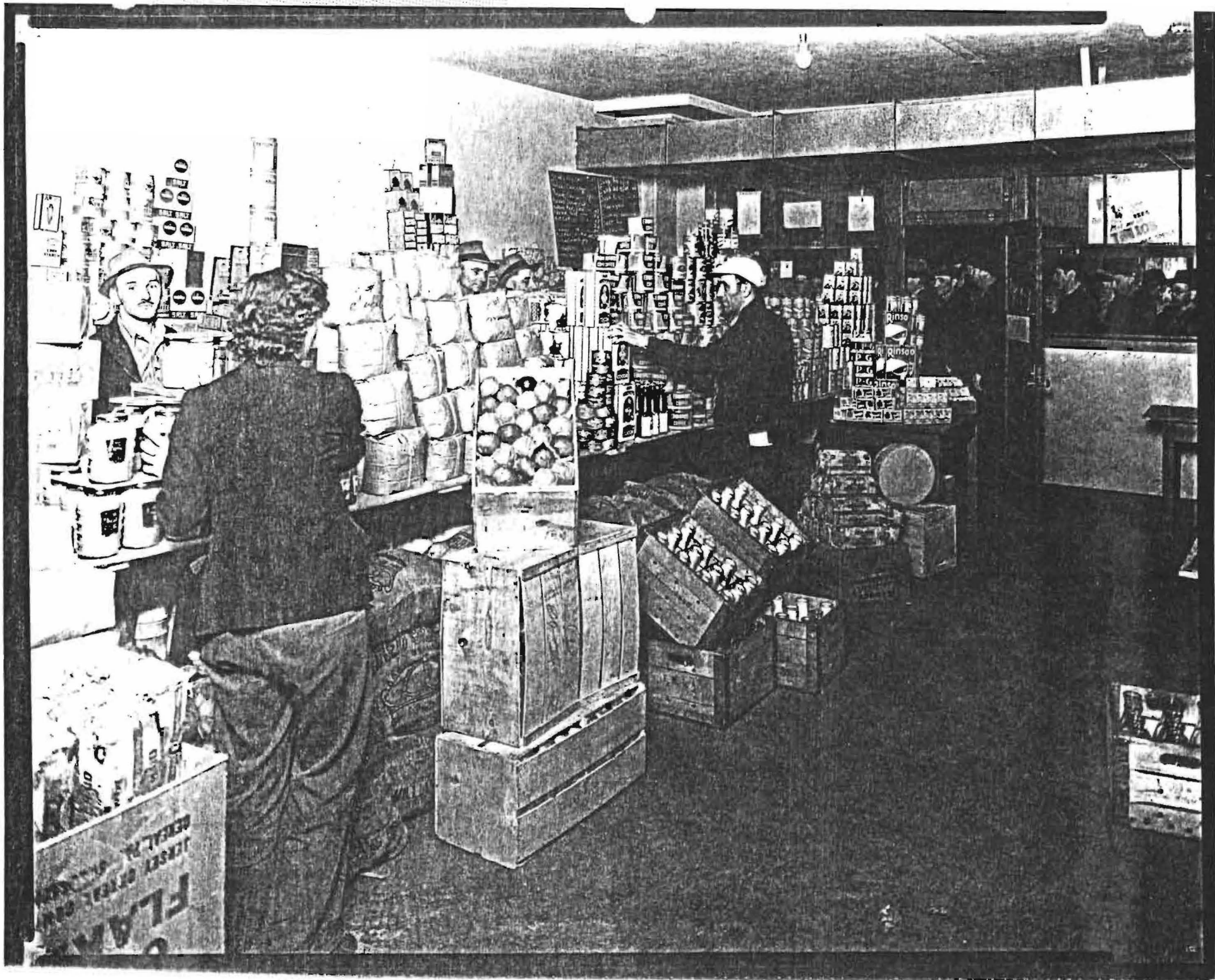
OM: That's all right. That's the way they dressed. This was winter and their
clothing was likely shabby

KF: And they were warmer in their overcoats.

OM: Yes.



