

Local activity in the IWW saw a dramatic increase in the year 1911. During the free speech fights in Aberdeen from November 1911 to January 1912, when Wobblies soapboxed in public spaces for the right to speak freely in public about the IWW, socialism and other “radical” ideas, local socialists and the IWW joined forces to overturn local laws and ordinances banning such speech. Free speech fights were common occurrences in many towns across America at the time, as speeches promoting unionism, various forms of leftism, and the IWW were accused of provoking strikes or riots. Many Wobblies took this up as a challenge, and drew large crowds by continuing to speak publicly in the unions favor despite legal crackdowns and arrests of speakers. 1912 would become an important year, as one of the biggest strikes in the region would take place beginning in March and ending in May, with thousands of workers eventually walking off the job and ceasing production for wage increases in the lumber industries. Longshoremen, sailors and electricians would also strike in solidarity, despite the violent response from armed guards, vigilante militias and the police. Furthermore, this strike saw the fastest union growth in IWW history, with the first week garnering up to hundreds of new members a day.

The backlash of union busting and anti-IWW violence increased significantly by the end of the strike however, with jail cells filling with free speech fighters, union organizers and strikers alike. Mass deportations began near the end of the year at the hands of “citizen committees” formed by local business, banks and anti-union vigilantes. Anyone suspected of IWW membership or support were often rounded up at night and escorted out of town or beaten. Many business leaders, fearing a loss in profits over the looming threat of a general strike, also subverted organizers by using labor spies to deter would-be union-interested workers from joining, and collected intelligence for bosses to use against their workers.



The next major era of IWW activity took place beginning in 1917 and lasting for the duration of America's involvement in the First World War. This time walkouts, protests and a general strike were focused on implementing an eight-hour work day, with many lumber workers and loggers simply walking off the job after eight hours as opposed to their usual 10, collectively enforcing their demands despite threats of joblessness and violence. Many Wobblies also took part in direct action on the shop floor by utilizing work-to-rule. They would follow every safety protocol to the last detail, feigning ignorance as to their job responsibilities, which slowed down production as a whole. The general strike eventually extended from the Grays Harbor region to multiple different lumber camps across Washington, Oregon, Montana, and Idaho, with workers numbering up to the tens of thousands being off the job at any given time.

Much like the strikes of 1912, the Wobblies were successful in obtaining the eight-hour day, along with higher wages and safer working conditions in many of the logging camps, mills and docks surrounding Grays Harbor. However, with the end of the First World War came the First Red Scare, as many business interests as well as the government became concerned over the growing labor movement in the country. After the Russian Revolution in 1917 the IWW was seen as a major subversive threat to not only production but the capitalist economy as a whole. It was during this time that many vigilante organizations became better funded and organized, with even more backing from local business interests as well as the police and local clergy.



Ralph Chaplin, a famous union activist and journalist in the IWW, visited the Grays Harbor area in 1919, gathering information for his upcoming publication, *The Centralia Conspiracy*. He spoke to many Wobblies in the region, and even caught wind of four union members who were lynched outside of Montesano. He also visited to relay what information he had gathered about the so-called “Centralia massacre of 1919,” and inform Wobblies as to the current situation of the case immediately following the incident. When he attempted to make a speech at the local Aberdeen IWW hall, vigilantes threatened to raid the hall with the assistance of the police, and were met with 2,000 IWW members and supporters who defended the hall by physically blocking them from entering and showing up with baseball bats and clubs. IWW halls continued to be raided well throughout the 20s and 30s, collecting documents about ongoing organizing campaigns, destroying literature, and even hosting a bonfire of furniture and publications in 1918 as an act of patriotism during the War.

Ultimately, the IWW in the Grays Harbor area would suffer a loss of membership and influence due to an increase in strike breaking and union busting in local industries, where the IWW was active, as well as further legal sanctions against unions in the form of “criminal syndicalism” laws.

Internally, during the mid to late 1920s the local labor movement also suffered the same factional split that the IWW had, with a transition of influence turning towards mainline socialist and communist movements and parties and distancing themselves from the IWW in favor of parliamentary socialism rather than industrial unionism. In spite of this, the Grays Harbor region would continue to be a significant area of successful IWW activity well through the late 1930s leading up to the Second World War, with many local union halls continuing to host banquets, fundraisers, and coordination of organizing efforts in the lumber, transportation, and mill industries. While the IWW no longer has a significant presence in the Grays Harbor region today, their activism and organizing made up some of the most successful victories for the union, and show a colorful story of multiethnic workers coming together against the bosses for better wages, hours and conditions.



# Vigilantes attack Hoquiam IWW Hall on November 16, 1917.

By Aaron Goings | Posted 10/19/2008 | HistoryLink.org Essay 8783



Industrial Workers of the World sticker, 1916

Courtesy Everett Public Library

On November 16, 1917, vigilantes calling themselves the "Black Robes" attack the union hall of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW, also called Wobblies) in Hoquiam. Grays Harbor County is gaining national attention for its citizens' violent activities against the radical labor group. The Black Robes begin issuing threats to tar and feather Hoquiam Wobblies. They break the window out of the IWW headquarters with a threatening note attached to a brick. The Wobblies, tossed out of their hall, are forced to congregate at the Aberdeen hall or in local pool rooms.

## One Big Union

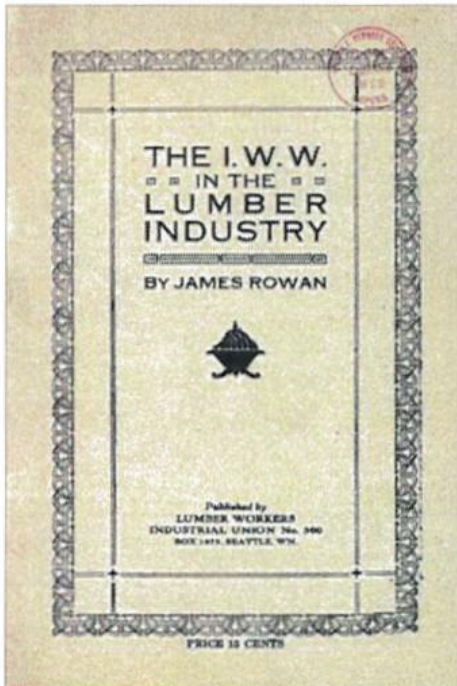
The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) was founded in June 1905 as both an industrial union (a term that contrasted with "craft union" and meant a union that included unskilled workers as well as skilled craft workers) and a revolutionary organization. The IWW (often called the "Wobblies") hoped to organize all workers, regardless of race, sex, or skill, into the "One Big Union."

In the Wobblies view, employers and wage laborers had an inherently oppositional relationship. The preamble to their constitution reads:

"The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the earth and machinery of production, and abolish the wage system."

In Grays Harbor County the Wobblies organized primarily among lumber workers. The first IWW local in Hoquiam was established in early 1907. At that time its small membership and limited influence paled in comparison with that of its later years.

## Organizing Aberdeen



IWW pamphlet on the lumber industry, ca. 1919

Courtesy UW Special Collections



## Organizing Aberdeen

The radical unionists gained their first major toehold in the region during the Aberdeen free-speech fight of 1911-1912, in which the Wobblies successfully overturned a local ordinance designed to prohibit street speaking by radicals. Close on the heels of the free-speech fight was the so-called "Greek Strike," which began in March 1912, when 200 Hoquiam mill hands walked off the job and joined the IWW. Between March and May of that year, approximately 8,000 mill hands and loggers from Grays Harbor, Willapa Harbor, and the Puget Sound joined the strike, eventually shutting down dozens of operations throughout Western Washington.

The Wobblies were at their high point in strength in Grays Harbor between 1917 and 1923. In the cities, logging camps, and beach communities, they organized domestic workers, loggers, construction workers, clam diggers, mill hands, longshoremen, and sailors. As was the case throughout much of the northern regions of the United States, the IWW in Hoquiam gained its largest following among the large Finnish American population. The names of several hundred Finnish Wobblies from the Grays Harbor region appeared in the pages of the *Industrialisti*, the Finnish-language newspaper of the IWW, between 1917 and 1921.

## The Lumber Strike

In the midst of World War I, the Wobblies struck again. Seeking to force employers to grant the eight-hour day and improve working conditions, IWWs and other unionists struck and paralyzed the Pacific Northwest lumber industry. In Grays Harbor all but one firm -- the Grays Harbor Commercial Company at Cosmopolis -- was closed up tight by the massive strike.

During the struggle, representatives of the lumber firms and their "law enforcement" and other allies in the towns fought the strikers with threats, arrest, and violent assaults. Picketers were arrested and beaten for the threat they posed to wartime profits and the war effort itself. Striking loggers were forced to remain in large congregations to avoid being assaulted. Bill Amey, an IWW camp delegate, gained notoriety for riding his motorcycle from camp to camp to avoid confrontations with police and vigilantes.



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### **The Black Robes' Attack**

On the evening of November 16, 1917, members of a mysterious vigilante club called "The Black Robes" tossed a club through the window of the Hoquiam IWW headquarters. A warning tied to the club read:

"Remember the boys in France. Feathers are light and tar is cheap.  
This is for the I.W.W."

Warning of "Another Tulsa?," the Wobblies' *Defense News Bulletin* reprinted an article from the *Chicago Post* that informed its readers of the Black Robes' message. The reference to Tulsa was to the breakout of anti-Wobbly vigilantism that had swept throughout Oklahoma during World War I.

In Grays Harbor County, too, Wobblies had been frequent victims of brutality. Throughout the war, the Aberdeen and Hoquiam IWW halls were raided, their literature and records destroyed, and several members were made to "run the gauntlet." Others were tarred and feathered by businessmen and members of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen (4Ls), a military-company union labeled the "Four Hells" by the IWW (*Industrial Worker*, January 5, 1918).

H. D. McKenney, one of the many labor spies hired to watch over and report on the Grays Harbor Wobblies during World War I, investigated the incident between the Black Robes and IWW. His inconclusive findings led him to suggest that the attack had been self-inflicted as a means of arousing public sympathy for the radical workers.

### **Eviction from Hoquiam**



## Eviction from Hoquiam

If the Wobblies had committed the act to gain public sympathy (highly unlikely), their efforts backfired. Fearful that his property was to be destroyed, their landlord evicted the Hoquiam Wobblies shortly after the Black Robes' threat was issued. Unable to convince other property owners to rent them a hall, Hoquiam IWWs were forced to congregate in pool halls, the Finnish Workers' Hall, and the IWW hall in Aberdeen. The lockout achieved great success. From early-1918 until the 1930s, the number of Hoquiam Wobblies was always far fewer than that of Hoquiam's sister city, Aberdeen.

The Black Robes's attack was far from the final outbreak of the "Wobbly Horrors" in Grays Harbor County. Throughout 1919 and 1920 a wave repression against labor radicals, called variously the Palmer Raids and White Terror, swept over the nation.

