

SD: Could you begin by telling me your name and where you were born?

AA: My name is Annie **Sarich** but I have been called Anita most part of my life and Anna. I was born in Phoenix B.C.

SD: And your name is Anita Anderson now?

AA: Yes.

SD: You had mentioned that when you lived in Phoenix the **Grandby Mine** was shut down.

AA: Yes. Well my father came to Phoenix B.C. shortly after the turn of the century, and the mining was set up there, a mining town, and four of us girls were born there, my sisters. And the Grandby company had pulled out and the miners and their families had to pull stake and go elsewhere to start their life, which was a very fine community town and it broke their hearts because they had to leave and move other places. And that was how my father through his relatives moved us to Saskatchewan to buy a homestead and start farming up until his death 1927.

SD: Was it very hard (to live on the farm?)

AA: Yes, it was a hardship because there was no machinery, and it was hard to, ... the family just pulled together and ^{just} worked on the farm. And the very interesting part of it was all the farmers around came to help anyone that just moved in and that was great. I remember

that. But we had so many immigrants, People coming from the old country and coming to the prairies. and I remember at one time we had as many as twenty-four people staying at our farm and then they would move on to Ontario and British Columbia and elsewhere. But many of them my dad helped to settle them over here.)

SD: Was the community in Saskatchewan primarily made up of ethnic groups?

AA: Yes.

SD: Which groups were those?

AA: Well there were Ukrainians, Russians, Scandanavians and yugoslavian people.)

SD: When you came to B.C. why did you do so?

AA: Well, in 1929 we stayed on the farm until that time again and my father had married and she had three children and they decided that they could not carry on the farmwork so the articles and items on the farm, machinery and that, were sold and we moved back to British Columbia and came to Princeton because we had relatives there, and Marion and I were going to live with them and carry on, continue our education. But that wasn't so because they were all struggling and that was a mining town in Princeton too. They all had big families and so we just had to start off to look for work at a very early age, which was domestics. There was nothing else around but this type of employment.

SD: When did you begin to work, do you remember what year that was?

AA: Well, 1929 I'd say.

SD: How were young women placed in domestic service in those days?

AA: Well, you just...^{Domestics} they were not placed. You talked to people and you went around and you heard that somebody was wanting some help in a hotel, a chambermaid or whether it was cooking or looking after children and this was what you did,

SD: What kinds of alternatives in terms of work were there for single young women why were in the city?

AA: For most of the young women there was domestic chambermaid or domestic, (doing domestic for private families those who were in business and otherwise. You just had to ... it was tough.) pg 49 → pg. 8 return

SD: Could you describe your first job?

AA: Well my first job was working for a family in Princeton and they kept boarders and they had a lot of children and it was very unsatisfactory, and there was a great hardship to stay there. But I stayed as long as I could and then I moved on to Vancouver Island and then I worked in a hotel there and did similar. But I moved there because I had a married sister living there and my brother-in-law and it was a bit better. The wages were better.

SD: So you were working on the Island? and that was...

AA: She was a friend of the family and she sort of wanted me to just fit my life in with them and sort of continue my life with them. She had a very large family, but they were better cared for and they were...

SD: Can you talk a bit about the kind of attitudes there were towards domestic workers from the people who employed them.]

AA: They just gave you room and board and a little bit of spending money, that's about what it was. And you either slept with the children or you had a makeshift place to sleep. But it was a home. You had to have somewhere to live.

[SD: Was it difficult to find housing] (during the Depression?)

[AA: Yes.] You just didn't find housing. You went to work for people, domestics and just lived in. [And your early part of life from those early years, that's how you had to maintain a home.

SD: And what would couples do? Would they live in an apartment, or a house during the Depression?

AA: Well, [married couples were renting houses and] they usually had, [everybody was having somebody else living with them. Or they had just plain housekeeping rooms where they just cooked, slept and everything in one room. [They didn't have,] it was furnished, and this was how they had to live until they bettered themselves by getting better employment with more money and then they could move to a larger apartment. [But most people

had housekeeping rooms and rented out a room if they had a home and this is how they just...most people lived in housekeeping rooms and just made shift.]

[SD: Can you talk about some of the tasks you had at work, the kind of things that you would do at work in your first two jobs.]

AA: ^{Domestic work} It was just looking after children, helping with the cooking, keeping the house clean and just general. That was all, and it wasn't anything nine to five, it was just all the time. [You had to be, you were doing everything. [And for, at the most you got was fifteen dollars a month, up to twenty five dollars a month.

[SD: So you were constantly on call?]

AA: You were always there so you just took it for granted that was your home. [Domestics did, I remember now correctly,] domestics did try to get organized [into a...] but most of the girls were afraid [to get organized] because if their employer heard it they would be out of a job. [But they did, I remember, that they did try to get people organized in domestics.

SD: Can you describe a bit of the process that went on around that organizing?

AA: Not very much because, as I say, I think that the people were frightened, were scared to get organized. So I don't know too much about it. That was '29 to '30 and then '31, '32, '33 and up to '34. I came back to Vancouver and applied for housekeeping domestic

here in Vancouver and I was placed in several jobs this way.

SD: Can you describe these jobs?

AA: Each one had...^{Job}one was where she advertised for mother's help and they had their family all at home yet, their daughters. And it was doing everything. Keeping the house clean, cutting the grass and doing the dishes and just looking after; but it was a beautiful home and they were Jewish people and my employer was a very fine woman and very understanding, and her husband. But they only paid eight dollars a month, they just wanted a mother's help and someone to be in the house but they...you know...it was really too much.

SD: Too much work for too little money?

AA: MM, hmm. (For little money.) But the food was very good and they were very good to me.

SD: Then you moved on to another job?

AA: Then I moved on to another job which was advertised for also mother's help. She had just had twins and they were born the same day as the Dionne quintuplets. I was there fifteen months but it got to be more than I could take 'cause it was looking after the twins, doing the cooking and helping with everything and my day off would be always a Thursday and I never got away until late late in the afternoon and it was too late to do anything. And you had other friends to

visit and you had places to go to and things you were invited to. You just always got there so late. And the busfare was 7¢ to ride the streetcar and sometimes you didn't have enough money to go to visit your relatives so you just walked from South Vancouver to way down wherever you were going and maybe just took the streetcar back.