THE GREAT DEPRESSION WIPED OUT THOUSANDS OF JOBS, LEAVING MANY UNEMPLOYED COLD, HUNGRY, HOMELESS AND ANGRY. UNEMPLOYED DEMONSTRATION AT OLD CITY HALL, TACOMA, FEBRUARY 1931. (Tacoma Public Library) Communists and Wobblies mounted soapboxes to channel anger toward action under their banners. Socialist unionists called a meeting of unemployed at the Central Labor College in March 1932, which organized the Unemployed Citizens' League. In three weeks the League numbered two to three thousand members in twelve locals operating nine neighborhood commissaries. (E-1)



These are companion pictures. And this, I think somebody told me this was the Model Bakery. It was a closed bakery that this movement got the use of. The unemployed bakers would bake the bread and it would be distributed to the groups and then in return for their labor they had so much credit that they could get things that they needed.

KF: So the food that was distributed was free, like for the unemployed.

OM: Yes. And some of it as I say, some it was this huge barter arrangement that grew up because [of] different people's skills. They did different things. Look how proud and happy these guys are. And the aprons, you can read it.

KF: American Red Cross. Act of Congress.

OM: You see this was relief flour that they made the aprons out of. I think those two are great.



UNEMPLOYED CITIZENS' LEAGUE BAKERY, WHERE JOBLESS BAKERS MADE BREAD FOR DISTRIBUTION THROUGH LEAGUE COMMISSARIES, TACOMA, 1932. LEAGUE ALSO OPERATED A SHOE REPAIR SHOP. (Tacoma Public Library) As public work relief was limited, League members worked cooperatively to provide for their needs. They grew vegetables on donated land and cut and hauled donated wood, receiving labor credits to be exchanged for food and fuel. Trade unions raised money and donated services for their support. (E-2)



E-18

OM: This is great. See, after they got their stuff together here on this side of the mountain, then some of these outfits in Eastern Washington, the workers organized. This was a box factory in Omak and they got into a prolonged strike situation, so they had to put out a call for help.

KF: [(reading the caption to picture)] Three truckloads of food to striking mill workers in Omak. For heaven's sake.

OM: That's a neat picture.

KF: Showing solidarity!

OM: That's why I said -

E-10

OM: Now here, that's 11th and A, yes.

KF: Lumber strike.

OM: Yes, that's the lumber strike. The victory in the longshoremen's strike was a terrific impetus in the lumber [industry].



FACE-OFF BETWEEN NATIONAL GUARD AND PICKETS JULY 12 MOMENTS BEFORE THE BATTLE STARTED. (Richards collection, Tacoma Public Library) Guardsmen blocked access to 11th Street Bridge, while some 500 pickets marched around intersection at 11th and A streets, booing and taunting guardsmen and scabs returning from the mills on the tide flats. Despite soldiers and private guards, production limped along with skeleton crews. (E-10)