In Grays Harbor County, the trial of the Wobblies prosecuted for killing four members of the American Legion during an American Legion raid on the Wobbly hall in Centralia (November 11, 1919) took place in the county seat, Montesano. Local citizens armed themselves, buying out the entire stock of guns, ammunition, and rope from local hardware stores in Aberdeen, Hoquiam, Cosmopolis.

In May 1923, Wobbly activist and logger William McKay was shot in the back of the head by a hired gunman while picketing at the Bay City Mill in Aberdeen. One year later, IWW James Rowan's car was run off the road by Grays Harbor businessmen. He only narrowly escaped lynching by the timely interference of a farm family and a deputy sheriff.

Sources: "Another Tulsa?," *Defense News Bulletin*, November 24, 1917, Industrial Workers of the World Collection, box 181, Accession No. 130, Wayne State University College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs, Detroit, Michigan; James Green, *Grass Roots Socialism: Radical Movements in the Southwest, 1895-1943* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 345-395; Fred Thompson, *The IWW: Its First Fifty Years, 1905-1955*, (Chicago: Industrial Workers of the World, 1955); Letter from F. B. Stansbury to Edmund Leigh, December 27, 1917, War Department Records, Record Group No. 165, Box 2, file No. 5408, National Archives-Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle; Philip J. Dreyfus, "The IWW and the Limits of Inter-Ethnic Organizing: Reds Whites, and Greeks in Grays Harbor, Washington, 1912," *Labor History* Vol. 38, No. 4 (Fall 1997), p. 450-470; Aaron Anthony Golings, "Free Speech and Industrial Unionism: The Industrial Workers of the World in Grays Harbor, Washington, 1910-1912" (master's thesis, Central Washington University, 2005); Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States, Vol. 4: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1909-1917* (New York: International Publishers, 1947), 220-225; "Mob Shows Teeth: Centralia Publicity Speaker, James Rowan, Attacked Outside Montesano," *Industrial Worker*, May 14, 1924, p. 1; Tom Copeland, *The Centralia Tragedy of 1919: Elmer Smith and the Wobblies* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), 65; *Industrial Worker*, January 5, 1918; *Industrial Worker*, April 8, 1918; Aaron Golings, "TWW Lost A Fellow Worker In 1923," *The Daily World: A Century of Service, 1908-2008* (Aberdeen, WA: The Daily World, 2008); Robert E. Ficken, "The Wobbly Horrors: Pacific Northwest Lumbermen and the Industrial Workers of the World, 1917-1918," *Labor History*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Summer 1983), p. 325-341; Walter L. Stout to Spruce Production Division, Signal Corps, U.S.A., November 27, 1917, War Department Records, Record Group No. 165, Box 2, file 573, National Archives-Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle; F. B. Stansbury to H. D. McKenney, February 23, 1918; H. D. McKenney to F. B. Stansbury, March 8, 1918. War Department Records, Record Group No. 165, Box 2, file 573, National Archives-Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle; *Daily Washingtonian*, February 12, 1918, p. 1; *Industrialist*, December 15, 1920, p. 32; Walter Horace Margason testimony in the Industrial Workers of the World Collection, *United States v. Haywood, et al.*, July 1, 1918, p. 5761, Box 110, Folder 3, Wayne State University College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs, Detroit, Michigan.



# The One Big Union Monthly

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ABOUT 50 ARTICLES AND 15 CARTOONS

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PRICE 15 CENTS



# How the I. W. W. Men Brought About the 8-Hour-Day in the Lumber Industry

By A. H. PRICE.

I do not think there has been enough said about how the eight-hour day was brought about and about the struggle toward economic power. Being one of the strikers, I will write it as I have seen it, the best I can.

The Industrial Worker was started the first part of 1916, as an official organ of the I. W. W.

Through the Industrial Worker there was a call for a convention of Lumber Workers about the 4th of July, 1916, at Seattle. At that Convention ways and means were arranged to organize the Lumber Workers Union of the I. W. W. The latter part of the summer, I. W. W. halls began to open up. Everett, one of the first halls to open up, was opened and closed several times, resulting in the killing of no less than five I. W. W.s, and the wounding of several more; also the arrest of seventy I. W. W.s, who were charged with murder, and after a long trial were found "not guilty."

There is a book on the Everett tragedy in circulation at this time, so it is not necessary to comment on it further. The autocratic stand that the lumber trust took in Everett against the Union men landing on the public wharf, and the sayings of Hy Gill through pressure brought to bear by organized labor against the Commercial Club of Everett in favor of the I. W. W., went a long way toward organizing the I. W. W. and the winning of the eight hour day; also in winning the trial of the defendants in the Everett tragedy. After the winning of the trial, loggers and mill workers joined the Lumber Workers Union of the I. W. W. by the thousands.

In the spring of 1917 strikes began among the river drivers in Montana, Idaho and the Eastern part of Washington, and the winning of some of them was encouraging to the loggers. By the middle of June, the lumber industry of Idaho, Montana and the Eastern part of Washington was tied up. By the 20th of July this strike had extended to the Pacific Coast and parts of Oregon.

## The tricks of the Lumber Trusts.

The Lumber Trust seeing that we were preparing to spread this strike, their first act was to make use of the A. F. of L. by calling a strike before we were ready, for the purpose of creating a division. They also got the support of some of the shining lights of the Socialist party. This was at Aberdeen, Wash., but we beat them to it by shutting all the logging camps and saw mills down in that vicinity. The second day after the strike was called, one lumberman granted the nine hour day, and the Timber Workers of the A. F. of L. went out and scabbed as an organization. When the strike was first called the Timber Workers Union had about 400 members;

at this writing they hardly exist, with the exception of the places where the boss is using them to keep the slaves from joining the I. W. W.

The second act was to flash a court injunction in our face against picketing, but we had so much economic power and so many went on the picket line and in picket camps, that it was not enforced until toward the last when our economic power began to slip; and then they began to fill the jails. It was not a question of being against the law, or against right or wrong; it was a question of power.

## The Third Act.

The officials of the A. F. of L. saw that they would be forced to quit for the want of lumber in the shipyards of Aberdeen, so they called a strike in the shipyards against using "scab lumber" for the purpose of swinging the loggers and mill workers in the Timber Workers Union.

## The Fourth Act.

The Political State felt our economic power and saw that the Lumber Trust would be forced to grant the eight hour day sooner or later, so the Governor of the State of Washington and Secretary of War Baker declared themselves for an eight hour day, for the purpose of getting great honors and being heroes, and to make the slave think "George did it." This ought to be a great lesson to the Workers. It proves, that if we get enough economic power, we can swing the politicians on our side or off. It makes no difference who or what they are, so let us waste no energy dabbling with politics.

## The Fifth Act.

In Seattle several hundred carpenters were laid off for the want of lumber, so the labor fakirs and bosses instigated a strike in the Seattle shipyards against using "scab lumber" for the purpose of getting the loggers and mill workers to join the Timber Workers of the A. F. of L.—the Bosses' Union. All this was for the purpose of defeating the I. W. W.

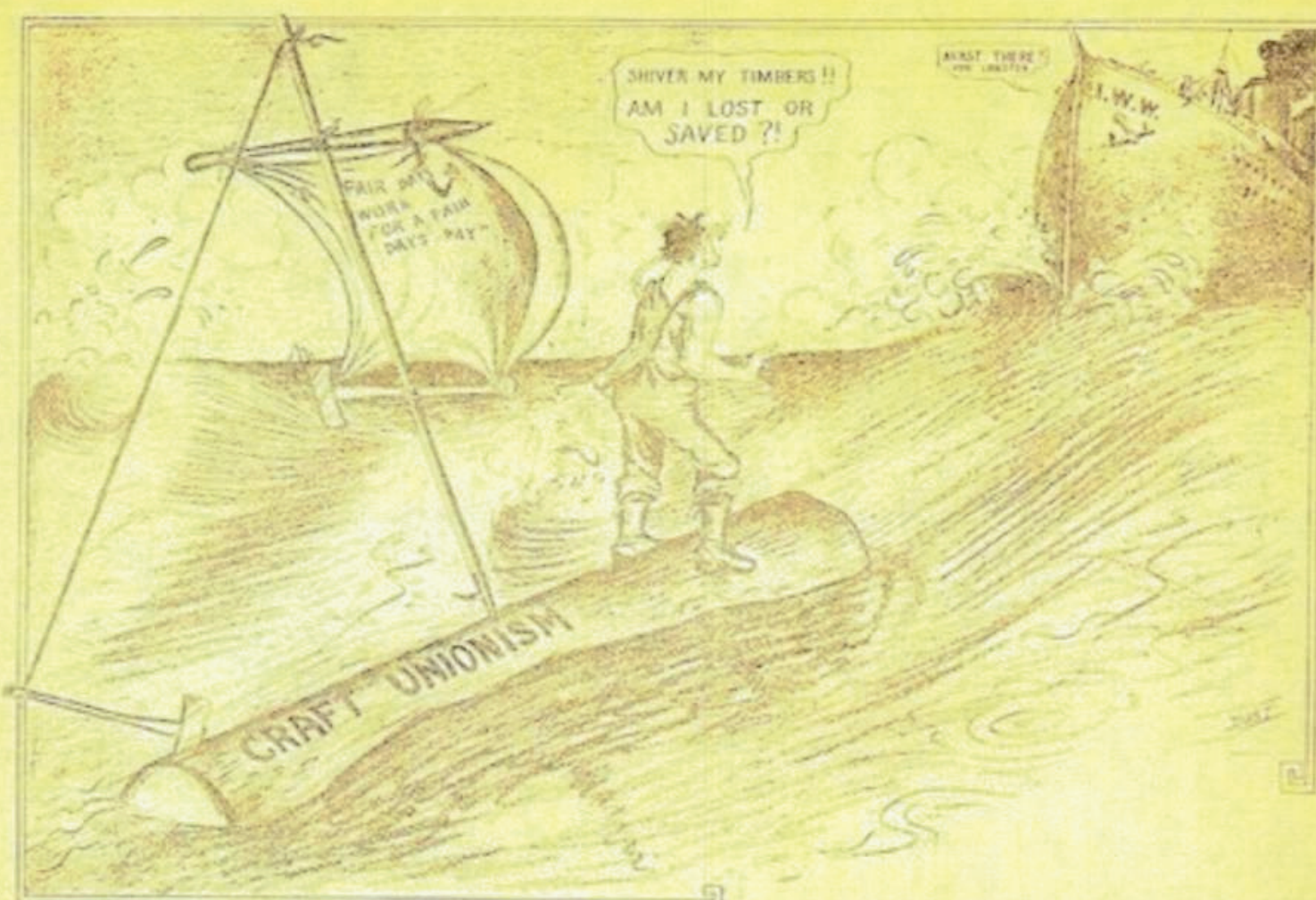
## The Sixth Act.