[SD: Where you were working at these places how were the attitudes of the employers to their domestic help? Did they look down on them, did they ...

AA: Yes, some of them did.] I would say that they ^(employers) made you feel that you were a maid, or were 'shiksa' and you were their maid.] They made you feel that way sometimes when their company was around. It was very unhappy about that. Then they could be just the opposite when their friends were not around.

[SD: Was this something that alot of your domestic workers shared; that feeling of being...

AA: Yes.] We'd get together and talk about it on our day off and the girls would just say 'you just couldn't be anymore than a mother would be to me'. And I found that too. But I found the other.

[SD: Right. How about in terms of young women who were taking care of children. Did they find that they got attached to the children?]

AA: Yes, I got attached to the twins. And they got attached to me. And this caused a problem because I could feel this coming over the lady I was working for, Jealousy.

I almost had a nervous breakdown there because I just worked so hard and I just fell in love with those children. They just ran after me and they were just **cuddling** up to me and they were just so sweet.

SD: Did you do any other domestic work after...

AA: Up to, up to...uh...I went to work for a dentist.

I worked in their home. I did everything, even, he had a dentist office in the home and I helped with that as well as doing everything. But they were very down to earth people and very kind and appreciated you. I only received ten dollars a month there and that I think was the last of my domestic work until I started to get more involved in the restaurant work.

[SD: And domestic labour, was this a job where it was pretty well women only?

AA: Yes.

SD: And the women who were domestics, were there, different ethnic groups or nationalities who worked as domestics?

AA: Or were there for example, were many of the domestic workers immigrant women or were they...

AA: Yes.] Some of them ^(domestics) were immigrant women. Most of them were native dollars.

[SD: Was this pretty well what most young women did, even if they had families?

AA: Yes. ^{Yes. * move to pg. 3} They had to get employment and so they would just say go and do housework. That's all there was. You didn't have, you were too young, you didn't have the education, you weren't in that, to be a teacher or to

work in an office. Because my education stopped so early.

SD: And, can you then talk/about where you went after you worked as a domestic worker. You became a waitress? Or?

AA: I wanted to look into restaurant work [and I did and I think that my first job was that I had as a bus girl.] My sister and I went [there] as bus girls at the Trocadero Cafe [and which] at that time we began to get organized, [and] we found out that there was something that we could do [about it] because the conditions were not that good. The pay was very poor, [and there was a time to do something and] we did hear about there was a union organizer for the restaurant employees [so we] looked into that. After we had talked to quite a few of the people who were working in this restaurant and they were quite willing to do something about it. So we went to see them. [It was Bill Stewart who has passed on now and Bill Gateman.] Bill Stewart was the organizer and we found a union and that was the time that strike was held in 1936. [So it was a real struggle up to then prior to getting into restaurant work.]

SD: Can you talk abit about exactly what the conditions were like at the Trocadero?

AA: Well. [The food was good. You had to pay for broken dishes which you didn't break. [and there was the...] by the time you paid for your uniform and [so much,] a little bit, for the food [and that] you didn't have very much left.

[SD: How would you be paid, would you be paid in cash?

AA: Yes.

SD: Were people ever paid short, in the restaurants?

AA: I couldn't say that. No.

SD: What did a bus girl do? What were her duties?]

AA: ^{to pg 9} Well, ^{the} the bus girl had to just set the table, clear the tables, see that the coffee was made and that there was ice water and cutlery; ^{she} and looked after the sweeping of the floor and just general work, But you did not wait on the customers.

[SD: Did you serve a lot of people though?

AA: Yes.] It was a busy restaurant and we served a lot of people. ^{It was} a well known restau^{au}rant.

[SD: Was there a lot of pressure at work?

AA: In a way, yes.

SD: And when you began to organize, how did you do that? Did Bill Stewart tell you what to do?]

[AA: Yes.] We went out to the union hall and we got organized.

* [He told us until we ^{held} held meetings until the day of the strike, which was in the summertime in 1936.

SD: And did you sign people up?

AA: Yes.] we signed quite a few people up ^{it sounded as though} [and found] [✓] everyone was together on this. ^{*Pg. 15} But a few people backed off and reported it to the [employer, the] manager, and that morning when we came to work he approached me and my sister and a few other people and said 'I hear there's going to be a strike here and if you have anything to do with it I want you to get off this property right now.'

We just did not. We kept on doing our bus work and **and told him** Bill Stewart came and approached him that the wages had to be increased and the working conditions and he said "No." So we said "we're going to have a strike." so we went out and picketed the place. ^{The strike took about a month.} And we had a lot of support from the public. [All of the people **that** stayed on, they just stayed on and worked. But we had a lot of support from the public.

SD: Did other workers go out on strike with you? From the Trocadero?

AA: Well the ones that joined up the union and said that they would, those, actually they were all signed up and they were going to go support this move, but then they backed off.] Several people backed off and they stayed on and worked. ^{They got cold feet.} You would call them scabs. pg. 14 *

[SD: Right. What kind of attitude did the police have? to this strike?

AA: Well we never had any problems. ^{The police} They said "You can go out and picket but you can't stay here. He's ordered you out of the place but you can picket." [He did say that. They did say that.

SD: So you picketed the place?

AA: Yes. There were no ...

SD: And did the police have that kind of attitude in part because they were customers?]

AA: The police were sympathetic to the strikers because they ate there and got to know [the girls,] the bus girls and the waitresses and so in this way, ..the customers

become just like a family
[were, were, just like a, you become like a family] because
they were eating there every day and you see them every
day. [So there were no...]

[SD: How long were you out on strike?

AA: I think it took about a month.

SD: And did you have help picketing?

AA: Yes, other people came and helped to picket. [We used to
just wear our uniform, what we wore at work, and picketed.]

[SD: And what were the main demands of the strike?

AA: *The main demands of the strike were*
More pay, better conditions and union recognition.

SD: Did you have support from other unionists in your own
union or...

AA: Yes.