E-12

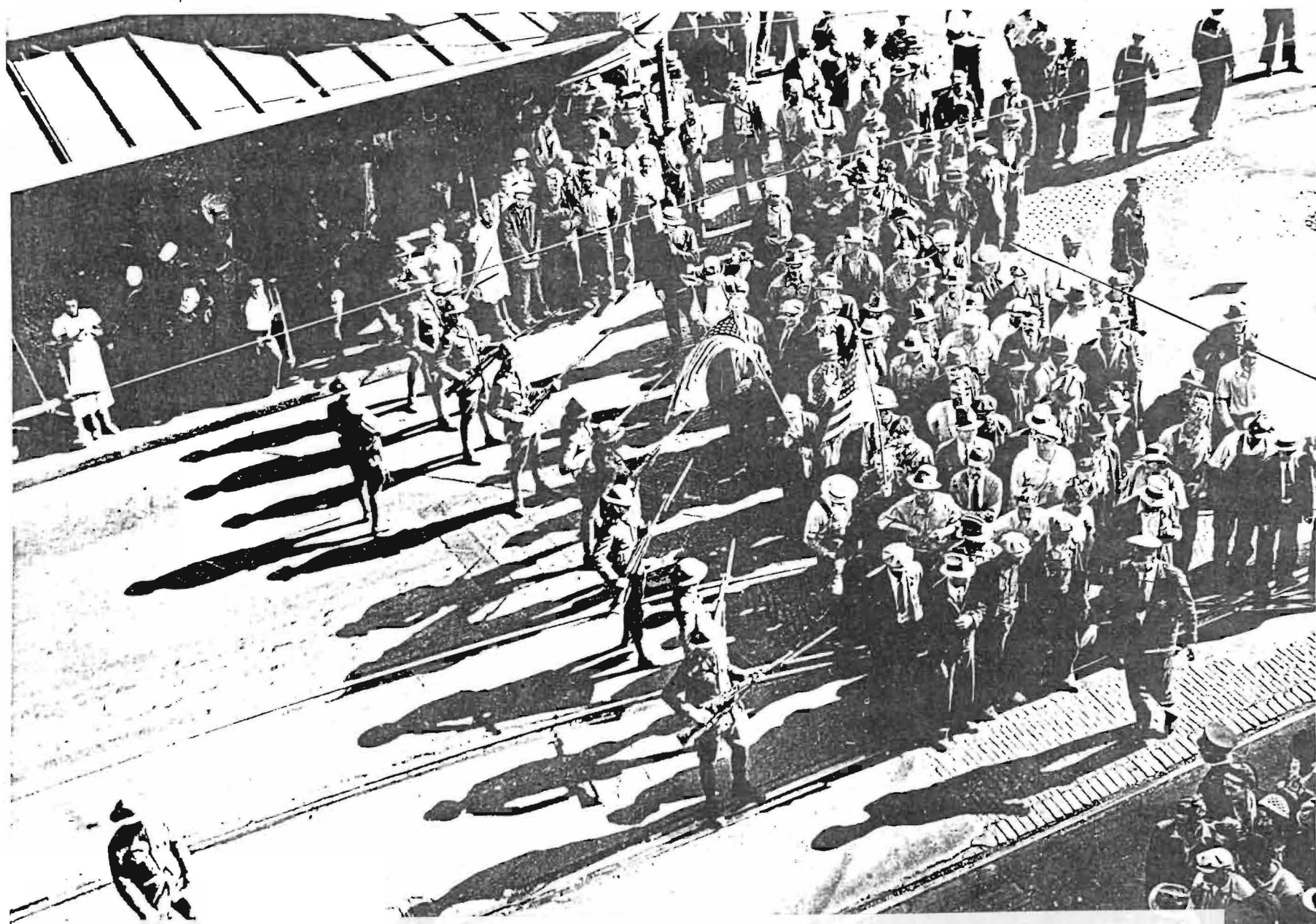
KF: I love that

OM: Isn't that something with the sun glistening on that [bayonets]. That was just minutes before they... Now the reason they are in this order is that, this we had in the collection earlier, so the commentary didn't fit in any other order. Otherwise, chronologically, those pictures are out of order. And this one follows where they chased them up the hill. When they got to the produce stands on Market Street, they pelted the guard with them.

E-11

KF: Fought back with fruits and vegetables, huh! (laughter)

OM: Yes. That's what the newspaper account said.