In Aberdeen the soldiers were called out at the instigation of the Mayor, through the economic pressure brought to bear by the lumbermen, and drove the strikers off the picket line. This happened after the A. F. of L. had called off their strike in the shipyards at Aberdeen and the jail at Montesano began to fill up and men going broke and going back to work. Our economic power got weak and the Lumber Trust took advantage of the situation.

## Act One by the Workers.

Seeing that we could accomplish nothing by staying off the job any longer, there was a resolution





### Between the Devil and the Deep Sea

drawn up in the Montesano jail to the effect that we transfer the strike to the job and that it be left to the workers to do what they saw fit, individually or collectively, to enforce the eight hour day. So back to the job we went.

In the first camp I was in we loafed on the job three days.

The bull of the woods quit because we could not get the logs. The fourth day we all got fired and the camp shut down for a new crew; at other camps the whistle would blow when the eight hours were up, and we would all go to camp. There were instances where the job delegate would get fired and the whole crew would walk out. One lumberman gave \$50,000 to the Lumbermen's Association for the purpose of defeating the eight hour day. This lumber camp was pulled five different times. In another instance a camp was being pulled and the owner was overheard to say, "I will spend every cent of money I have got to defeat that damnable organization." In another instance one lumberman was overheard to say, "They will put me on the bum if they keep this up, striking on the job. Grant them the eight hour day." The "hoosier" act was played to a finish and the "loaf on the job" and other tactics not only hit the lumbermen's pocketbooks, but it was those tactics that got the eight hour day.

#### Four L. Organized.

While all of this was going on, the lumber trust, seeing that they could not create a division with the

A. F. of L. Timber Workers Union and that the loggers were joining the I. W. W. by the hundreds, the Lumber Trust attorney suggested an organization by the name of the Four Ls, meaning the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen, and this was accepted by the Lumber Trust and turned over to one Col. Disque for execution. The next move was to send a "sky-pilot" into the logging camps and saw mills to work on the workers' patriotism for the purpose of preparing them for the Four Ls.

The next move was to send men into the woods with uniform on and intimidate them into signing up with the Four Ls, and the great struggle was on for the control of the Lumber Workers. Hundreds signed up through intimidation and bulldozing and for the purpose of holding their jobs without being bothered. All men refusing to line up with this organization suffered all manner of abuse at the hands of the authorities by being called pro-German and traitors to their country.

A few of those who signed up with the Four Ls were sincere; the majority were not, but the Four Ls being controlled by the Lumber Trust did succeed in keeping wages down and kept many from thinking that the I. W. W. forced the Lumber Trust to grant the eight hour day, and it also hindered organization.

The Lumber Trust held a meeting and decided to surrender the eight hour day before the Four Ls held a meeting, and when they did call a meeting they tried to cut wages, but there were too many I. W. W.s on the job for them to make it stick.



The lumbermen east of the Cascades were the first to decide to surrender, at a meeting held at Spokane, Wash., which represented the lumbermen in Montana, Idaho and Eastern Washington. At this meeting they passed a resolution calling on the government for the sake of industrial peace to establish an eight hour day.

In numerous camps at this time the eight hour day had already been taken by the I. W. W.s.

#### Slush Fund Lost.

The Lumber Trust also attempted to cover up under the government by making the people think that the government forced them to grant the eight hour day, and the lost their \$500,000 that they raised to defeat the eight hour day and the I. W. W.

After all this they did not stop the growth of the I. W. W. by using the A. F. of L., the Four Ls, jails, patriotic bunk, and their lying papers in big headlines.

The capitalist class in general seeing that the workers were not being "fimflammed" and that there were thousands of workers on the fence thinking of joining the I. W. W., including the rank and file of the A. F. of L. and the Socialists, so the last stand was "mob rule." The next move was to make a raid on the printing plant where the Industrial Worker was being printed and about \$10,000 damage was done to the Piggott Printing plant, but this did not stop the paper.

Some of the A. F. of L. officials who accepted government jobs were used as industrial police in Wenatchee and North Yakima. A resolution was signed calling on the soldiers, which resulted in the closing of the hall and the arrest of a great many I. W. W.s.

#### Governor Slides Out.

In the latter part of April there was a meeting of lumber men called at Spokane, to decide ways and means to stop the I. W. W. activities. At this meeting the Governor of the State was called on to cope with the situation. The Governor refused to act. The President of the Central Labor Council did. So back to Olympia the Governor went, and in a few days he was notified by the lumbermen that they could do the job without him.

After a few days I heard that the Governor had gone to Alaska on a visit. Whether he got cold feet or his trip paid for, I do not know. I will leave it for other people to decide. During his absence raiding of union halls began, smashing in the fronts and burning furniture, tarring and feathering job delegates and others, and there were many people put in jail on deportation and open charges and held for months, then turned loose without trial.

This was for the purpose of intimidating weak-kneed members and others who were thinking of joining. In Seattle I saw the biggest union raid on record. It lasted about four hours. There were 213 arrests and over \$5000 found on them. All the time while this was going on there were thousands of people looking on.

All summer, during 1918, in some of the logging camps, antagonism was kept up between the fore-

man and the men; the foremen in order to hold their jobs would tell the men that the Four Ls got the eight hour day, or that Col. Disque did it.

At the present writing they are losing their control with the Four Ls. What their next move will be remains to be seen. But watch developments.

#### Federation Petted.

In the last eighteen months the capitalist class has petted the A. F. of L. and gave some of them government jobs in order to hold them down.

Just eighteen months ago I was working in Peterson's shipyards at Aberdeen, as a common laborer. All we common laborers were members of the I. W. W. We called a meeting in the hall one night and decided to go on a strike the next morning at ten o'clock for fifty cents more a day. It was successful. In a few days our demands were granted, but the owner of the shipyards told us that in order to get our jobs back we would have to give him our red cards and take out a card in the shipyard union of the A. F. of L. There was nothing doing along these lines.

At the present writing there is some cunning diplomacy going on in Seattle. The A. F. of L. are taking some of the I. W. W. principles; the Socialist party of Portland is at present using some of the I. W. W. philosophy, also posing as the same people as the Bolsheviki in Russia. Their main idea seems to be to confuse the workers in order to hold them where they are.

The working class should learn a great lesson from the way the eight hour day was brought about. In forcing the lumbermen to grant the eight hour day we have demonstrated our propaganda. We do not have to tell them we can "put them on the bum," they know it. The lesson to be learned is worth more than the eight hour day.

#### What I. W. W. Gained for the Workers.

This is the greatest labor victory in the history of the country, and the first time that a big strike has ever been transferred to the job. There were no arbitration meetings with the bosses. They tried to get a meeting with us, and wanted to sign contracts, but there was nothing doing. There have been no less than 150,000 slaves who have profited by this labor victory.

The scissorbills of Oregon and British Columbia who have never done anything to better job conditions have profited well by getting the eight-hour day, but they have not yet received any better camp conditions from the boss. If a worker wishes to know what class of men work in a certain camp, all he has to do is to ascertain what camp conditions exist there to know whether the camp is organized or unorganized.

The lumber industry is the basic industry of the Northwest, and whatever the conditions are in the basic industry it helps you to determine what conditions exist on all the jobs. Every one who works for wages in the Northwest has profited by the great struggle for shorter hours and better conditions that was put up by Lumber Workers Industrial Union No. 500 of the Industrial Workers of the World.



July 8, 1935:

Striking lumber  
workers march  
from Aberdeen to  
Hoquiam in a show  
of solidarity

#### NOTABLE DATES FOR THE LUMBER STRIKE

##### MAY 1934

The Waterfront Employers' Association of San Francisco refuses the longshoremen's demands for union recognition, a dollar-an-hour wage, a thirty-hour week and a union-controlled hiring hall.

##### JULY 5, 1934

"Bloody Thursday." In the "Battle of Rincon Hill," two longshoremen are shot to death by San Francisco police; thirty are wounded and forty-three more clubbed or stoned.

##### MAY 9, 1935

Northwest timber workers — "seething with discontent" over wages and working conditions — go on strike.

##### JUNE 26, 1935

Washington Gov. Clarence Martin promises State Patrol or National Guard protection to "all employers who wish to reopen their mills."

##### JULY 1, 1935

The largest picket line ever formed on the West Coast — 2,000 unionists — is set up at the Harbor Plywood Co. at the foot of Myrtle Street in Aberdeen.

##### JULY 7, 1935

Three hundred Washington National Guardsmen arrive in Aberdeen. Strikers are outraged.

##### JULY 8, 1935

One hundred and fifty National Guardsmen with fixed bayonets arrive at the Bay City mill in South Aberdeen at daybreak, telling some 3,000 men and women there will be no picketing. Instead, six thousand march in a parade from Aberdeen to Hoquiam and back.

# Marching! Marching!

ON THE HARBOR, RESENTMENT over thirty years of union repression by the sawdust aristocracy — mill owners, shipping interests and bankers — simmered until the Depression.

Then, charismatic new labor leaders emerged from the economic chaos, and Franklin D. Roosevelt's liberal "New Deal" reforms opened the door to aggressive union organizing.

Among the firebrands was Harry Bridges, a wiry longshoreman from California by way of Australia. A former member of the Industrial Workers of the World, Bridges always said, "Aberdeen feels like home to me."

The feeling was mutual. Woodworkers had a significant stake in the historic West Coast longshore strike of 1934. The alliance is documented definitively by Jerry Lembcke and William M. Tattam in "One Union in Wood: A political history of the International Woodworkers of America." They note that the woodworkers hadn't made much progress toward industrial unionism until the longshore strike "revealed the effectiveness of united militant action."

In 1934, the jurisdiction of the shipping companies' captive unions was challenged by Bridges' International Longshoremen's Association.

"The Waterfront Employers' Association of San Francisco refused the ILA's demands for union recognition, a dollar-an-hour wage, a thirty-hour week and a union-controlled hiring hall," Lembcke and Tattam wrote.

Led by Bridges, the longshoremen retaliated, shutting down the docks from San Diego to Seattle, including Grays and Willapa harbors. They demanded a coastwide working agreement. From May 9 to July 31, 1934, lumber shipments were paralyzed, sawmills forced to close. The battle cry was the old Knights of Labor slogan, "An injury to one is the concern of all."

On July 5, "Bloody Thursday," the insult of truckers pushing through picket lines to the piers of San Francisco led to more than injury. Two longshoremen were shot to death by police. Thirty

more were wounded; forty-three others clubbed or tear-gassed.

"The Battle of Rincon Hill" and the red-baiting that followed (Bridges was alleged to be a Communist) imbued the future International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union and its allies in the forest products industry with a sense of radical unity.

