

**Clara Jorgensen, John Jorgensen, and Peter Jorgensen
Narrators**

**Steve Trimble and three unidentified students
Interviewers**

**December 8, 1974
Askov, Minnesota**

[Note: There are two male speakers and I can't distinguish their voices, they both have very thick accents, so I have labeled the male voices simply as "M". It is possible there is a second female speaker but I can't be sure so I have used CJ throughout. Steve Trimble's voice is very clear so I have used "ST" for him without confusion but there are younger interviewers there too, both male and female, and I have used "?" to identify them. - Barb]

CJ: Yeah, that was in 19 or was it 1936 I think it was I was in [unclear] in Sioux City Iowa...

M: [Unclear]

CJ: And I remember you know the hall there, what a hall there we had in Sioux City Iowa was absolutely filled, and there was a lot of sharecroppers from the south and I know one of our delegates from out east of Hinckley was there, he was kind of a, he didn't understand you know as well as some of us did and he wanted when they took pictures you know they had these guys come and have their pictures taken and they said no we want to go home, we want to be able to go home because if they had their pictures their lives wouldn't be worth five cents, killed, you know, lynched. And up here was sort of a repetition of what I said, they had their penny sales, they had their other sales on the farms you know with the stock, they had the milk strike with the well you know turned their milk or their trucks around, they didn't and they dumped the milk and there was these, a unity among the farmers and the workers that, I know they were on strike in the cities and the farmers collected truckloads of food to take down to the strikers which then since that time it's a big business as far as we're concerned is to drive a wedge between the workers and the farmers and so that there would no understanding of their problems because they are pretty equal as far as the workers and the farmers, they're just working for a living, that's what it amounts to and we've had also the People's Lobby in Minnesota at the state capitol, before that they had had a demonstration I believe to demonstrate the plight of the farmers, they took a, what was it they had down there, a goat and I seen the pictures before I was very active in it, where they have demonstrated the plight of the farmers and then we, there was a thousand people in the People's Lobby in 1936.

ST: Could you talk about when you first did become active, like this was the first...

CJ: Well there again we started out with [unclear] Farmers League, you mean Holiday? We started out with the United Farmers League and then it went into the Holiday here and we had a big membership here, in fact Pine County was known as the most militant county in the entire, in

Minnesota because of their leadership of we had a good organization here, not too [unclear], German but we'd just let them be and we just had the support of people who did use some tactics there I think which was very good that we tried to get rid of a lousy chairman, we would have split, you know there had been dissension but here we could keep a sort of a oh what should I say...

M: Unity.

CJ: Unity, we kept this unity and we were able then to have the support of a lot a lot of people to pass the resolutions that we [unclear] action that we took and it was, it was a lot of show of strength the whole Holiday movement is that when we went down to, went to the capital it was a movement of strength because it was so many people and this was I think and was, she writes so much about, it's a thing that give us the power. But I just, I wasn't with, I think you were with to one of the, down with the health project...

M: [Unclear] were having a meeting over at [unclear]

CJ: That's Brad wasn't, John Brad who was the president of Land of Lakes was not sympathetic to the farmers you know even though he was supposed to be the head of the Land of Lakes Cooperative Creameries you know and they were I mean as far as the Land of Lakes is concerned, in my estimation has always been a corporation, really, it's not really what the co-ops are all about and, which is to help [unclear] really the ones that are down on the lower totem pole and not the ones that are higher and [unclear] This was Brad's way of you know I mean he got good wages and he didn't really care.

ST: What were conditions like in Pine County that it would be so militant?

CJ: Well everybody was losing their homes you know they couldn't even, the cream just didn't pay for nothing and that was a time when we didn't have electricity, few had phones, we didn't have tractors, we had horses and so, and still your income was so you couldn't even, with just a little cream truck you couldn't even exist and that, a lot of the, oh there were some farmers that thought oh they were well off because they had their farm paid for but there wasn't even enough to eat with the income you got say nothing of paying taxes so they lost their farms because they couldn't pay taxes.

?: Like if you had a decent, let's say you had a decent crop that it was to your expense to get rid of it almost wasn't it, if you wanted to bring it to market?