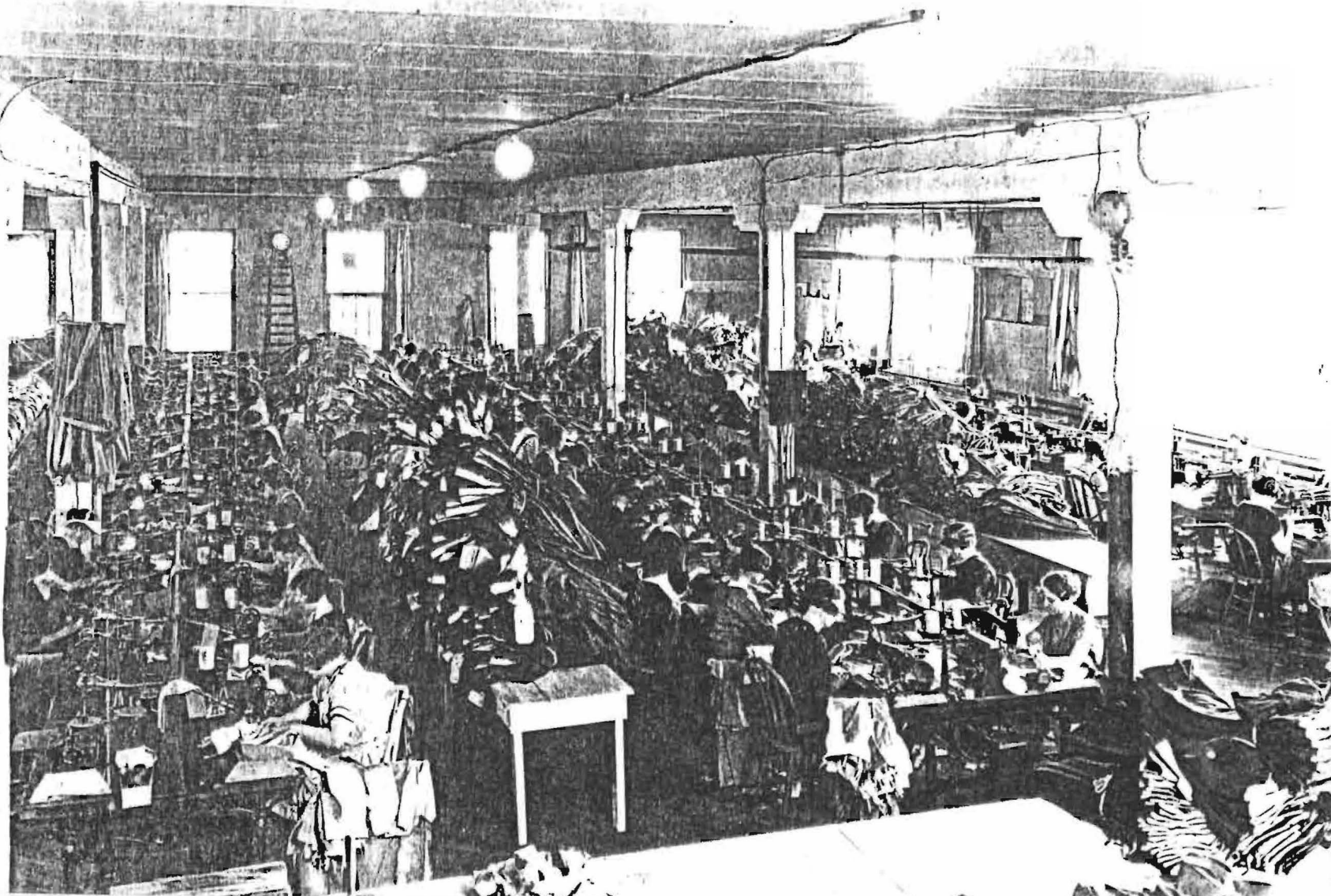


NATIONAL GUARD WITH FIXED BAYONETS PATROLLED TACOMA STREETS DURING 1935 LUMBER STRIKE TO PREVENT MASS PICKETING. Guardsmen might harass strikers and annoy citizens, but their activities did nothing to move lumber from congested docks of struck mills. Claiming private armed guards on docks made working conditions unsafe, union longshoremen absolutely refused to load scab lumber cargoes. Their solidarity contributed greatly to winning the strike.

D-15

KF: Day's Clothing Factory.

OM: Yes, they have quite an interesting history. I wrote their history, because I knew if I didn't offer to do it, it wouldn't get done. And the most marvelous woman that I talked with, besides their business rep., this woman who came out of the garment factories in the south, a preacher's daughter. Oh she was just great! And you know, white southern working class, you would think she would be narrow and prejudiced, and she wasn't. She was the most understanding person. And they have quite an international work force, you know, in the industry now; and Item House now is the one presently organized with Asians, and South Americans and the whole bit and she just seemed to be able to handle the whole thing.



MEMBERS OF UNITED GARMENT WORKERS LOCAL 201 AT DAY'S CLOTHING FACTORY, TACOMA, 1926. ORGANIZED IN 1903, LOCAL 201 WAS THE FIRST TACOMA UNION COMPOSED PREDOMINANTLY OF WOMEN. (Bowen 2657, Tacoma Public Library) During the Great Depression people patched their overalls, so the union accepted a 20 percent cut and six-hour day to spread work. After the union refused a second cut, the factory locked out the employees and reopened scab in 1933. Four years later the union had organized the scabs and signed a new agreement. (D-15)