In 1937, 15,000 dock workers along the West Coast followed Bridges out of the American Federation of Labor and into the new Congress of Industrial Organizations. The ILWU's rousing first convention was held in Aberdeen the next year.

Woodworkers took note of the longshore victories. "Red Harry" was a fellow worker. Two years earlier, ILWU men had refused to load "hot cargo" while woodworkers wielding clubs and tire tacks menaced scabs heading for the docks. They had developed a militant ally to help them press their own demands. Some loggers, like Brick Moir of Hoquiam, a CIO activist from the 1930s, enshrined Bridges' portrait on their living room walls.

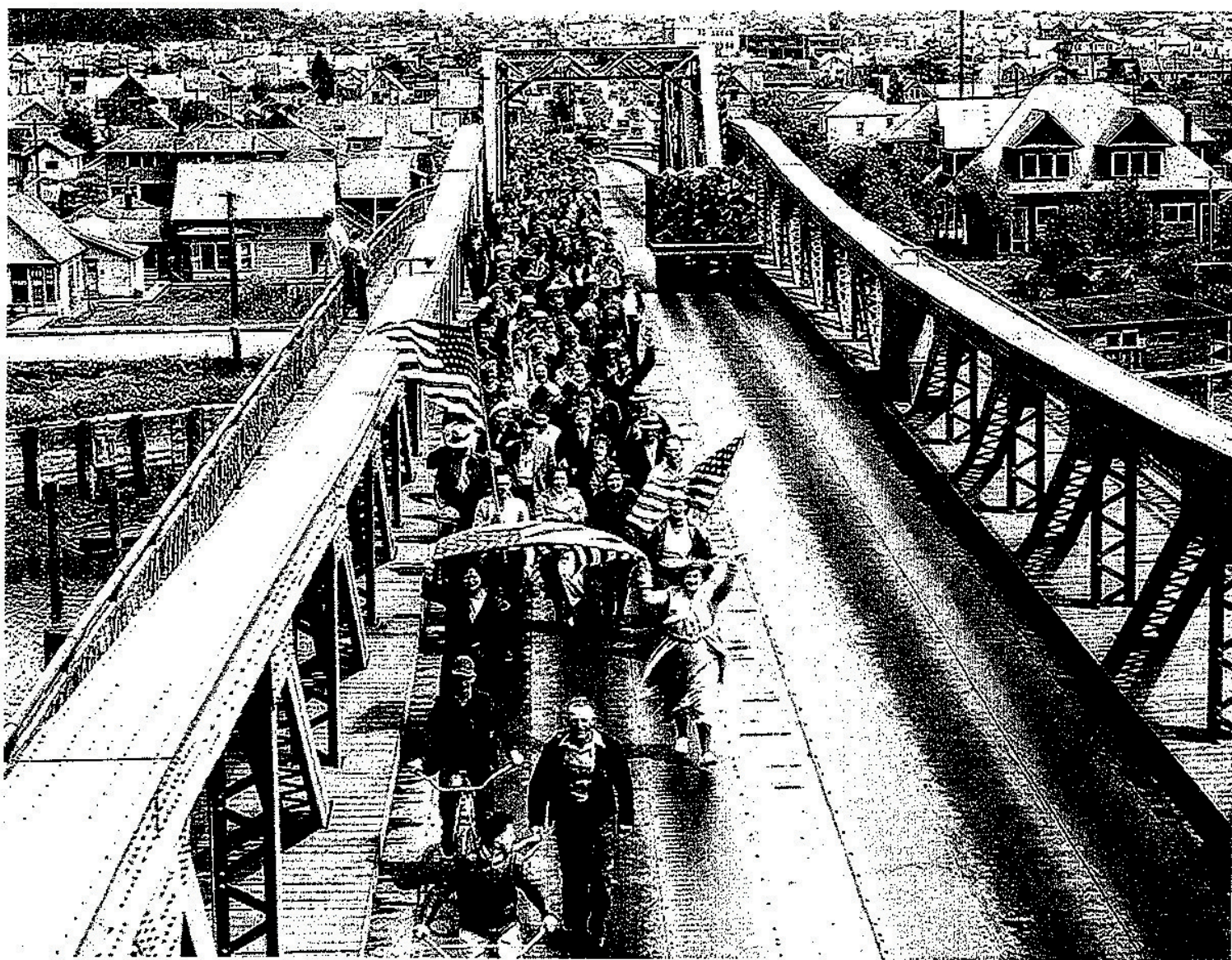
"Harry's the guy. ... One tough little SOB," Max Vekich Sr., an Aberdeen longshoreman, told a reporter covering an ILWU picnic in Aberdeen in the early 1970s. Vekich had his right arm draped around Bridges' shoulders. Harry was savoring a hot dog. Leonard Ramiskey, another old longshoreman, strolled over to join his friends.

Bridges smiled. "We've seen some days, ain't we, mates?"

The New Deal's National Industrial Recovery Act, which guaranteed workers the right to collective bargaining, set the stage for the formation of the AFL's Northwest Council of Sawmill & Timber Workers in July of 1933.

The Grays-Willapa Harbor District, with headquarters in Aberdeen and an office in Raymond, became a huge force in the union right from the start. Few places in America had been as hard hit by the Depression as the Twin Harbors, and the bitterness against "the boss loggers and their ilk" ran wide and deep.





Forbidden from picketing Grays Harbor mills by the National Guard, some 6,000 labor supporters cross the Simpson Avenue Bridge into West Hoquiam during a solidarity parade on July 8, 1935. (Jones Historical Collection)

In all, 10,000 Northwest lumber workers — including many veterans of the Wobbly era — demanded admittance to the union, which caught AFL leaders off guard. Since 1914, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners, which claimed jurisdiction over lumber workers, “had deliberately ignored them because they did not want to admit unskilled workmen into their ranks of skilled craftsmen,” Lembcke and Tattam note. The old guard also feared the impact of “radical elements.”

Northwest sawmills and logging camps were “seething with discontent.” Seeking far better wages and working conditions, the Harbor-area district led the push for new contracts, including a

demand for seventy-five cents an hour minimum, overtime pay and seniority rights.

The employers said it was out of the question. Given the Depression, their profits were too skimpy as it was, they said.

AFL leadership was timid. Its new members were anything but. They set a strike deadline of May 6, 1935. But weeks before that, with negotiations going nowhere, workers began to leave the woods and mills. By May 9, 30,000 were on strike — 50 percent of the lumber workers in the Northwest.

It was the largest strike in the history of the region, with a sub-plot of radical vs. conservative unionism. (Proving that there are shades of gray left and right, some old Wobblies complained that

#### AS THEY SAW IT

“State troops are here to police Grays Harbor as a result of the strike.

“No such situation has arisen before in our history. It is a pity that it had to occur now, for it means that efforts to negotiate a settlement have failed.

“The presence of the troops here to avoid possible riots and perhaps bloodshed was deemed essential by the mayors of Aberdeen and Hoquiam, the chiefs of police of the two cities, the sheriff of the county and state patrolmen, who have been on duty here for a week past.

“They said in their petition to the governor that the situation was beyond their control, that they feared the consequences and that they considered the need of troops vital to preserve order and save lives.

“They deemed it their duty, not a pleasant one for them, or for the governor, for the troops themselves, or for the community, to set forth the facts as they believed them to be and ask the intervention of the state authority. ...

“A forced settlement will only provide the foundation for a future outbreak. Can not both employees and employers sit down now and reach an agreement? ...

“Military law does not prevail on Grays Harbor and no one wants it, but it could come to that. The troops are here on police duty, other police forces having proved inadequate. The troops will do their duty, having taken an oath to do so.

“They are under orders and are prepared to enforce their orders, a fact which should be borne in mind.

“The thing to do then is to keep order, obey the law and settle the strike.”

— “Troops,” *Aberdeen Daily World*, July 8, 1935



## SPEAK LIKE A NATIVE

Union newspapers from the 1930s are sometimes hard to decipher for the modern-day reader.

But most of the terms — usually acronyms — were common parlance in the Great Depression. Here are a few:

**scab:** A strikebreaker; anyone who crosses a picket line as a replacement worker during a union walkout.

**the NRA:** Not the National Rifle Association. The National Recovery Administration was one of Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" reforms. Section 7a of the National Industrial Recovery Act, signed into law on June 16, 1933, guaranteed workers the right to bargain collectively through representatives of their choice.

**Wagner Act:** Signed into law by FDR on July 5, 1935, this bill reaffirmed union organizing rights in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling that the NRA was unconstitutional.

**AFL:** The American Federation of Labor. The AFL, led by Samuel Gompers, was founded in 1881 by a confederation of craft unions. The AFL was leery of "radicals" preaching industrial unionism.

**CIO:** The Congress (originally Committee) of Industrial Organizations. Founded in 1935 by left-leaning AFL affiliates to unionize workers industry-wide. Woodworkers and longshoremen, led by Harry Bridges, were among the most vociferous CIO recruits. The CIO was expelled from the AFL in 1937.

**AFL-CIO:** The merger of the labor-organizing giants was achieved in 1955.

Undeterred by a steady drizzle, a parade of defiant strikers headed toward Harbor Plywood. They were intercepted by the police as they approached the Port Dock on Oak Street.

The strikers fanned out, with one group continuing toward the plywood mill. The state police fired one or two gas bombs, "but the pickets had prepared for this by wetting rags and handkerchiefs" and crouching in "tall wet grass."

"They jeered at the state police and laughed when the gas failed to spread among them" because of the rainfall, the *World* reported.

On Saturday July 6, the Northwest Joint Strike Committee, angry with their submissive AFL leaders and livid with Governor Martin, accused him of using the State Patrol to protect "armed strike breakers." They threatened to launch a recall drive.

The governor shot back that the unions needed to "purge their organization of communistic and radical elements ..."

A crowd of 3,000 assembled to jeer and boo the police as they protected strikebreakers going to work at Harbor Plywood, but they stayed a considerable distance from the company line.

On Sunday, July 7, around 6 p.m., Harborites were "stunned" by the arrival of 300 men of the Second Battalion, 161st Washington National Guard Regiment, from Camp Murray near Tacoma.

"The hum that arose throughout the town bespoke of rising resentment against the latest actions of the governor," the *Timber Worker* newspaper reported.

The outrage grew when the governor noted he had acted at the request of Aberdeen Mayor Herbert Horrocks and Hoquiam Mayor Ralph Philbrick, their chiefs of police, the sheriff and State Patrol commander on the scene.

The mayors told the governor that "strike leaders admittedly had lost control of the men and admitted they could not hold them in check." (Strike leaders said they admitted no such thing — it was the police and mill owners who were out of control, they said.) "They cited numerous reports of violence, beatings and threats." Moreover, the mayors said local police "have been working eighteen to twenty hours a day on special duties arising from the strike."