CJ: Yeah, it was hardly anything you know I mean so you got, what was it eight cents a dozen for eggs but at that it was down to eighteen, twenty cents a pound for butterfat you know...

M: [Unclear] grew a lot of potatoes [unclear] and rutabagas of course and Swan had his packs of rutabagas and potatoes. Potatoes was sold as low as 25 cents a hundred and rutabagas were well [unclear] I think was four dollars but you, it wasn't necessarily a sale for them.

CJ: No, that's the same way with potatoes, you'd farm our crops and we couldn't sell them and then we had the drought on top of it so our crops are not very big but then you couldn't even sell what

you had, this is where of course the crunch was that you and of course people during the Depression in the cities could not buy either, they had no money cause at the same time they were, it was a depression all over and people were out of work and...

M: I don't know what the price of meat in the cities was in those days, but I think you could get some real good fancy cuts of meat for 15 cents a pound.

CJ: See we sold, during this time we sold the...

M: They didn't do too much good to the man who didn't have a job you know and that was millions of people sitting without a job. As a matter of fact there was a great amount of people in the city who also lost their homes because they couldn't pay any taxes.

?: What kind of involvement did you take part in [unclear]

CJ: Well in the Farmers Holiday and...

?: Like did you [unclear]

CJ: Farmers Union or Farmer Labor Party.

?: What kind of activities would you participate in [unclear]

M: Yeah, we had well we had our you know our executive committee of the [unclear] the Holiday and the executive committee and then we had our monthly meetings and then if there was anything that'd come up see then they would all sort of, almost word of mouth you know and people would get together in those days, somebody had a car and they put a little, 25 cents worth of gas in they'd go and participate in, you know stopping a sale or going down to the courthouse and seeing that the land wasn't sold and but of course after a while see they didn't, it was more or less, then we got a moratorium and then of course I mean there was no use in trying to have a sale because there was nobody going to be at it see so they get tired of having them, so that was stopped, so that's what really these kind of activities was always on, kind of on the alert kind of thing that you after a while there that you see to it that nobody was forced out and these, so you kind of watching for things to see how things can and then if they did well then people were right there, they came by the, some way or another they managed to get around those days with like I say and there again there's something that was different of course it was different on the farms years ago than it is now, people were quite concerned about each other's you know the neighbors, everybody helped each other you know like if they'd be trying to build a house or build a barn or they went and had a bee, they had to haul their milk...cream to town, in those days it was cream. They took turns you know, the farmers to drive the teams and then they'd pick up each other's and this kind of a more of a friendly feeling toward than there is nowadays, which is sort of, people are coming a little bit back to again, I think there's, it's been so much dog eat dog type of a thing.

M: Well how many farmers were there in this community for instance, there was well over 200 farmers in the let's say in the, between 1910 and 1940, now there's about half a dozen.

CJ: No, it's more than that.

M: Well what do you call farmers.

CJ: Oh there's more than that but it is pretty down you know, people they just, even now they can't make it you know so but they had an alternative, they'd been able to get a job in the city or someplace else but there you had no other alternative, you had no job you could get and well like selling an animal I know one of our friends, he has a check, he saved it, a check stub or whatever, for a cow, a big big cow, \$7 and something, some people they had to pay money and you heard this over the radio just recently, of a guy that shipped a calf and by the time everything was deducted he got 66 cents. Another one, that was on the radio, another one sold a couple of calves and ended up with 25 cents...

M: And then we have, somebody out here that sent the calf down, he got a bill, when he got it down there, there wasn't enough to pay transportation.

CJ: This is now.

M: That's now.

ST: It's starting to happen again.

M: Sure it's the same thing.

CJ: Yeah. Same thing because you know prices are so depressed for the farmers and this is the thing see, this is what he starts out with, the difference between you know the little bit that we get and what the people have to pay.

?: Who's making a big profit then?