This was a very significant event that turned around the labor movement on the Pacific Coast. Longshoremen organizing efforts had started, grew out of this nucleus in Tacoma here culminating in the 1934 Maritime Strike. Ron Magden did the [title: Tacoma Longshore Unionism, 1886-1989 , Centennial Booklet] very first section in that book [that] deals with the longshoremen. The victory in this strike, set the tone for the rest of the coast. Had this strike been lost, it would have been a terrible blow, not only to the coast but the nation. This was before CIO, before the auto sit ins. This was a seminal event that triggered everything. This was the end of the strike when they had assembled in Seattle to vote on going back to work and submitting their issues to arbitration They had fought their hearts out. Very, very tough strike. [said quietly, with deep emotion and compassion]

KF: Looks like a happy day. Most of them look happy.

OM: I guess. Well, yes. I guess. It had had its tragedies. They lost two people in Seattle. A Standard Oil gunman killed one of the longshoremen at Point Wells and a cop killed a sailor down on the Seattle waterfront in a police charge. They lost two in San Pedro, two in San Francisco.



Northwest Joint Strike Committee. July 28, 1934.

UNION STRENGTH IN TACOMA AND OTHER NORTHWEST PORTS CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO VICTORY IN 1934 MARITIME STRIKE. JOINT NORTHWEST STRIKE COMMITTEE, SEATTLE, JULY 28, 1934. (International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union Local 1-19) Tacoma Longshoremen were the nucleus from which the Pacific Coast District ILA reorganized the Coast. Longshoremen, licensed and unlicensed seamen struck the entire Pacific Coast in May 1934 for union recognition, abolition of fink halls and fink books, and uniform coastwide agreements. Solidarity of all crafts brought victory after almost three months on picket lines. (E-5)

OM: These are my folk.

E-30

KF: The Clerical [Union].

OM: They were both retail clerks and clerical. We were a minority. We were the second largest group. But these are Richard's pictures. I found them. I would go down when they were down in that decaying little studio down on Pacific and, a nasty little man ran it, charging exorbitant prices for everything. But I did buy this print and I bought a picture off their negative for my own union before the collection went to the library.



PICKETS DURING RETAIL STORES STRIKE/LOCKOUT, 1937. (Richards photo, Office and Professional Employees Union Local 23) Beginning with clerks in 1933, retail stores employees organized in their craft unions. When the unions struck Peoples Store for a wage increase in 1937, the rest of the department and variety stores locked out their employees. The open-shop Industrial Conference Board represented the stores. (E-30)

E-31

KF: This looks like the Rhodes building. Where is that?

OM: This picture is in the basement of the Olympus Hotel, on Pacific and 7th. I can remember being down there once to eat. I never was involved when it was a soup kitchen, but that's where they ran it [the soup kitchen].

KF: You think of soup kitchens as people being really poor- - -

OM: I know, grubby. That's why I put that [in]. This is the way people dressed at work. I have been so anxious to correct this myth that working people are a bunch of gorillas and soup kitchens are for- -

KF: street bums.

OM: Yes, or they're sleazy.

KF: On picket lines now, they do get kinda grubby. They don't walk in their heels.

OM: Yeah, I know . But these people had come in from picketing.



SOUP KITCHEN FOR RETAIL STORES STRIKERS IN THE BASEMENT OF THE OLYMPUS HOTEL, TACOMA, 1937. (Richards photo, Office and Professional Employees Union Local 23) The Central Labor Council coordinated the strike and soup kitchen. After five weeks the unions won. The council negotiated a blanket agreement providing for a union shop. Agreements for wages and conditions for each craft were attached to the blanket agreement. (E-31)

F-4

OM: Oh, it was a madhouse. I never was actually down there [in the shipyards] during the war. I had contact with all these people who worked there. Of course, all the public transportation was crowded. I had to go down toward 9th to get on a bus to go out to Lincoln Heights.