SD: What would they do?

[AA: Well they] ** other unionists* just came and picketed with us and they brought
us help towards the relief fund and people used to go by
in the street cars and just would wave and cheer us on,
'good for you' [and this sort of thing and] they would bring
us cigarettes, chocolate bars, gum [and] Lotus Taxi, at
that time,] would drive the girls home every night so there
would be no harm come to them from the picket line. *pg. 14 (A)* It was
a very good feeling about that strike.

[SD: What was the outcome of it?

AA: Well they carried on. *(The outcome of the strike was flat)* Some of the people got rehired but
the people who instigated it and tried to organize them,
they were left on the out and so they were not able to get
work for a long, long time.

[SD: Were you one of those people?

AA: Yes.

SD: Was that blacklisting?

AA: Yes. Well later I did get work from another restaurant and I was hired there as a waitress at the Ye Olde English Fish and Chips and he says "I'll take you". So my sister and I were working there and I used to work part-time in the union office giving people receipts for their dues and helping with the book work. I was doing that part-time and working at the fish and chip restaurant.

SD: When you were trying to organize...

AA: ...which was a union house...

SD: It was. What were the differences then between...

AA: Oh, there was a lot of difference. (You know, you could talk about your union and I was better paid, better working conditions.

SD: When you were organizing for the Trocadero, how did you go about talking people into joining?

AA: Well it was very hard because you talked to them, and it was, ^Eeverybody approached somebody else. You didn't do it all. And they were nervous but then they thought it was a good idea, they would go for it. ^{pg 14-28.5.} And then like I say, just some of them/decided not to go through with it and stayed on. They got, the saying is, cold feet.]

SD: Would you run into any particular problems with religious groups or?

AA: No. We had a religious girl that was a bus girl and she came along. We understood the whole thing. There was no animosity against...that there was...they didn't like

it but...sort of, ^{to pg 11 *} you understood the whole thing and you just carried on the picket line and they carried on their work inside.

[SD: And, what would Bill Stewart say to people to try and convince them to join the union?

AA: Well, ^{Bill Stewart} he told them it would be better [to get union] to get your restaurant organized and then eventually they would get organized. this would have an opening to organize more restaurants.

And this is what happened. They were getting well organized and quite a few [union houses,] restaurants, became a union house.

[SD: So did the Trocadero strike...]

AA: I think the Trocadero strike played an important part where it was more or less a beginning. There probably was one or two union houses prior to this but not many if I can remember.

[SD: When you were striking did you get money from other union houses?]

^{14A} AA: Yes. ^{The} Fraser Cafe in New Westminster which was a union house; they invited us for meals and they gave to the strike fund. ^{to pg 12} [I remember picking up some money towards the strike from them and from other unions.]

[SD: Did people cross your picket line other than the people working inside?

AA: To go in to eat? Yes.

SD: But were there many?

AA: Not many.

SD: Was the whole principle of helping other unions picket

was that part of, was that sort of a norm in those days? Were there other strikes ^h were you would then go to to help out if workers came to help you on your picket line?

AA: Yes, well that's ^{it was,} entirely up to the individual to do that. I think some did if there was a strike somewhere else. They would go and help out, but when their strike was over and that they just went back to work and they just carried on and they did come to union meetings and got more involved and more interested.

SD: Right. Can you talk a little bit about when you were working in the restaurant work was it mostly women working there?

AA: There was men working too, as waiters and as bus boys.

SD: So men and women did different work, somewhat different work, or did the waiters do the same kind of work as the waitresses?

AA: Oh, yes.

SD: And did they receive equal benefits, wages?

AA: Well, before it was the union I don't know...I don't think they all got paid equal...I don't think the pay was equal before the strike. I mean there was a line after the strike for the bus people, and then for the waitresses...it improved conditions. They paid them anything they wanted to up 'til then.

SD: And did that, did the unionization equalize wages between waiters and waitresses.

AA: Yes.

SD: What was the system of supervision like in the restaurant? Was there a lot of supervision? Were they hard on the people who worked there?]

AA: Some restaurants were very hard on their employees. It was very, very hard to work for some of the people in those days. And some were not too bad. Some of them were quite human and very good to you.

SD: Did the people who worked in the restaurants, did they get along with each other, or was there conflict between...

AA: No, they ^{People who worked in the restaurants} pretty well got along with each other. [I think] there was more getting along together after the union was started and they had union meetings to go to [because they had planned in the union like, they did in the way of socializing.] They had a lot of socializing; They would have dances and [they would have] cruises and they used to bowl. We even had a choir going [and we had the...] our union hall organization was at the top of the Lyric Theatre which was a huge hall. We rented this and picked up furniture and chesterfields and we'd have concerts on Sunday night. And we'd have dances. The union was growing and [it was, like I say,] it was very good socially as well [as they were] getting organized.

SD: The women you worked with, were most of them single, or married, or?

AA: Both married and single.

SD: And were they different age groups?

AA: Yes. Very very young and older.

SD: And did most women who worked in the restaurants did they

live in the communities around those areas, the restaurants?

AA: No, everybody lived in the surrounding area, some had to go out distances.

SD: Were there special issues that came up in the unionization that affected women?

TAPE I. SIDE 2.

TAPE CONTINUED

AA: Yes, everything was dealt with, conditions, uniforms, hours, seniority. They were getting to all these issues.

SD: Were there regular local meetings?

AA: Yes. Executive meetings, and local 28 had a social convener who planned our social activities. It was a very good, very good organization to belong to.

SD: Did large numbers of people in the union participate in the meetings?

AA: Yes.

SD: What kind of issues did the meetings discuss, was it just sort of trade union issues, or . . .

AA: Yes, there would just . . . ^{Local meetings} talking about signing up restaurants and they'd signed a restaurant up and that restaurant and then they'd give a full report on it, how it took place and what they had to deal with and they let the union know if people paid their dues, and reports of committees. Mostly it was to organize the restaurant industry.

SD: So those of you who had worked or were working in other restuarant did you help organize other places?

AA: No, that was the only restaurant that I was in that was prior to the war.

SD: How was the contract put together -- was it a master agreement, did it cover all these restaurants?