"We are here to preserve order," said Brig. Gen. Pennington, commander of the "steel-helmeted Guardsmen."

"Armed with pistols and clubs," National Guardsmen immediately went on patrol throughout the cities. There were "khaki-clad sentries posted at all intersections in the Armory block" near Aberdeen High School.

It "presents a war-like picture," the *World* said.

"There were no 'welcome' mats out for the visitors," the paper noted dryly.

However, many of the Guardsmen from the Yakima area — most barely out of their teens — had deeply mixed emotions. A number of them had relatives on picket lines in the Northwest.

It was the eve of the ninth week of the strike.

Monday, July 8, 1935, was destined to become one of the most tumultuous days in Harbor history.

In South Aberdeen, 150 guardsmen arrived at the Bay City mill at daybreak, confronted some 3,000 men and women and decreed there would be no picketing. Period.

"The Guardsmen, with their bayonets flashing in the early-morning light, formed squads, gave the order to move and proceeded down Curtis and West Boulevard with the main body of pickets before them" jeering and shouting epithets. "Rifle butts were used to prod on those who moved slowly," the *World* reported. "Others were shoved and poked with riot sticks." "Loiterers" were arrested, "bundled into cars of the State Patrol and taken to the Armory where they are held under Army arrest orders."

"The militia brooked no resistance," using tear gas at one point "to speed up the pickets." Outraged picket captains talked of a general strike by all union labor on the Harbor.

Instead, the strikers gathered at Wishkah and I streets downtown around 10 a.m. and decided to stage a parade.

"From 3,000, this quickly grew to more than 6,000 as the paraders — including a color guard and two women wheeling baby carriages — passed along Heron, Wishkah and Market en route to the Armory."

They sang "Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here!" and "Solidarity Forever."

By this time, the parade was 12 to 13 blocks long, with the marchers four abreast, according to the *World*.

"Almost half the male population of the city was parading in protest," the *Timber Worker* said.



The soldiers outside the Armory "snapped into a salute as the colors passed by," but the paraders jeered them before they moved west on Wishkah toward Hoquiam. "There was no disturbance of any kind, and city police, state patrolmen and the National Guard troops made no effort to interfere."

The cheering, singing throng marched from Aberdeen to Hoquiam and back.

However, as it approached the hospitals, the voices of the protesters "died down and there was hardly a sound but the marching feet."

"It was the most amazing labor event I've ever seen," Bill Botkin, a retired woodworkers union leader, said sixty years later. "We were able to blow off steam and show our unity."

Botkin said he could "still remember the way the tear gas tasted" and the tsunami of indignation that rolled over the town when the National Guard arrived. "It's a miracle that we didn't have our own 'Bloody Thursday.'"

The next day, strike leaders announced plans to petition for the recall of Mayors Horrocks and Philbrick.

And on July 10, at least 3,000 participated in yet another protest parade. They marched again from Aberdeen to Hoquiam "led by massed colors and the Croatian band." Their banners said: "No discrimination against women workers," "Six-hour day," "Union Recognition," "Living Wages," "Remove troops," "Government Arbitration."

Hoquiam High school students joined the line of march to cheers from the adults.

The mill owners took out a large ad in the *World* saying the loss of payroll during the strike was "conservatively estimated at \$502,500 per month or \$25,000 per working day." The average wage before the strike was 58 cents per hour, or \$4.66 per 8-hour day vs. \$4.76 per 8-hour day from 1926-1929. But in 1929, they said, the average price of lumber was \$20.63 per thousand feet vs. \$15.30 just before the strike. The mill owners said they were incurring heavy losses, especially since Canada was using "cheap Oriental labor," and a forty-eight-hour week.

Rumors circulated once again that a general strike would be called if the soldiers were not withdrawn.

President Roosevelt, deeply concerned by the growing unrest in the Northwest, sent in federal mediators. But Governor Martin and the mill own-

ers wouldn't budge. By month's end the strike had largely collapsed.

Grays Harbor was the last holdout, with unionists and state police in repeated confrontations.

In the end, the union was forced to swallow a minimum of fifty cents per hour and a forty-hour week rather than seventy-five cents for a thirty-hour week as it had demanded. Nor did it gain a "closed shop," but employers agreed to bargain with union committees over safety and working conditions.

The union had also more than doubled its pre-strike membership and now boasted 35,000 lumber workers. By the spring of 1936, the ranks of the Sawmill & Timber Workers had doubled again to 70,000. It represented more workers than any other West Coast union — no thanks to the AFL, still wedded to the concept of craft unionism and leery of "all those radicals."

The stage was set for the formation in 1937 of a CIO industrial union to unite forest products workers. What to call it? Many suggested "The International Wood Workers." But how about those initials — IWW?

The unionists, most of them young, many with Marxist-Leninist beliefs, had fathers and uncles who had been Wobblies. They knew all the old songs from the IWW's "Little Red Song Book," the ones that could "fan the flames of discontent." "But many of us were not buying into communism or anything that smacked of communism," Botkin recalled in 1995. "This was a new union that didn't need old baggage or anything to give the employers more ammunition against us."

They settled on the International Woodworkers of America, the IWA.

Although philosophical battles would rage for the next fifteen years over communist influence in the union — "white bloc" vs. "red bloc" — the tear-gas standoffs and protest parades during the Depression left a bedrock of solidarity.

When the Association of Western Pulp & Paper Workers went on strike against the Weyerhaeuser Co. in the spring of 2001, the ranks of longshoremen on the Harbor had been thinned dramatically by the fallout from spotted owl set-asides and containerized cargo, but they were solidly behind the striking pulp mill workers — one of whom sported a sign that said, "Industrial Workers of the World — An Injury to One is an Injury to All."



Longshoreman and union activist Harry Bridges always said, "Aberdeen feels like home to me." (AP)

#### WHAT TO READ

Here are a few of the best books about the political turmoil among woodworkers and longshoremen in the 1930s:

"One Union in Wood, a Political History of the International Woodworkers of America," by Jerry Lembcke and William M. Tattam, Harbour Publishing Co. Ltd. and International Publishers, 1984. Well researched and well written, this is the definitive account of the IWA, especially its Wobbly roots and relationship with Harry Bridges.

"Reds or Rackets, The Making of Radical and Conservative Unions on the Waterfront," by Howard Kimeldorf, University of California Press, 1988. The political contrast between East Coast and West Coast longshoremen is detailed, together with an excellent analysis of Harry Bridges' "fellow worker" charisma.

"Workers on the Waterfront, Seamen, Longshoremen and Unionism in the 1930s," by Bruce Nelson, University of Illinois Press, 1988. History comes alive, particularly in the chapter on "The Big Strike."



# The Chehalis Valley Historian



703 W. Pioneer Montesano, Wa

Incorporated 27 Aug 1984

Volume 37 No 3

## Something Remembered

### The Loyal Legion by D. White



Recently, as we were preparing for our participation in the city of Montesano's annual garage sale, I stumbled upon a small jewelry box that contained an assortment of tiny odds and ends. Included in the cache was an attractive, tricolor, enamel pin that displayed four gold L's along with a stately conifer and a crosscut saw. The entire pattern was circumscribed by a dark blue band with the words (in gold) Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen. (Editor's note: The enameled pin is estimated to have been produced circa 1930.)

My interest piqued, I executed an internet search and discovered that this small relic of the past had an interesting story to tell and that it was one that significantly impacted eastern Grays Harbor County early in the 20th century.

Known commonly as the 4L, *The Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen* was a company union promulgated and supported by the War Department of the United States in 1917. (Wikipedia.com)

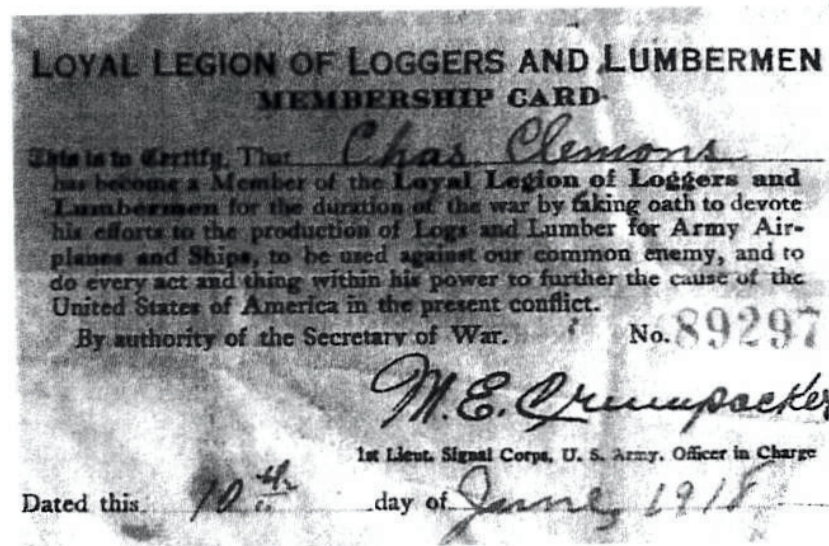
The Loyal Legion was founded in an effort to meet the demand for the spruce timber that was needed in the war effort.

In 1917 there had been several widespread, successful lumber strikes in the Pacific Northwest. They had been led, primarily, by the International Workers of the World. The IWW was a radical union whose members were given the moniker "Wobblies".

In response, a special military division was dispatched to northwest lumber camps in an effort to win support for militarizing the timber industry. Col. Brice Disque, later a Brigadier General, is credited with having devised the plan and, with approval from the Wilson administration, one hundred officers were committed to the effort to place the lumber industry under military control. A meeting was held in Centralia, Washington in November of 1917 with representatives of 16 of the region's largest lumber companies in attendance. Just days later, in Wheeler, Oregon on November 30th, the first unit of the Loyal Legion was activated. (Wikipedia.com)



Many of Grays Harbor's loggers and logging companies were involved in the 4L. One east county resident with historic bonafides who was a card carrying member was Charles H. Clemons. A copy of the membership card, issued June 10th 1918, was provided by CVHS member and volunteer Rob Kirkwood (great grandson of Charles Clemons) and is shown below.



As illustrated, the card was issued under the authority of the Secretary of War and was signed by the officer in charge, US Army Signal Corps, 1st Lieutenant, M.E. Crumpacker. Crumpacker, who was the son of an Indiana Congressman, attended the University of Michigan and was the starting right tackle on the Wolverine football team in 1908. He was also a graduate of Culver Military Academy and Harvard Law School. Following WWI he served as a congressman from the state of Oregon for two terms. (Wikipedia.com) At least one of the commissioned officers who directed the Loyal Legion had deep local roots. This 1918 photo of Frank Mc Cleary, son of Henry Mc Cleary (founder of the town of the same name) was provided by the McCleary Museum (via Clarence Mc Leary).