LUNCH BREAK AT THE SHIPYARD, 1943. (Richards Collection, Tacoma Public Library) Unionism was new to most Midwesterners who want to work in the shipyard, but laid-off miners from Black Diamond and Ravensdale brought their collective bargaining experience with them. One former United Mine Workers officer became a Boilermakers steward. (F-8)



SHORTAGE OF LABOR DURING WORLD WAR I BROUGHT WOMEN INTO NEW INDUSTRIES IN JOBS PREVIOUSLY HELD BY MEN. PRODUCTION WORKER IN WOOD PRODUCTS PLANT, TACOMA, 1920. (Boland B3227, Tacoma Public Library) After the war, returning soldiers reclaimed jobs, and most women went back to traditional occupations. A few women held jobs in Tacoma wood products industry during the 1920s. Women participated alongside men when Upholsterers and Furniture Workers organized furniture factories in 1933, and shared picket duty during strikes in 1935 and 1936. (C-5)



PAYDAY. SHIPYARD PAYCHECKS SHRANK BECAUSE WAGES WERE FROZEN AND PRICE CONTROLS NEVER REALLY WORKED. (Richards Collection, Tacoma Public Library) Periodically the government grudgingly permitted unions to negotiate wage raises that partially covered the increased cost of living. But throughout the war working people endured economic hardships while defense contractors made handsome profits on cost-plus contracts at taxpayers' expense. (F-11)

F-16

OM: Now this picture, with the woman in her curl papers. This was a locomotive repair crew. This was 1946.



WITH GAS RATIONING DURING WORLD WAR II, MANY WORKERS RODE THE BUS TO THE SEATTLE-TACOMA SHIPYARD. (Richards Collection, Tacoma Public Library) For Tacoma, the war boom began in September 1939 when the U.S. Maritime Commission awarded the Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corporation a contract to build five freighters at a cost of \$2,127,000 each. Thousands of people from the Midwest flocked to Tacoma to work in the shipyard. (F-4)