AA: It covered that whole restaurant, yes, the busgirls, the waitresses.

SD: And would they reach cooks as well?

AA: Yes, that was the cooks, the cooks' helper.

SD: And how were union officials chosen?

AA: They were elected from the meeting.

SD: Was there a strong shop steward structure?

AA: Yes, very good.

SD: And what kind of role did the shop stewards play?

AA: Well, they would go around trying to organize restaurant people into the union and talk to them, then they would make a report at the meeting. It's been so long ago I just don't remember, but it was a lot of interest at that time and there was a lot of people involved, and it was something that was building up. Bill Stewart was an excellent organizer, a wonderful organizer.

SD: Were you a shop steward?

AA: Yes.

SD: Were there political discussions in the union as well?

AA: Well I don't recall that, other than just the union business,

and there was a lot of it.

SD: Did political parties play an important role in your union?

AA: Well, I would say so. There were progressive people in the
. . . CCF people and . . .

SD: Can you talk a bit more about the role they played?

AA: Well they would be more interested . . . the progressive people
in the union were the ones that really kept moving things
ahead for the workers.

SD: And were they in the leadership?

AA: Yes, I would say so.

SD: Were there any conflicts between political organizations
inside the union?

AA: Yes, there were . . . I was a delegate to the Trades and
Labor Council and I saw a lot of it there.

SD: Can you talk a bit about what kind of things . . .

AA: Well, I just can't remember now.

SD: Who were the conflicts between?

AA: Between the organizers, and some of the delegates . . . were
not united with the leadership. They would often hold
back. See, they were organizing hotels and that's a very
big industry.

SD: Was it within the restaurant union that there were conflicts?

AA: Yes, there have been.

SD: At the Trades and Labor Congress, were there differences
between Industrial unionists and craft unionists?

to see
SD: (cont) People who wanted industrial organization, like whole plants organized, or people who were into just shop craft organizations, of particular trades.

AA: Well, the Trades and Labor Council was a lot of delegates from all the unions came, and there were conflicts among them.

SD: Were women active in the union?

AA: Yes.

SD: Was there encouragement of women to be active?

AA: ^{women} They were encouraged by the return they received.

SD: Can you talk a bit about what that was?

AA: Well they improved the conditions, and it was something different for the first time in their lives, they'd never belonged to a union, they were just coming out of their school and, most of the people never reached high school, just went to the grade school. [So this was something different. Bill Stewart was a good leader, he just moved ^{they} people up, ^ just wanted to get organized, they wanted to get into it.]

SD: When you talk about people just coming out of school, did the union make them feel like they were learning things?

AA: Yes, yes.

SD: Why? What kind of things did you do that would be like really educational?

[AA: Well, to move on, to get organized, and you have . . .
towards bettering yourself and improving conditions, and
conditions as a whole for all working people.

SD: Did it make people feel like they had power in their lives?

AA:] Well they felt that they had somebody really doing some-
thing for them.

[SD: Were the women who were active young or old, or married
or single?

AA: They were young.

SD: Why?

AA: Well,] everybody was young ^(who was active) at that time, my age, young.

SD: Was it hard for older women to get work?

AA: Well, the older women stayed home and raised the children,
stayed home. A lot of them worked on the farms and what-
ever they were involved with. That was my beginning and
I know that most of the people who were involved, some of
them were still at home, and their mothers were not out in
the field, they were at home. And people were just getting
organized and they started, the mothers, a lot of the
families, were on relief. Which was hard.

SD: Did the union, or you, try to encourage other women to
become active?

AA: Well, I was mostly interested in restaurant employees.

SD: But within the restaurant industry?

AA: Yeah. Just the restaurant industry.

SD: But within that, did you try and help women particularly?

AA: Yes.

SD: What kind of things would you say to people, to try to get them involved in the union, take more of a role?

AA: Well, just on. . . I can't remember that. . .

SD: Do you want a minute?

AA: Well you were doing what you can at your own level, at your own union restaurant, you were busy with that, and when you went to meetings you heard about the others who were trying to get organized, other restaurants.

SD: So you'd mostly concentrate on your own union. And would you call support meetings for your organization?

AA: No, there were just regular union meetings, and executive meetings.

SD: Were the women in the leadership of the union?

AA: There was women, men and women both.

SD: Do you remember any of the names?

AA: Yes, I remember, Ona Whitman, she's passed on, she was social convener for local 28 and a good one. And there was, her committee was mostly made up of women, and men, too.

SD: Were women mostly in elected positions, or appointed?

AA: Elected positions.

SD: And stewards were elected?

AA: Yes.

SD: How would that happen, would that be from the union meeting or would that be from their own shop?

AA: From the shop and also from union meetings.

SD: Were women on regional or national bodies of the union, in leadership positions?

AA: Just local people.

SD: So the leadership was mostly men?

AA: Men and women both, both men and women, but mainly men.

SD: Why was that, do you have any idea?

AA: No.

SD: In terms of women's involvement in the union, did their responsibilities at home affect their ability to participate?

AA: No, I don't think so.

SD: What about childcare, was that a problem?

AA: No, that never came up.

SD: Did the responsibilities that women had at all affect their activity in the union, their level of activity in terms of their interest in the union, would they maybe be preoccupied with having to go home and take care of their families after work and so on?

AA: No, I think they just got . . . they became a member, they got involved, they went to the union meeting, they paid their dues, and if they were elected to a committee, they usually were . . . accepted it. And they'd just carry on.

SD: Were there particular areas of responsibility that women tended to take up? Like shop stewarding, or . . .

AA: Yes, women played a part like the men, they would have, they'd be elected to positions and committees, they would, it was a lot of solidarity in that union at that time.

SD: Were there any particular issues that women were concerned with, like childcare or maternity leave?

AA: No.

SD: Or sexual harassment?

AA: No, it was mostly getting organized to have a union and to better their own condition of their job, their place of work.

SD: How about equal pay?

AA: No, it was a union rate that they were striking for and they were working for to get the the benefits, better conditions, better pay.

SD: How about leaving work at late hours? Was that a problem?