The Army assigned Captain Mc Cleary the responsibility of overseeing all Spruce Logging in the Pacific Northwest. The sole act required for membership in the 4L was a loyalty pledge which read in part:  
*I, the undersigned,...do hereby solemnly pledge my efforts during the war to the United States of America and will support and defend this country against enemies foreign and domestic. I further swear...to faithfully perform my duty toward this company by directing my best efforts, in every way possible, to the production of logs and lumber for the construction of Army airplanes and ships to be used against our common enemies. That I will stamp out any sedition or acts of hostility against the United States Government which may come within my knowledge, and I will do every act and thing which will in general aid in carrying this war to a successful conclusion.*

Failure to take the loyalty oath could be met with discharge from employment and even arrest. With free membership, and heavy pressure from fellow workers, loggers found it difficult to turn down the 4L. Twenty thousand signed up during the last months of 1917. (Wikipedia.com) (Editors note; A fascinating book about the Loyal Legion entitled "Soldiers in the Woods" is available through the Timberland Library.) Two examples of an earlier rendition of the Loyal Legion pin are on display in the McCleary Museum. They are brass and somewhat larger than the enameled pin that precipitated this article and are likely the earliest version of the 4L membership pins distributed.



Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen pin ca 1918  
(Mc Cleary Museum)

Beginning in 1918 the 4L issued a monthly Bulletin with Volume 1 No.1 published in March of that year.



The eight page document gives a glimpse into the tenor of the times and includes an article entitled "How Spruce Became a Forest King" that presents a brief history of the use of spruce, and the tough, lightweight lumber it provides, as well as the challenges associated with logging the wet country that its growth habits favored.

(Editor's note: A copy of the Bulletin was provided by the McCleary Museum's Charles Fattig.)

It was spruce's use in the construction of the airplanes of the era that made it of vital military importance in WWI.

The Bulletin also includes a summary of the regulations governing the lumber industry and a listing of the salaries earned by timber industry workers.

The wage schedule for logging camps and sawmills was particularly fascinating; high climbers were the highest paid hourly wage earners in a logging camp earning an impressive 80 cents per hour. In sawmills it was the millwright at 67.5 cents per hour that topped the wage scale.

A variety of columns meant to inspire and inform were also included in the initial Bulletin.

The tragic tenor of the times manifest itself via a list of the casualties suffered by the 4L membership in the performance their patriotic duty in 1917.

(Editor's note: It appears evident that the listing of "Alma" as a location is a typo of Elma. Fortson, Washington was near the current city of Darrington in Snohomish County.)

An additional column entitled "The Value of a Malcontent" was also included in issue 1.

Photos of both follow.

#### CASUALTIES

Andrew Holmes, Member No. 34,270, Local No. 22, District No. 5, was accidentally killed while in the performance of his duty February 27, near Elma, Wash. He was employed by the Saginaw Timber Company, and was helping to load a car of logs at the time of the accident. One end of a log swung out over the car bunk and struck him.

J. Topett, Member No. 32,413, Local No. 114, District No. 5, was accidentally killed while in the performance of his duty during the week ending March 2nd, near Tenino, Wash. He was employed by the Badger Lumber Company and was killed while unloading a train of logs.

Axel Olson, Member No. 61,457, Local No. 19, District No. 5, was accidentally killed while in the performance of his duty March 26, near Alma, Wash. He was employed by the Saginaw Lumber Company and was crushed to death by a falling tree.

Fred English, member No. 46,258, Local No. 69, District No. 7, was accidentally killed while in the performance of his duty March 20th. He was employed by the McCaughey Mill Company at Fortson, Wash.

#### THE VALUE OF A MALCONTENT.

The man who raises a peek of potatoes is doing more for civilization and humanity at this time than all the malicious malcontents who befoul the woods with their traitorous theories. The man who chops a spruce tree for aircraft material against the Hun is doing more for his fellow workers throughout the world than ten thousand soap-box orators who confine their efforts at "liberty" and "freedom" to noise and conversation.

The ad below also appeared in the initial edition.



Prior to being terminated in 1938, The Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen was credited with helping to defeat Germany and commended for their effort in bringing an end to the influence of the Wobblies in the northwest's timber industry. (Wikipedia.com).



## Harbor Roots

### The Gleeson Family By D. White

Growing up in Montesano, I remember being favorably impressed by the nice little man who worked at the Grocery store in town. His name was Andy Gleeson. He and his wife lived in a house that fronted East Pioneer, just a half block from our home in the early 1950's. (Editor's note: The Gleeson home sat on the land now occupied by the Montesano Fire Department).

I became more familiar with the Gleeson family when I met Mr. Gleeson's grandson, Mike Turner. Mike and I were classmates and we have now been friends for almost 70 years. Mike's wonderful mother Rosemary was one of Andy and Maggie Gleeson's children.

My Gleeson connection and interest was tweaked a little this past month when a reader revealed that the barn that I had identified as belonging to Ed Long in the last issue of the Historian, was actually built in 1898 by Michael Gleeson. The barn was initially owned by the builder and later by his son Andy. In consideration of all of the above, I decided that it was time to devote a Harbor Roots column to the Gleeson family.

(Editor's note: See the correction regarding the identification of the barn in this issue.)

All of Grays Harbor's Gleesons (including Michael, Andy, Rosemary and her son Mike) appear to be descended from Michael and Mary Gleeson of County Tipperary, Ireland through two of their eight children. Their oldest child, Timothy, was born in 1805 near Silvermines in County Tipperary, Ireland. He married Judith Ryan and lived his entire life there. He passed away in 1880.

The other Gleeson from whom Grays Harborites can claim descendancy was Michael and Mary's younger son James.

James was born December 21st 1822 in County Tipperary and died in his Satsop Valley home on March 21st 1889.

(The Montesano Vidette 31 March 1889)

It was James (sometimes referred to as James Sr.) who arrived on America's shores in 1847, settling first in Vermont before moving to Buffalo, New York and then to New Orleans. It was from that location that he later moved to the west coast, eventually settling in Washington Territory. (Obituary, Grays Harbor Washingtonian, 30 March 1899)

In 1858 James Gleason traveled to Olympia and then settled in what is now Mason County, farming on Beck Prairie for a few years. Gleason found the land

to be less fertile than he preferred and, on the 17th of March 1863, he homesteaded a 160 acre parcel on the Satsop River. (Family records and Obituary, Grays Harbor Washingtonian, 30 March 1899)

In 1870 Gleason married Ann Flannery who had come to the Satsop from Clare County Ireland in 1868. (Obituary, Montesano Vidette March 31st 1899)



James Gleeson 1822-1899 (The Montesano Vidette)

The Gleesons became successful farmers and well respected members of the pioneer community in Chehalis County. The family eventually included six children; sons Michael J., Sarsfield F. (Fieldy) and James Richard and daughters Marguerite, Mary Anna and Helena E. (Nellie).

By 1893 James and Ann Gleeson's Satsop Valley Farm had expanded to four hundred acres, with much of it under cultivation.

(The Montesano Vidette 27 October 1893)

The Gleesons ran a diversified farm and references to their production and sales included; milk, beef, horses, hogs, chickens, sheep, apples, pears, oats, potatoes, Timothy and other hay, rutabagas, beets, carrots, etc.

(The Montesano Vidette 1891, 1892, 1893)

In 1894 the Vidette indicated that the first Hawthorn tree in the area may also have been brought to Chehalis county by the Gleesons.



Apparently, they had transported its roots from Ireland. (The Montesano Vidette 1 June 1894)

James Gleeson was not only a highly regarded farmer but the Vidette also described him as a "bright man who had quite a bit of education."

As a result, James Gleeson was appointed the first county school superintendent in Chehalis County and served for many years." (The Montesano Vidette 1 Nov 1912)

In the same article Gleeson was described as "a lovable sort of man, honest to the core and neighborly...everybody's friend" but, he was no "pushover" and was also known for his Irish temperament.

On 22 December 1895 the Vidette related an incident in which a Northern Pacific Railroad section crew tore down a new portion of fence that Gleeson had erected near railroad tracks on a 31 acre parcel of school land that he had acquired from the state.

Washington State had apparently never paid for the right of way and when the railroad crew disassembled Gleeson's new fence, he definitely got "his Irish up". Although a complete account describing the culmination of the dispute could not be located, there can be little doubt that when Gleeson, in describing the fracas to the Vidette, was quoted as saying; "the end is not yet!" And he meant it!

The Gleeson family had other dust-ups with the railroad and the state (The Montesano Vidette 16 December 1892) and in 1902 the Vidette indicated that appraisers had been selected to decide an amount that should be paid to some of the Gleasons for damage to their lands. (Editor; Note the misspelling of the surname.)

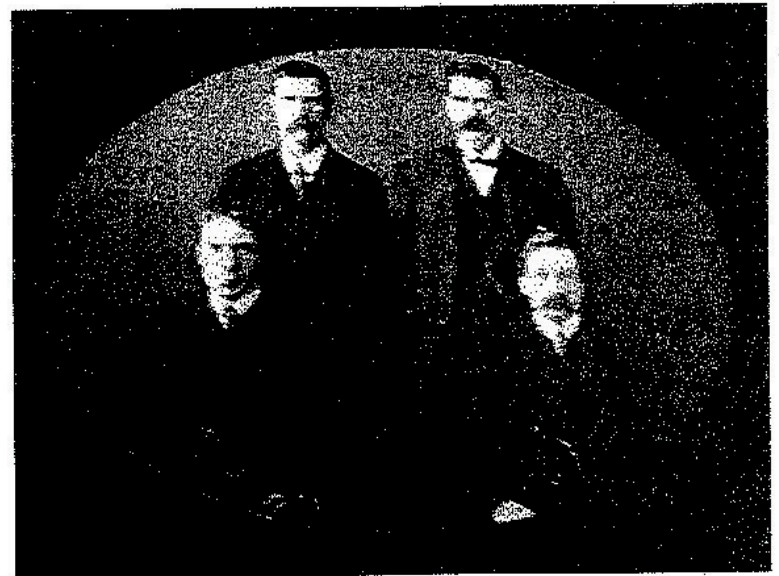
James Gleeson may have been a little cantankerous, at times, when it came to government encroachment or perceived negligence, but he also had a big heart. William O'Leary, a fellow Irishman who was one of Grays Harbor's earliest settlers spent the last years of his life as a guest in the Gleeson's Satsop Valley home. (The Montesano Vidette 6 September 1901)

James Gleeson first returned to Ireland in 1888 to visit a gravely ill brother who passed away prior to his arrival. When James returned from Ireland he was accompanied by a nephew Timothy Ryan and young man named James T. Gleeson.

James T. was the son of a Gleeson neighbor in the Silvermines area and, although the neighbor possessed the same surname, no direct relationship was acknowledged. It seems likely, however, that there must have been some familial connection.