CJ: You know the ones that are getting rich, it isn't me. We were figuring out, we get about 11 cents a quart for milk, for [unclear] that is it goes to manufacturing milk, it's B milk you know, B, but it's 3.7 plus, your milk that you buy in bottles is about 3.2 I think or less, we don't have [unclear], it used to be very [unclear] 3.5 but then they got that fixed so it was 3.2, but ours is 3.7 which brings you know I mean the content of the butter is what brings the price up so anyhow that's eleven cents and then we have to haul it ourselves so let's say there's 10 cents left but that has to go to the feed, the hay, the you know minerals that they get and the work, there isn't anything left is there, I don't see much...

M: No, it's not in the best [unclear] their worth.

CJ: There's not, we were just figuring it out just for the fun of it. But this is the same thing that, a niece of ours had bought, they bought, oh a little better than a year, they bought two, four feed cows, at \$400 and they lost one here and then they sold three and they got, and they were about 1300 pounds apiece, and they got \$420 for all three of them so I think if people in the city can start to find a, feel or know what we're getting and what they're paying, that they're going to say now, no way, we can go out and buy it at the farmers or something, and I think that's what happened, the locker plants have never been so wild as they are now, everybody's buying animals and having them slaughtered because it is just, this is always the way that, that was the same thing and these land

companies you know they sold the land up here for a high price you know for the type of land, the land companies, when it was bought, and then of course then the people couldn't pay then you take it back again, or that is, then the whole, just about every farm [unclear] would have gone if it wasn't for the Farmer's Holiday.

ST: Can you think, like tell us maybe a specific sale that you remember or a specific action you know going down to the courthouse, or something kind of really spell it out in detail.

CJ: I think, well...

ST: Or some...

M: [Unclear] I [unclear] one incident that we have to, just one sale that was [unclear] down in Pine City. We was, were called down you know to stop the foreclosure and I can't remember now how many we were but we were a hell of a lot of farmers, it was all blocked all the way around the courthouse and the halls were packed with farmers and the sheriff was in his yard and he couldn't get out because he's out for screwing the people [unclear], and [unclear] the sale was 10 o'clock, and at 10 o'clock he came on and he couldn't come out and sell the farm and that's the way it went down. We stayed there long enough so when there was, I don't remember just how many, how long time, I think it was about half an hour or fifteen minutes, then it had to be over with and so when that time was up, okay you can go now, and [unclear] and the farmers went home.

ST: Well how did you like, you said a lot of people didn't have phones, how would you get everyone organized?

M: Oh we can organize all right that quick too.

CJ: People went, see they had these local creamers for one thing you know and so people hauled in their milk you know, you could always leaflet that you know the day before and this happened in every little town they had these people come in with sleds, they liked to read a little bit waiting to get their cream unloaded you know but this is what happened and that's one of the ways that it was very quick to get because people they'd come in with their...

ST: They'd come in every day you mean.

CJ: Well every other day, every other day.

M: [Unclear]

CJ: No, every other day.

ST: You'd go down and leaflet them.

CJ: Yeah, it was simple word of mouth, kids you've got kids you know and you could walk, use your feet you know which people did, so it wasn't that much you know a problem especially when you were young, people, I used to walk to school many a time when I was a kid, you know along the railroad tracks, it was a long way, but people used to walk.

ST: You mentioned too the United Farmers League, could you, I've never heard of that before whereas I had heard of the Holiday, could you tell a little bit about it?

CJ: Well it was more or less what she talked about here at the beginning where it is the United Farmers League, this was more or less the same kind of an organization except it, it was more or less of a, kind of more like a farmers union type of, more of a permanent kind of a thing, you know that type of a organization, it was kind of the beginning of you know sometimes it takes hold and then it became something a little different like it, this, why it became then like the national farmers holiday was because they took a holiday that they, we don't, you know that you don't ship milk and things like that and it become such a, it just spread like wildfire, it grew up in just such a short of time and that sort of took over for the United Farmers League, but actually it was started on the same principles as the Farmers Holiday, yeah as the Farmers Holiday except that that became the dominant one see, come from all over United Farmers League was mostly I think in the Dakotas and this area, but you see the Holiday went way further than that and became affiliated through [unclear] the sharecroppers, ten...what is it they call them, something with the tenants, sharecroppers and tenants, in that order in the south.

ST: Well how'd you join the Farmers League or how'd you hear of it, through reading or...