AA: Well, there were problems all the time, I just can't recollect everything.

SD: Were men in the union open to women being active? How were they?

AA: Very good, very good.

SD: Did they treat women equally?

AA: Yes.

SD: Were women who were active in the union politically active as well?

AA: Yes.

SD: In what kind of activity?

AA: Well, whatever committee they were on, it was whatever you wanted, if you wanted to go help and participate on a picket line somewhere you went, it was entirely up to you.

SD: Were there organizations for women other than the restaurants?
I don't know if

AA: Well, cannery workers were getting organized or not, I believe they were trying to.

SD: How about store clerks?

AA: No.

SD: Agricultural workers?

AA: I couldn't tell you about that.

SD: Were there any non-union organizations for working-class women?

AA: Oh, there was a lot of people that weren't in the union.

SD: What were they doing politically?

AA: Nothing really. I couldn't . . .

SD: How did you find out about trade unions?

AA: Well, again I say, we were working at the Trocadero and we were not satisfied with the pay, we weren't satisfied with the working conditions, and we were wondering if there was a union, if there was an organization that we could get in . . . we were informed that there was a Local 28, and, in Vancouver, and Bill Stewart was the organizer, and we want to see him and then we got organized.

SD: Before that, were there any organizations of unemployed women?

AA: Yes, there was an organization for unemployed single women and a union for unemployed single men.

SD: Who helped to organize the union of single, unemployed women?

AA: There was Mildred Duggan, and there was Helena Gut ridge and Grace MacInnis, and other women, who tried to organize the single, unemployed women. They called a meeting, I remember attending it in Vancouver, and we gave, they wanted to know what the conditions . . .

SD: Can you first tell me about the meeting at Moose Hall?

AA: Well they just asked the women how long had they been looking for work and to try and get organized so they would have better protection and they would know how to

find, what kind of, . . . there was a lot of unemployed women, single women, and these women called a meeting and they wanted to hear about how you were getting along and where were you looking for work and most of us who went to that meeting told them this and I remember, Grace MacInnis, asking to go out and get a paper and there was some, there was people there looking for housework, people who would do housework, at \$10 a month, \$15 a month, and the women from that meeting went out and got these jobs and were placed in housework. The single unemployed women's organization carried on for a while but I just sort of lost track of it.

SD: When was that.

AA: That was in the early '30's. And the single unemployed men's movement didn't come on until later. They were organizing for relief camps.

SD: Were there any demonstrations by women?

AA: No.

SD: Was it more like a service organization?

AA: It was helping to get women to band together and sort of just come and go and everybody that was up at that meeting was asked to take a position in the organization and we did so for quite a while. And then it just sort of faded away.

SD: When you were a domestic worker you began to become a bit more radicalized, you looked . . . what happened? What made

you begin to look outside of just your work and say,
"This society's got to change"?

AA: Well, no. From the time I started housework I was not really aware of what was going on. When I was doing domestics at one of the places where I was employed I had heard about the strike down at the Ballantyne Pier, and they were discouraging me against it, but I had a brother who was very progressive, and was explaining things to me, and I think I started going to meetings and things and I got interested. It was mainly going and seeing that you got involved and you got interested. You were living in a time of struggle everyday.

SD: Did you go out and see your friends and relatives and did they reinforce some of those things you were feeling?

AA: They would talk about it but they were not . . . people went to meetings and things and they agreed that things were very bad, they would have to do something. Everybody was not against what you were doing, or what everybody else, what they were getting involved with . . . there were just bad times.

SD: How did your employers react to your attitudes, your changing attitudes?

AA: Not very good.

SD: What would they do?

AA: Well I don't know, that wasn't my part. I was already in a

AA: (cont) union in Local 28 and I was working in a restaurant and I was working later into two restaurants that were union house and I found it okay. After I got into a union house I found it alright. To work with them and to talk to them.

SD: The employer.

AA: Yes. To work for them and to talk to them, I found them okay.

SD: When you had been blacklisted at the Trocadero, did you try and go on relief?

AA: Yes, I had to go on relief at sometime there, and I had quite a time getting it.

SD: Why was that?

AA: Well, the lady that interviewed me, she said, "You did have a job at the Trocadero, why did you". . . she went all through that. I was on strike and why didn't I stay on the job and . . .

SD: What other political events were occurring at the same time?

AA: It was mostly around relief camps, people going out and fighting for jobs. It was mainly . . . the thing of the day was organizing to get jobs.

SD: What about international campaigns, like Spain?

AA: Well, those were things that came along too. I had great pleasure of meeting Dr. Bethune at that time and working

AA: (cont) <) a little bit with him when our boys left us and went to Spain. We organized the Girls Brigade to Aid the Spanish orphans.

SD: Did women from the union participate in it?

AA: Some did, yes.

SD: How did they become involved in the Brigade?

AA: This was people in ordinary circumstances, people that you knew outside the union, your neighbors and friends within other unions that . . . people talked about this and that there was an urgent need to help the Spanish orphans, and we were getting homes adopted for these children, in the states and in Canada. And it was a very successful organization, such as you have where they were adopting Korean children, and so on.

SD: Did you also raise money for them?

AA: Yes, we raised money, we put on campaigns, and . . .

SD: Were there demonstrations for the unemployed at that time?

AA: Yes, there was lots of large meetings at Cambie Street Grounds.

SD: The last time we talked you told me your story about applying for relief and the kind of reactions of relief people to . . .

AA: Yes, like I said, it wasn't very good. They just attacked you because, "Why were you on strike, you had a job," and they became very vicious with you, saying you should . . .

AA: (cont) I particularly had quite an experience with them, my interview. She harassed me quite a bit, and at one point she just was, almost gotten out of hand. ^{But} I got the relief.

SD: Did that happen to a lot of women who were organizers or unionists, they were fired?

AA: I don't know what their experiences were, but that was mine.

SD: When people were doing work around Spain, did you organize public meetings for Bethune?

AA: Yes, we organized meetings with any delegates that were coming from Spain. The Canadian League ^S Against War and Facism, it was a league for peace and democracy, that was in Vancouver and A.M. Steven was the chairman of it. They would call public meetings and had radio programs for solidarity and for support.