James and Ann were eventually joined in Chehalis County by four nephews (Daniel, James, Michael and Patrick) and two nieces (Sarah and Johanna). Interestingly, Daniel age 19 and his sister Sarah age 10, had traveled to join the Gleeson clan all the way from Ireland to Satsop, accompanied only by strangers. (The Vidette 17 July 1875).

All six nieces and nephews were born near Silvermines in County Tipperary to James's older brother Timothy and his wife Judith Ryan Gleeson. Of the six, only Patrick Gleeson returned to Ireland to live out his life. (The Montesano Vidette 24 Dec 1904) The remaining siblings all married and settled in Washington.



The sons of Timothy and Judith Ryan Gleeson (L-R) Rear: Michael and Daniel Front: Patrick and James (photo courtesy of Betty Perry)

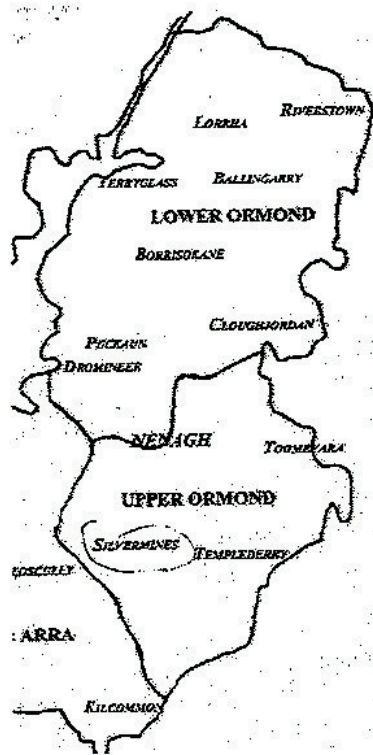
According to [Wikipedia.com](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silvermines) Silvermines lies immediately north of the Silvermine Mountain Range and takes its name from the lead, zinc, copper and silver mines located nearby.

The Silvermines home of Timothy and Judith Gleeson and their six children is reputedly shown in the photo below.





This map shows the location of Silvermines in the upper Ormond Barony of County Tipperary in south-central Ireland. Silvermines is near the city of Nenagh, the second largest city in Tipperary. Nenagh was once the site of a traditional fair and the meaning of the name is “The Fair of Ormond” referring to the Barony. (Wikipedia.com) (Editor’s note: The photo and map were provided by Betty Perry.)

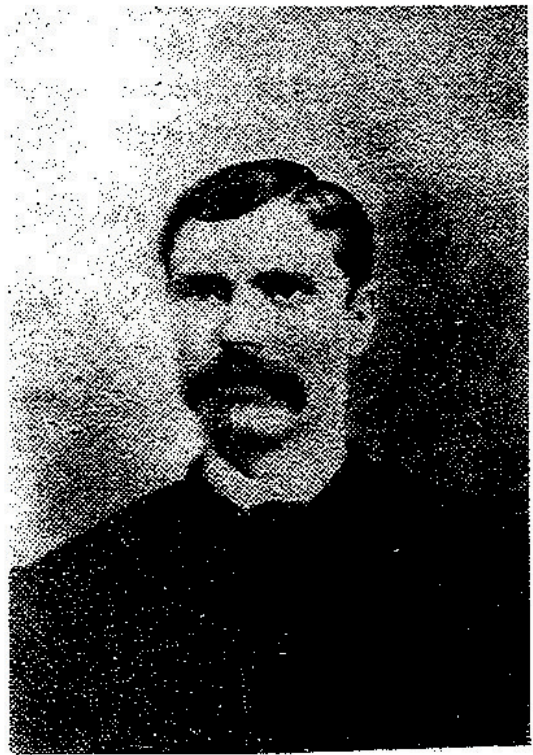


James Gleeson’s nephews Daniel and James also developed farms in the Satsop Valley and a house that Daniel built is still standing. This current photo shows the Satsop Valley home with owner (and descendant) Betty Perry standing in front of it.



Michael Gleeson, brother of Daniel and James, arrived in Chehalis County from Ireland prior to 1880 and moved in with Daniel. After attending

school in what is now Brady, Michael took up a timber claim near Humptulips. Michael eventually sold the claim after proving up on it and purchased land for a farm in the Wynooche Valley. Michael Gleeson married Margaret “Maggie” Griffin in 1889 and they lived on their Wynooche farm for many years. (The Elma Chronicle May 4 1939)

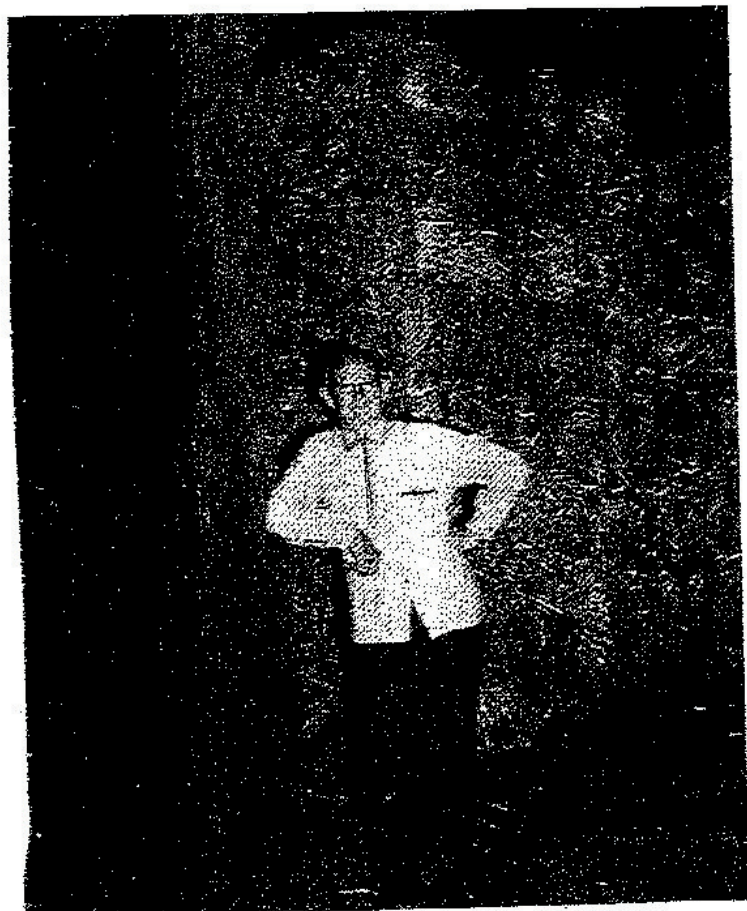


Michael Gleeson 1872-1934  
(The Vidette)

The Gleeson family, like most early pioneers, suffered a number accidents as a result of the inherent hazards associated with living in the rural northwest. In addition to the illnesses and near drownings the family experienced, in 1888 Michael Gleeson was attempting to fall a tree when it split and shot off the stump directly back into him. Gleeson was badly bruised but survived. (The Vidette 8 June 1888)

1897 was a particularly difficult year for the Gleeson family. Timothy Ryan, James Gleeson’s nephew, died tragically when he slid from a load of oats and was impaled by the handle of a pitchfork. Earlier that same year, nine year old Dan Gleeson (son of James Gleeson jr.) jumped from a fence and landed on a Scythe blade, nearly severing his foot from his ankle. (The Vidette 2 October, 28 May 1897) Michael and Maggie Gleeson eventually developed their land, just two miles west of Montesano, into a prosperous 240 acre farm. Their son, Michael Andrew (Andy) Gleeson is shown on the following page, in a Vidette photo, many years later, inside of the Wynooche Valley barn that his father built.





ANDREW GLEESON is showing one of the upright timbers in the barn built by his father in 1896. These uprights measure 18 x 18 inches and are sunk six feet into the ground. They are still solid today.

(Editors note: See in this issue of the Historian an article entitled "Huzzah!". It includes a correction and a new discovery related to the "Welcome to Wynooche Valley" sign.)

In the six generations since the Gleeson family's arrival in Chehalis County, they have become intertwined with the members of many Harbor families including those of the Foss, Dimitio, Cooney, Turner, Law, Johnson, Baker, Baxter, Leybold, Landers, Sutton, Busby, Hubbard, Wakefield, Sackrider, McPhee, Skok, Ryan, Halverson, Bailey, Welch, Griffin and others. In researching the Gleeson family in Chehalis County (later Grays Harbor), it soon becomes apparent that the surname has been spelled as either Gleeson or Gleason. So, which was it?

The answer is, apparently, both!

Various print "media" played a significant role in creating confusion over the spelling of the name by referring to individuals at various times using each of the two different spellings. Even the venerable Vidette contributed to the confusion, referring to James Gleeson Sr. as James Gleason in several instances. (Vidette 1 May, 4 August, 1885, 25 May 1888, 16 December 1892.)

A favored family story related by Betty (Foss) Peary is that mail was often delivered to the wrong Gleeson family during the early days of Chehalis County and so at least one family member altered

the spelling of their last name to Gleason in an effort to reduce confusion for the mail carrier.

It also appears that other individuals in the Gleeson family may have altered the spelling of their name at various other times for reasons unknown.

Andy Gleeson, my best friend's grandfather, used the Gleeson spelling throughout his life but his birth certificate shows his surname as "Gleason".

It seems likely that the spelling was simply an error made by the individual who recorded his birth.

While the spelling of the Gleeson surname can be a conundrum for those investigating the roots of the family, it is additionally perplexing that the Irish Catholic family repeatedly used the male given names; James, Michael, Daniel and Timothy, over and over again throughout several generations.

(Editor's note: It appears that some Gleeson descendants have, understandably, been just as confused as the rest of us regarding their numerous ancestors with the same given names.)

Because of the spelling issues and the repetitive nature of the given names in the Gleeson family, reattach can be a bit of a challenge for those who attempt to investigate its origins..

It appears, however, that despite its complexity, we can all rest assured that each of the Michael, Daniel, Timothy and James Gleeson/Gleason 's who have lived what is now Grays Harbor were or are, in fact, members of the same wonderful Irish family!

More importantly, at least from this writer's point of view, we have all have been blessed because they chose our "neck of the woods" as their home!

Faith and Beggorah!

(Editor's note: Many thanks to Daniel Gleeson descendant Betty Foss Perry and McCleary historian Charles Fattig for their assistance in providing information for this article.)