CJ: Oh we, no I think that was by word of mouth, you know I mean you knew somebody you know that told us and we joined the Farmers League. There was, well it really started over I think in, around here [unclear] wasn't it, the [unclear], it seems to me you know [unclear] was come from over here.

M: Well of course the Farm Holiday, there was nothing until the Farm Holiday started here.

CJ: There sure was.

M: Well we had the United Farmers League but that was...

CJ: Yeah.

M: Yeah, but then not here...

CJ: Yeah, sure.

M: Not in [unclear]

CJ: Well what is it, Helman and Kwitner and all them belonged to the United Farmers League...

M: That was [unclear]

M: Yeah.

CJ: Yeah, that's what I say, they were here and it was through here that, see Raino Kantala was here, he spoke to the United Farmers League here in 1936, but you know there was more like say communication between people live than there is now, that is I think there was much more

knowledge of what was really going on, than a lot of people now, nowadays, I think that with all due respect for it I think that this [unclear] set us back a few years. See people don't get together much, they don't read as much, it's really been you know sort of a desert you know as far as reading is concerned, you compare it to reading that people do here and in other countries, it's very little for all the material that we have to read.

ST: Yeah, I get the impression that the farmers, I know like way back with the populists, all the way on really read a lot like in the evenings and things and you can find a lot more varied opinion in reading you know like people from published pamphlets or something whereas if everyone relies on the tv there's only, you know there's only three channels so people who have different views can't, you know you can't have a tv program, you could write a pamphlet, that's sort of its...

CJ: Yeah.

M: Much harder.

CJ: Yeah and you know people were well we say that what'd we call, the necessity was there for, you know inventions you know the necessity, they did you know put out a leaflet, it wasn't that big of a hassle, you just [unclear], printed it, and you know even to print it by hand, pictograph these leaflets and it wasn't, didn't have to be any spectacular, anything spectacular at all.

M: It's quite easy to [unclear] you know because of the local creamery where the farmers come you know [unclear] we massed in there with our leaflets and the farmer, he got lots of time, he come in there, he has to, that'll have to be delivered in the forenoon, that you will be a [unclear] you know, he had time to read them, discuss the matters [unclear].

CJ: Also, we can't forget that we've also been through a McCarthy period here which has done terrible damage to people as far as thinking is concerned, they didn't...

ST: I don't think they, maybe you should go into more detail cause I know what you mean when you say the McCarthy period, but they probably aren't aware of it.

CJ: Well the McCarthy period was in the 1950's and on through, how many years was it that it lasted, six...

?: [Unclear]

CJ: Something like that, just, something like that, that is Joe McCarthy started and he was a real fascist from, and he was Wisconsin and so, to destroy anybody, it didn't make any difference, he'd just call them a communist and he put up such a hysteria in the United States you see that, and there was people that went along, he could get enough along with him so that it became that, what he said well you know like what's this, Chamberlain and no, what this era, in the pumpkin, Hiss, Alger Hiss you know this guy found papers in a pumpkin you know, I mean it was almost fantastic the stuff that could be believed you know, that because that they had the voice to spread all these this here stuff that anybody that they didn't like, they'd just call them a communist and that destroyed them politically forever and anybody that had any different idea, this is how they would fix them see, that

they would just call them a communist whether they, so many of them were far from a communist, they weren't even what we'd call, consider very liberal even, you know, but this is the kind of a thing, it was almost like a, it was like a Hitler Germany you know and books and stuff like that, you can't read, you know this, there were, what you read and also of reporting of people that supposed to be communist and at first they had the trial of the communists during that period too and it was all a, and they got sentenced and they couldn't, couldn't find anything and not one case was a criminal act committed, attributed to any of them but just for what they, ideas they had in their head, there was no acts of violence or anything, but just what they thought and they was, they were jailed. And this is, it was a sort of a terror in the land in those years and well then during that period people didn't talk, they didn't discuss and they didn't dare have an opinion, that was the sad thing because it, so today even you find in a group of oh I would say from the late, from the probably from '45 to '5...near the '60s we have like a silent generation, this is where we're in trouble too as far as our own country is concerned right now because it didn't bring forth the people, the leaders, that it should have, there was a suppression of people in those days so we didn't have, like we, well Roosevelt wasn't that all good, but he was made better because of the action of the people, he gave us, we fought for and this is what we won because, that he, the pressure of the people brings a lot of things, like I say the power of the people is a great thing, like even in these foreclosure sales and all that and so like Roosevelt, we did get a lot of things under him, we had social security, we got REA, and we got TVA, Tennessee Valley Authority, this is supposed to be a cooperative thing, REA is a cooperative electricity you know, electric, electrify the country you know where people didn't have electricity before, they, there was things like government free feed and free seed for the farmers and we did win things there when people were active and then they practically took it, taken everything back from us, away from us since that because of this period of McCarthyism and people didn't talk, didn't...