SD: What did A.M. Steven do?

AA: Well, he was the chairman for these two organizations, our organizations and organizing the medical aid for China helping Dr. Bethune.

SD: How did you come in contact with him?

AA: Well, Dr. Bethune came to Vancouver to raise money for China after he left Spain, and the meeting was organized, called for at the Orpheum theatre, and I had the pleasure to meet him then, but it was the Girls Brigade that came to their aid and took up the collection and did this kind of paperwork

AA: (cont) and whatever there was to do with the organizing of that large rally.

SD: Who was involved in these organizations? What class of people?

AA: Trade unionists, domestic people, fisherman, loggers, other industries. Miners . . .

SD: And were many women active in the mobilization?

AA: Yes, there were quite a few.

SD: Were there many women in the union at that time?

AA: They were just getting organized.

SD: Did women ever meet as women around women's issues, was there a conflict that there was women's issues?

AA: No, I don't recall.

SD: What did the women do, they'd just be involved in general political activities?

AA: Well, they would go work, I can't recall that . . . if the loggers were on strike or if the fishermen or the long-shoremen, the women would be involved. The progressive women would be involved with the men. There was another council, I remember organized, and they used to do a lot of work.

END OF TAPE 3605-1; CONTINUED ON TAPE 3605-2

ANDERSON

SD: What did they do?

AA: Well they prepared for meetings and they did the general work for organizing.

SD: What kind of organizing?

AA: Well they did the . . . not the soup kitchen but they did a lot of the preparing for meetings, for dinners or for whatever. The Mothers' Council was the right hand to assist everybody.

SD: How did your family react to your political . . .

AA: Some liked it, not all my family agreed, because we were separated on that as people are today.

SD: Was the Hotel and Restaurants Employees Union the only union you were involved in?

AA: Yes.

SD: Did you hold any positions in any of these organizations or on your union?

AA: I was on the social Committee and I worked in the, like I say, I worked in the office three days a week, helping to collect dues and helping a little bit with the paperwork.

SD: What were conditions like generally for organizing in the 1930's, was it difficult, was it easy, was there a feeling of militancy?

AA: It was very hard to organize, ^{it was} not easy to organize.

SD: Why was that?

AA: There was so much against the unions and against the . . .

AA: (cont) any militancy.

SD: Were people arrested?

AA: Yes, people were picked up. I cannot remember everything about that . . .

SD: Did other organizing drives like the ones of the relief camp workers play a role in encouraging women to organize?

AA: Yes.

SD: How would that work, would you meet these people who were organizing?

AA: No, when the men were getting organized, single women's organization assisted them, with putting leaflets out and doing whatever, any help they could give them.

SD: Were you involved in that at all?

AA: A little, but not very much, a little.

SD: What about inspiring women who were working to unionize. What about the unemployed organizing, did that inspire women who were working to unionize?

AA: I believe so, it played a part.

SD: What about loggers and other men who were in the process of organizing, would they come into your restaurant and talk to you?

AA: Well, they'd come into the restaurant to eat, but ^{loggers} had their dances and their regular social activities and everybody just went to them, supported them.

SD: What effect did minimum wage boards have on wages and work-

SD: (cont) ing conditions?

AA: None.

SD: Not even in the restaurants?

AA: I don't believe so.

SD: What role did the Workers Unity League play in organizing?

Were they active at that time?

AA: Yes, I believe so, I don't remember them but I believe that they were organized at that time.

SD: What about the Trades and Labor Congress?

AA: The Trades and Labor Council was a strong force in the union.

SD: Did they encourage organization of women?

AA: Oh, yes, there was delegates from all unions.

SD: Were the Women's Labor Leagues active in helping to organize?

AA: I couldn't remember that.

SD: Was there any coverage in the press of these campaigns that took place?

AA: There might have been, I believe so.

SD: Do you remember any coverage in the . . .

AA: I don't recall, I don't remember. I remember the local paper that was the center of the Province, they had articles about the strike but they always, you know, played it down.

SD: How about the labor papers?

AA: Oh, yes, they brought it up to date and ^{said} what was going on, what the grievances were and what the workers gained.

SD: Can you talk a little bit about your involvement with the Yugoslav community? When did you start to become interested in cultural work?

AA: Well, that's quite a few years ago, that was in the '30's.

Oh . . .

SD: Can you talk about what kind of role your involvement in ethnic organizations has played in your life?

AA: Well, it was a very important part of my life, and . . . ethnic organization began with the Yugoslavs because of having Yugoslavian parentage, background, which is Croatian, which was changed after the war it became Yugoslav. It was a big part of the process that radicalized me. It was like around home and progressive people, progressive fishermen, carpenters, loggers who went to camps immediately started to build halls, cultural work, and later formed a women's auxiliary.

SD: Were you involved in the women's auxiliary?

AA: Yes. I was a member of the women's auxiliary. They did all the work around the organization, cooking for banquets, for dinners, and . . . there was the language group, there was the orchestra and a choir and at that time yet there was no folk dancing.

SD: Were Croatian loggers and fishermen really involved in the early unionization?

AA: Yes, yes they were.

SD: Why were they so conscious?

AA: Why, because they wanted to get organized, because they wanted to build their own halls, they wanted to develop their culture and this was their home now and this is what they did. They gave a tremendous contribution by participating in the community and this is how their children came up through the organization, through folk dancing and orchestra work and choir.

SD: I remember you mentioning that it was very hard for these young immigrant people who came to Canada in those days. Was it difficult?

AA: Yes, it was, because they, when they came they were promised work, and the billboards told them a lot of things, and they came here to find the better way of life and they came, they landed here and there was no work, there was unemployment and relief camps and they just got organized and started getting, building their own organization, building halls, they contributed their work if they didn't have the money to put in. They built the Crescent Hall that the Russian people have now which was the Croatian Educational Home.

SD: How did you personally get involved?

AA: Well, through the women's auxiliary, and through helping in the organization. I was not involved in the cultural work, that came later.

SD: Did you have a paper? Did the Yugoslav organization have a paper?