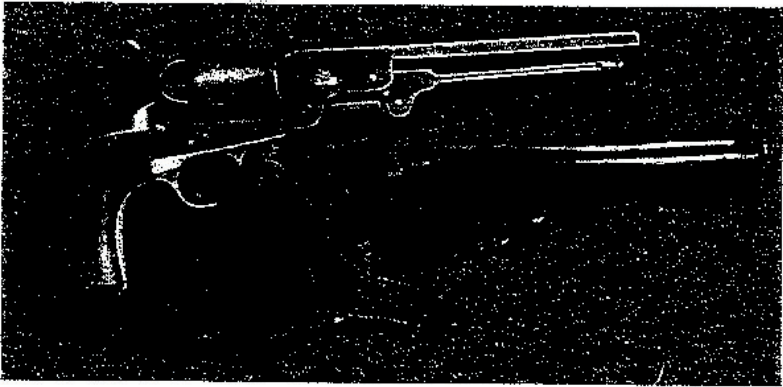
## Featured Facets

### The Civil War by D White

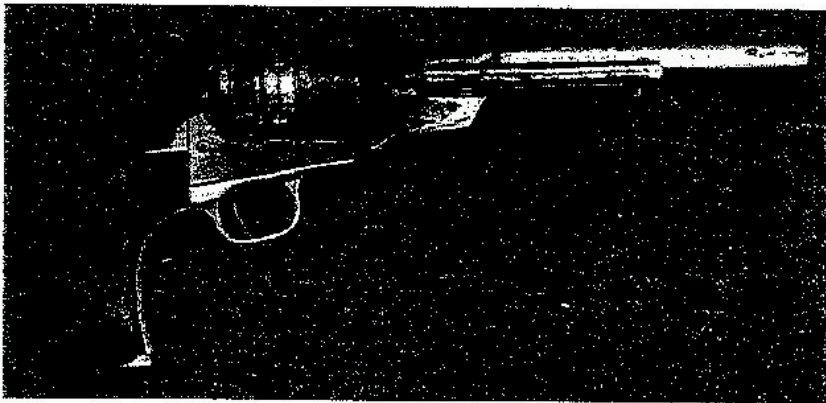
The Patricia Clemons CVHS Museum does not possess a great number of Civil War relics. Those we number in our collection are, however, fascinating and each has a history related to the Civil War veterans who were either among the earliest pioneers in our area or the ancestors of those who eventually settled here. According to McCleary's Charles Fattig, who has done extensive research on the Civil War veterans who have lived in our area, over 150 Civil War vets actually made Chehalis/Grays Harbor County their home. Many are at rest in the cemeteries that dot our landscape and it is in their honor that we present the following pictorial display.



Museum visitors are often fascinated by our two Civil War era pistols.  
The first, an 1851 .36 caliber Colt pistol and holster, belonged to William S. Twidwell and traveled the Oregon Trail with him.  
The second is an 1860 .44 caliber Army Colt. It is an 1861 type 1 Richards Conversion and was an heirloom of Satsop's Jewett family.



1851 .36 Caliber Colt

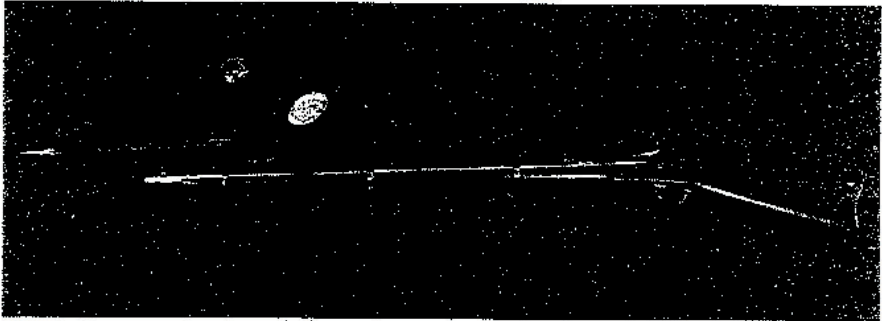


1860 Army Colt .44

The Grand Army of the Republic certificate below was donated to the museum by the Montesano VFW and commemorates the Civil War service of Robert G. Carlile who served in the Illinois Infantry and passed away in Montesano in 1924. Mr Carlile is buried in Wynoochee Cemetery.



The foremost relic in our Civil War collection is, however, a Model 1861 Springfield Musket with an ammunition pouch and bayonet that are all in pristine condition. Donated by members of Oakville's Rosmond family, the musket was modified from a cap and ball to a trap door 50-70 model in 1866. The fact that the musket, bayonet, ammo belt and pouch have all have survived in good condition, along with the two large brass badges, is remarkable.



(Editor's note: Many Thanks to Montesano resident Rich Jacobson for his assistance in identifying, restoring and appraising these relics for the museum.)

**Huzzah! We Have it!** by D. White

The old adage, "You know what you know, but you don't know what you don't know," certainly seems to apply to my recent article featuring a barn roof with a Welcome to Wynooche Valley sign on its roof. (see Historian: Volume 37 No 2)

One of our intrepid readers (who has some history with the structure) has informed us that the barn pictured was not Ed Long's but is actually a barn that was built in 1898 from a single mammoth log by Wynooche pioneer Michael Gleeson. (Editors note; See this edition's Harbor Roots article on the Gleeson family.) At the time the photo was taken, the owners of the Gleeson barn were Morris and Edna Dagnen. Apparently, the sign was the idea of well known Montesano attorney Jimmy Stewart who sought permission from the Dagnen family to have the sign mounted on the barn roof.

Stewart commissioned Montesano High School Industrial Arts instructor Mark Phillips to create the sign and Phillips did so utilizing four 4x8 sheets of Plywood.

Museum photos curator Mike Crites also received another bit of input in response to the barn article and it was a real "doozy"! In response to our plea for help in locating a photo of the arched "Welcome to the Wynooche Valley" sign, former Valley resident and CVHS member Bob Dick sent in two photos that had been shared with him by his MHS Class of 1964 high school chum, Mike Jones.

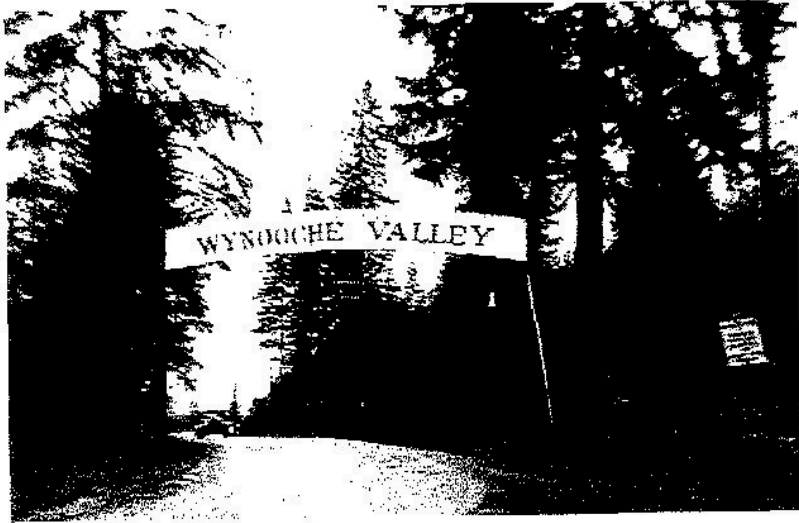


Jones, the son of Gordon and Joan Parker Jones, grew up on a farm near the Valley's east entrance. Both photos show a Valley entrance sign but one pictures the treasured (and long sought) arched "Welcome to the Wynooche Valley" version that graced the Valley's entrance during the 1950's and 60's!

As marked, the photo was developed in 1958 and is the very sign that we have been seeking!

You are our heroes Bob & Mike!!

Huzzah!!



#### **What's Happening at the Museum?** by D. White

It seems like we are always asking for help but we remind readers that we are a non-profit, volunteers-only organization with yearly budget needs in excess of \$7000.

Just to maintain what we currently have and do, a membership of at least 125 dues paying members is needed. Currently, we have less than 90. So, if you are a member and have not sent in your fiscal year 2019-2020 dues to Becky Crites, please do so. Additionally, if you have family, friends, neighbors or business associates who want to help preserve the history of this wonderful slice of western Washington, encourage them to join!

Our dues are cheap and tax deductible and no one who joins is required to volunteer..... ever!

Recently, several individuals have come forward to assist us in our effort to preserve and share the history of the Chehalis Valley. They are all contributing in significant ways and we are extremely grateful. One of them, John Marchese of Montesano, has been appointed by our board to fulfill the remainder of a two year term as CVHS secretary.

Assistant curator Gina Blum is continuing to reorganize and upgrade our historical display cases. Mike Crites has now scanned more than 15,000

images and Mike, John Marchese and Bob Blum are working to improve our museum's storage capacity. Rob Kirkwood and Darrel White have made progress on the Patricia Clemons display at the museum's entrance and Lester Van Brunt is producing a steady stream of signage that enhances our museum and collection. Bob Blum is installing our new computer and, in concert with Vice President and Museum Curator JoAnn Yost, will soon have our new collections software functioning. Darrel and Linda White once again led the effort to ensure that the CVHS museum participated in Montesano's city-wide garage sale. The sale generated proceeds of several hundred dollars for the museum and appreciation is extended to Dorothy Thorson, Pat Bossard, Bruce Hooper, JoAnn Yost, Mike & Becky Crites, Gina & Bob Blum, John Marchese and everyone else who assisted with preparation, sales and clean-up.

Our museum is still looking for mannequins, especially those of men and children. We need several so that we can display our historic clothing. We are also asking that readers who have photos or memorabilia of car dealerships or service stations that were located in the eastern portion of Grays Harbor County prior to 1955 contact Darrel White or Mike Crites or drop them off at the museum. Next Quarter's issue of the Historian will feature photos and documents related to the dealerships and service stations.

The next CVHS Board Meeting will be held at 4 pm on Wednesday October 2nd in the museum basement. Members and others interested are invited to attend.

### **Chehalis Valley Historical Society**

#### **Officers and Board:**

*President: Bruce Hooper*

*Vice President: JoAnn Yost*

*Secretary: John Marchese*

*Treasurer: Becky Crites*

*Board Members: Ruth Foss, Darrel White, Randy*

*Beerbower, Dan Stone*

#### **CVHS SUPERVISORS**

*Physical Facilities/Maintenance - Bruce Hooper*

*Newsletter - Darrel White*

*Museum Curator/Tours Coordinator - JoAnn Yost*

*Assistant Curators/Displays- Gina Blum/Pat Bossard*

*Curator of Photos - Mike Crites*

*Volunteer Coordinator- Ruth Foss*

*Technology Director - Dan Stone*

*Housekeeping.- Linda White*

*Funding/Grants - Dennis Brumbaugh*



CVHS Museum

703 W Pioneer

Montesano, Wa 98563

**To:**

**CVHS Sponsoring businesses:**

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BC Farms 444 Cloquallum Rd, Elma

Thriftway - Pick-Rite 211 E Pioneer Ave Montesano

Stewart & Stewart Law Offices- 101 1st St Montesano

The Shirt House 2301 Simpson Ave, Aberdeen

East County Thriftway 325 S 5th St, Elma