?: What happened up here during the McCarthy era, like were there people around here that got destroyed by it?

CJ: Well they couldn't very well destroy a farmer you know they could more easily destroy somebody, cause nobody wanted his job, or a farmer's wife, nobody wanted his job I mean so if they put him in prison or anything like that I mean which is you know the kind of stuff they'd like to peddle around so they couldn't have it any harder than the work they did on the farm in those days you know.

?: What happened to organizings of like the '30s during the McCarthy era [unclear] organizers [unclear] the farmers...

CJ: In the '30s?

?: Well the ones who were the organizers then, what happened during the McCarthy era?

CJ: Well, they were sort of by that time I think they were pretty old, but some of them you know that was still working like in the cities, they got destroyed you know, [unclear] there was lots of people in Minneapolis that lost their job, cause somebody called them a communist.

ST: The whole farm, Farmer Labor Party you know got, during the McCarthy period is when it

merged with the Democratic Party and once it was merged then all the radical elements of the Farmer Labor Party were...

CJ: No, this is the 1940's that they merged, what was it...

ST: '48.

CJ: '48, and this was just prior to McCarthy, you know about two years or so, so they really, when the Farmer Labor and Democrats merged then the reactionaries really got a sort of a had a field day because the whole country was going there so they had a chance of purging all the Farmer Laborites, the old Farmer Laborites, Meridel's mother Marian LeSueur, and if you ever heard a good orator she was it, she, she was so unlike Meridel in many ways, very trim and neat person and could she speak.

ST: Did she ever speak up here?

CJ: Ah, did we have her up here, she spoke around the county, yes, cause she went out, she was the kind that today would be saying sex discrimination see with a Selma Sestrom and a Susie Stagberg and I'm sure you've heard of their names before, they...

ST: Don't count on it, the school systems [unclear]

CJ: No, I know but I thought maybe you had gone into with Meridel [unclear] during the Farmer Labor days you know when it was, before they merged with the Democrats there was a Susie Stagberg who was down from Red Wing, there was Selma Sestrom who still lives in the city, there was Marian LeSueur who was Meridel's mother, there was Vienna Johnson who wrote an article in the paper every, the Farmer Labor Leader I think was the name of it, wrote an article every week, real good and my...

END TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

CJ: ...here in Pine County, Farmers Holiday for the farmers and the Workers Alliance but they worked sort of hand in glove and then the Farmer Labor Party, it was all more or less worked together so there was many activities, much doing, the Workers Alliance was for workers, that was for the people that were not on farms, cause they didn't have jobs in those days either.

ST: Well the Farmer Labor Party came, were you here when that had its origins in this county?

CJ: Well, I don't know just when it really got in, I don't remember when it started here in Pine County, see the, there's also before the, before the Farmer Labor Party there was the Non-Partisan League.

ST: Do you remember much about that?

CJ: No, I don't, but my in-laws they did, Aunt Gorchard from Willow River, now she, that was a