AA: Yes. They built the paper called Borba, Struggle, and this paper's responsible for really building the organization and helping the building of the cultural centers, and it had many, many readers.

SD: Did you try and preserve the language?

AA: Yes, the language, another . . . many of the grandchildren have come up through the heritage.

SD: What kind of cultural work did you do when you finally did start to do cultural work?

AA: Well, the latter part of the years I became a cultural director which lasted about 14 years. We had orchestras, folk dancing, language . . .

SD: Did you perform in this city?

AA: Yes, we performed for organizations, the Centennial, the year of Canada's one hundredth birthday we went to Vancouver Island and gave a concert there. We performed all over the city, our groups, at the university level, for other local ethnic organizations, and general communities.

SD: Was there a problem in terms of anti-Yugoslav people?

AA: Yes, there have been a lot of newcomers who fled Yugoslavia,

AA: (cont) who were pro-Yugoslav, and they have done a lot of damage.

SD: O.K.

AA: Bombing,^S and breaking windows and harassing people.

SD: When did you go to the Yukon?

AA: In 1940.

SD: When you were up there were you organizing?

AA: No, I went there ^{through} friends, just to get a break, and I found employment right away, and it was the best wages, the highest wages I've ever had up to that time, and people were very friendly and I spent some two and a half years living in the Yukon. It was just supposed to be a short holiday but I liked it so well I stayed on, and that was where I met my husband and I was married later.

SD: When you were there was there organizing being done by the Yugoslav community?

AA: No.

SD: What about the miners?

AA: Well, the miners were getting organized. They were, had concluded a successful contract and collective bargaining, I believe. That was short-lived.

SD: Where were they organizing, what city?

AA: In Dawson.

SD: Did they ask you to help them?

AA: Yes, one time, they asked people who could help them, and there was a lot of pressure put on the organizers.

SD: When did the Jubilee summer camp start?

AA: That was, Children's Jubilee summer camp started, it was established around the year of 1935-36, and I got involved almost from the beginning when the mayor of Vancouver at that time, I just don't remember who it was. We proclaimed a tag day for Children Jubilee, ^{and it was} because the children had suffered so much in the Depression, and a few people got together and sought this land, and they began to build it and it was built by ^{the} progressive people and the trade union movement and some churches and service organizations and for a small fee it gave the working class children a place to go for a little holiday and this was built up to volunteer organization, volunteer work up until this present day. It has quite a history, and it has given a holiday and pleasure to many thousands of children in lower mainland British Columbia.

SD: Were you involved with that on the auxiliary?

AA: Yes, I'm in the auxiliary, have been for many years and I have played a part on the Board, I've worked up at the camp. Many of the parents would take their children and work for their holiday, so I have done every type of work up at the camp from being a director to a chief cook and bottlewasher, camp mother. I've even done cooking, just about every part of maintaining that camp, I've done every type of work.

SD: Have you been involved in consumer organizations?

AA: Yes, I was involved in consumers' groups.

SD: What kind of work did you do?

AA: Well, some of the consumers' groups were watchdogs for prices, you know, going to the manufacturer and testing program. And then there were other women's organizations who were on-the-spot organizers of the general high prices on produce and foods.

SD: I remember that you mentioned there were some other kinds of work that you've done. You've worked as an agricultural worker for a while, strawberries?

AA: Yes, during the depression, we went out and we did picking the fruit, raspbetry farm in Cloverdale, they paid you so much a pound, but they gave you lodging so you stayed right there for about three weeks. And you just got a few pennies a pound, but they maintained you, they gave you ^{your} room and board, as it were.

SD: Did women live in tents, there?

AA: Yes, we had sort of makeshift tents and there was a dining hall, the food was good. There was a lot of women that went. ^{happened}

SD: When the 1938 events ^{in the unemployed movement}, did the women do any work to support the single unemployed men?

AA: Yes.

SD: What kind of work?

AA: Well if there was food to be prepared, leaflets to do,

AA: (cont) whatever.

SD: What were the central issues of the single unemployed, what were they demanding?

AA: They had, was the relief camps, unemployed, I can't remember so much about it, but they were organizing against the relief camps and for jobs. And nothing came of it until they took down the government buildings like the Post Office, art gallery, and I believe it was the Hotel Georgia in which they were not there very long. And they had a sit-down strike in the building for approximately a month. And there's where the Mother's Council played a big part, bringing clean clothes to them and food, and organizing outside of the Post Office food campaign. Everybody helped with this. But they held down these buildings for quite a long time until they were ready to move with a delegation of a hundred people to Victoria, to demand to the premier that they wanted their jobs. And they were tear-gassed out of the buildings, it was a bloody which Sunday, everybody- it has been well known- it was a very, very sad day, because the ^{ir} eyes were smarting they were sore and they were, Dr. Telford was on hand assisting the men. There was quite a bit that went on, there was windows smashed on Granville and on Hastings Street, and the delegation continued, pushed for Victoria, and they left that night, and there was a lot of support

AA: (cont) for the men, a lot of support.

SD: Were you at any of the events?

AA: Yes. We were called to be alert if anything happened, if we could help in any way, and we stood by. We saw most of it.

SD: So you demonstrated basically while it was happening?

AA: Yes. The - our - help.

SD: Were you involved in Tag Days or anything like that?

AA: Yes, there were many Tag Days held for different things, I just don't remember . . . I told you one about the Childrens' Jubilee Summer Camp.

SD: Do you remember going to demonstrations at all , like the one at the Cenotaph? Were you at that one?

AA: Yes. There were demonstrations for work, for jobs for people, held in Cambie St. grounds and many other areas around. There was riots.

SD: Do you remember McGeer reading the Riot Act?

AA: Yes. That was when McGeer read the Riot Act to the single unemployed, and then they were marched off to war, shortly after.

SD: Was there a social milieu, a sense of community between people who were involved in organizing drives?

AA: Yes, a lot.

SD: Did you spend a lot of time together?

AA: Well, everybody was very busy, had lots to do and never had

AA: (cont) that much time to socialize but in general people were speaking to each other, and they were friends and they were commuting, and they were mostly all interested in the same thing.

SD: Did this help to create an identification with the union?