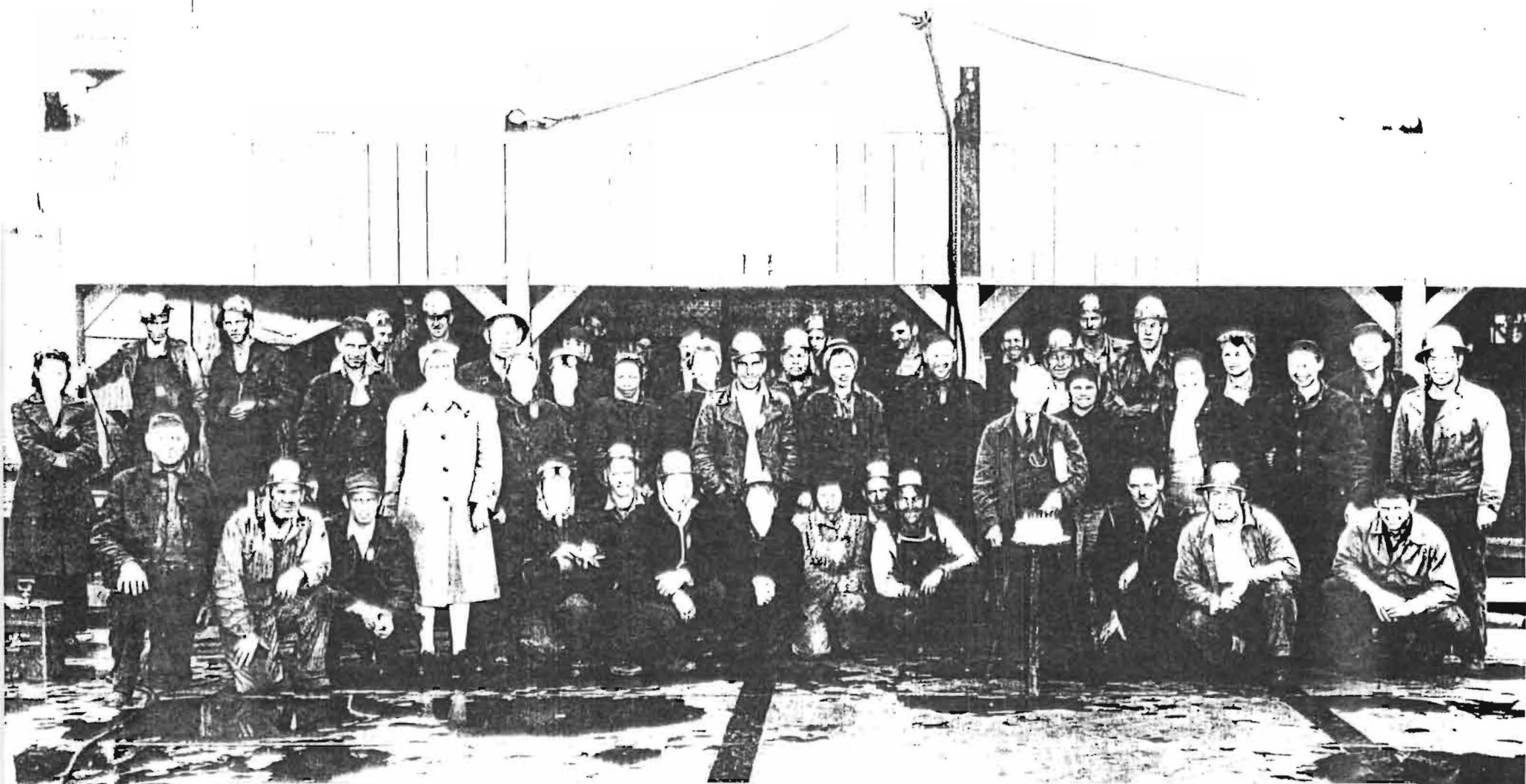
F-8

Some of the faces are marvelous in these pictures. The people are wonderful.

KF: Eating around boxes- -

OM: I didn't bother with ships. [referring to shipyard photos].

KF: I loved your commentary about the people missing in the Smithsonian Exhibit in your Editorial. [Appendix, Labor Educator, Nov./Dec., 1991]



BIRTHDAY PARTY AT SEA-TAC FOR THE OLD-TIMER STANDING BEHIND THE CAKE.
(Richards Collection, Tacoma Public Library) As the war wound down in
1945 shipbuilding stopped, and Sea-Tac's thousands of workers were
without jobs. Some returned to their former homes, but many found
permanent work in postwar Tacoma and helped to build her union movement.
(F-13)



UNIONISM SPREAD FROM THE CRAFTS TO OFFICE WORKERS, BEGINNING WITH TIMEKEEPERS IN 1943. (Richards Collection, Tacoma Public Library) Soon the payroll office and other administrative sections of Sea-Tac were organized in Office Employees Union Local 20360 (now Local 23). The shipyard members became part of the Metal Trades Council bargaining group covered by the master agreement. (F-9)

F-1

OM: This is an amazing picture. This is a union meeting if you can believe it. This an unheard of.

KF: Standing room only. Just a regular meeting? They're not voting on anything? [laughter]

OM: No, just a regular meeting. I'll tell you something for a long time they did go to meetings. For a long time we fined people who didn't come. And we were lenient about it. They could offer an excuse, and they could come to one meeting out of three. But the intent was to get them there. So, when the law forbid that, so that you couldn't enforce [attendance], we had to stop that. So in my own local we offer them two dollars credit on their next union dues. If they come to a meeting its marked on their card and then they get a rebate. Way back in the '80's or '90's they were doing that. They were fining people fifty cents for not coming to a meeting or something like that. It's always been their intent to try and get them there.



MUTE PICKETS ON POINT DEFIANCE LINE DURING JULY 1917 STRIKE OF TACOMA STREET RAILWAY EMPLOYEES LOCAL 758 FOR RECOGNITION AND REINSTATEMENT OF FIRED UNION ACTIVISTS. (Tacoma Public Library) Union was organized July 12 and struck four days later. Seattle street car operators, also working for a Stone and Webster subsidiary, struck in sympathy. Tacoma wages were 27 to 34 cents an hour on a ten-hour day. After two weeks all strikers won recognition, reinstatement of fired employees, and agreement to arbitrate wages and conditions. (C-1)





MEMBERS OF TACOMA SMELTER WORKERS' LOCAL 25 READY TO PARADE UP PACIFIC AVENUE IN 1952 TO PROTEST GOVERNMENT WAGE FREEZE DURING KOREAN WAR. (Local 25 Retirees Club) Workers at Tacoma ASARCO smelter organized in August 1933, aided by Tacoma Central Labor Council. Periodic solid strikes during which the plant shut down marked the union's bargaining relations with this tough, anti-union segment of the copper industry. Demonstrators' signs indicate wages well below those of lumber mill workers in 1952. (G-1)