AA: I believe so, it played a great part.

SD: The struggles that were going on, like the Aid to Spanish Orphans and the unemployed, was this supported by the Labor Movement, these struggles?

AA: It was supported by, let's put it this way, by progressive people, who wanted to see the end of war, of fac^sism, dictatorship in Spain.

SD: How about the Trades and Labor Congress?

AA: Not very good.

SD: In what sense, were they mostly just interested in economic issues?

AA: Just . . . trade union work, they didn't want any militar^y
I remember, so . . .

SD: Were you involved in union work after you were married?

AA: No, I was married in the Yukon and I had a small family, so I did not take any part, but I did, after I came from Dawson City, I had saved enough money to take a hair-dressing course and I was going to have a shop of my own in the Yukon, and after I had gotten my degree and that I was married and I had a small family and so I did not but

AA: (cont) I remember having an interest in the hairdressers.

SD: Can you talk about that?

AA: Not very much, but I remember being interested, because, taking the course I realized that the students had to have people to practice on, but I thought there was a lot of exploitation this way. Which is still the way that it is done today, and I think it is improved some.

SD: How was there exploitation?

AA: Well, a customer was charged and that was your training, and you bought your equipment to work with and the customer paid and you just performed a haircut and the shampoo and the dyes or whatever and you got your training that way, and that was in the '40's. I thought that they should have had some small remuneration for their service to help to pay for their course.

SD: During these struggles in the 1930's were married women involved as well as single women?

AA: Yes.

SD: Were they involved in special kinds of activities?

AA: No, it was just general.

SD: Were there political organizations that played a central role, in particular the CCF and the Communist Party?

AA: Yes, I believe they both played an important role in struggle. I remember a lot of the work Ernie Winch and his secretary Margaret Bacchus and the Stevens, and Tom

AA: (cont) McEwen and his daughter Isabel, who played a great part in my life, and I did a lot of work with Tom McEwen's daughter, helping to elect him when he was running for a candidate in the Yukon.

SD: Were there political youth organizations, like the young CCF or the Young Communist League ?

AA: I believe yes, yes.

SD: And did they play a role in union organizing at all?

AA: No, they , the union people were just coming in to it.

SD: Were these political organizations in the leadership of the labor movement?

AA: Yes, some of them were in the leadership of the union.

SD: So they would be the ones who would begin the organizing, or push forward the organizing?

AA: I believe so.

SD: You also told me that you worked as a clerk, a retail . . .

AA: Yes, the later part of my life, in the sixties and the seventies I worked as a store clerk in department stores and the retail clerks were not organized in any of the stores that I was employed in, and there were people trying to organize them but they didn't seem to get anywhere.

SD: Did you work after you were married, after your hairdressing course?

AA: Yes, after my youngest girl started school, shortly thereafter I started to work and I have been working here in

AA: (cont) New Westminster for a number of years as a store clerk.

SD: So you were not involved in union activities?

AA: No, but I have been involved in community work in my ethnic organization and in consumers' groups, and community organizations, and I have always been interested in the peace movement and I've taken part in that and still do. When it was Committee for Radiation Hazards and it was . . . a member of the CCND, and that has since folded up and all the entrances have been put on the BC Peace Council.

SD: Did you feel that the work you did in the 1930's and the 1940's, that this work was really important in terms of . . .

AA: Today? Yes, I believe so. I think we've come a long ways, the working people, and people are able to go to school and get an education . . .

SD: Prior to the 1940's, was there any other kind of work that you tried to get?

AA: Well before the domestic and before the restaurant work I remember lots and lots of women going to canneries, and going to places like that looking for work, every morning and walking down there in droves, and then there was a large screen , like a fence and everybody'd be waiting there, the head lady would come out and sort of say, "Nothing today, come back again," and we'd go away and we'd come back again, and we just kept on for a long time.

AA: (cont) Hundreds of women looking for any kind of work.

SD: And this inspired the organizing, I imagine.

AA: Yes, that was before I went to domestics and before I went to restaurant work and before I took the hairdressing course or done clerking, and those were very, very hard years and I think we have come a long way. When you think today that every industry has got some organization going on and the women are taking part in the United Nations, in the universities, and in general as lawyers and doctors, we've come a long ways and more and more people . . .

END OF TAPE 3605-2 SIDE ONE

AA: . . . are taking, are getting organized in as far as child care is concerned and every level of the children's cause, you might say, the thing that I feel very bad about is I'm always interested in the youth and interested in the young people, the way that the drug situation is, and the dropout in the schools that I don't like to see, and every type of gambling, and the alcoholism is on the upswing, this provokes me and upsets me very much.

SD: It must be very hard to look at given that in the 1930's for you as a really young woman it was just a question of survival.

AA: ^{to 1933} It was survival for us because my parents died when I was little, and therefore the girls in my family had to go out

AA: (cont) on their own, [there wasn't a place,] you have to find a living job, that's why you went to domestics, so you were given room and board and some small remuneration for your service, and this was hard, when you think you spent your whole youth, the best part of your youth in living this way, but its years I'm personally very proud of.

SD: It must've been almost like trying to find another family.

AA: (You're always doing that, finding another family, trying to fit in. We had a very close family, a very close family in Saskatchewan when we were on the farm homesteading, it was a different way of life. But that all ended. From 1929 on, its just been from pillar to post, you might say. But there was also the feeling, the urge, that you got to do something, and I think that I was part of that struggle and I wouldn't change it for anything.

I got great inspiration from doing cultural work, I might say that, working, helping the symphony, here in New Westminster, and being in the Oratorical Society, I had a little bit of musical training and it shows you, you don't have to have a lot to be able to read music, and get involved. It was a very interesting part of my life that I enjoyed very very much. It shows you there's lots of, many things that we can get involved in that we don't have to have a degree, you just get out and you do something about it. It's like a revolution, the whole thing, it picks up speed and it slows

AA: (cont) down, some get off and some stay on and carry on.

And I have faith in people and I think that they will fight for peace and not have war. It's like Carl Sandburg said, "Someday they will call a war and nobody will come." I hope that day is here very soon.

END OF TAPE