time that Lindberg was running for Senator and my son-in-laws mother pinned a, went behind one of the cars and she pinned a Lindberg for Senator advertising on our sheriff's car and he drove down 61 with this on the back of his car, didn't know he had it. But United, yeah, it was a strong United Farmers League where I told you, I have some record on that last time about the, or the tar and feathering that they did here in Minnesota or in Pine County here, two guys here were tarred and feathered you know, it was sort of a anti-German thing you know this tar and feather thing you know, anybody if they were Germans or something like that or said they were supported the Kaiser you know so then but also the, but the, well the Non-Partisan League was a, and it still is in North Dakota, they still have the Non-Partisan League in North Dakota, that's part of their election you know, there's the Democrats, the Republicans and the Non-Partisan League used to have a very big voice in North Dakota, if you didn't have the support of the Non-Partisan League you just didn't get elected, like it was here in Minnesota as far as the Farmer Labor Party was concerned, see they had the Republicans, the Democrats and the Farmer Laborites before they merged. The Democrats got about five percent of the vote in Minnesota. They had the patronage you see, patronage comes through the Post Office you know and stuff like that so they'd, they had, they kept it going I think because of the patronage but as far as people it was about 5% of the vote, it was all [unclear]. So the Democrats, it was very bad thing for the Democrats and the Farmer Labors to have merged, you see that was because of the Roosevelt era see because of you know being more progressive and then they merged you know which they should have not sunk their identity into the Democratic but be an independent party then it would have been much better for Minnesota if they had because this way it was taken over by a lot of the reactionaries...

M: And I don't think Mr. Humphrey would ever have gotten to where he is today if it wasn't part of the merged [unclear] company or to ordinances.

ST: He was one of the big guys who purged all the former Farmer Labor leaders out of the Party once he got in.

CJ: Yeah.

M: Him and...

CJ: Orville Freeman.

M: Orville Freeman. Orville Freeman I understand went to work for [unclear]

ST: Well did you go to any penny sales or things like that yourself?

CJ: I didn't, I didn't, my dad did, but I didn't.

M: I don't think I ever, I don't remember but I don't think...

ST: But you were active on committees and things during the Holiday?

CJ: Oh yes, [unclear]. I was always on something...

M: [Unclear] was always sent as some delegate to something...

CJ: I, not alone did we have a county organization but we had a town too so...

ST: Could you talk like a lot of times for me anyway there is stuff written on the Farm Holiday and it's all sort of you know the national, not the national but the big state wide sorts of things, but I don't have a very good sense of how things, how decisions were made on a local level and you know sort of the real workings of I mean there's the written out structure you know you had this and you had a chairman and you had the delegates and all that, but how did the meeting operate and what kinds of feelings were there.

CJ: Well, I don't know just how to answer that except that you know we, everybody would think about what they were going to, the county meeting you know, once a month, so they would think of what kind of resolutions they should have, what should be taken up and stuff like that and so this was kind of thrashed out and then they was [unclear] went along with the ones that were, that went to the county meeting and that's the same thing at the county meeting, it was very, people come in, there wasn't a meeting but there wasn't a resolution you know, there was resolutions of the things that's happening you know what's happening so something new comes up so we'd have a resolution acknowledging this new thing that's come up and what should be done about it. And we had a lot of speakers from, come in from out, all over, and even all the, the League Against War and Fascism, the meetings there were [unclear] so we were, you know we have a knowledge of what was transpiring, there was a lot of educational things at least as far as so the people were knowledgeable about a lot of things because there was a lot of education with different that would come in and a lot of the Farmer Laborites, the good Farmer Laborites were also in the Holiday and so the, who was speakers you know so a lot of times we had speakers but this sort of the thing that, that's about the way that it was done, the meetings. It would be just like a Farmers Union meeting now, except they were more militant, they were more aware of what was going on and there was something you could do about, now so many times like the Farmers Union, I know what I, you know what should be done all over the state, but you know my hand, you know how much can I do you know but here was the masses of people that were thinking the same way as you were so you could move people if you think things out and come forth with things you know.

ST: There's really things on a local level you could do that would make a difference whereas today you get together and say well you know we've got to end inflation and say well what should we do you know, there's not much you can do or as much that you can see direct results from.

CJ: Yes, I'll tell you one thing that happened here in Pine County which I'm quite proud of is that we, in the Farmer Labor Party, the chairman of the Farmer Labor Party is my son-in-law's dad [unclear] at that time and there was the Hjalmar Peterson was a candidate and Elmer Benson was a candidate and Elmer Benson was the one that Governor Olson wanted to succeed after he died of cancer and Hjalmar Peterson took over because he was lieutenant governor and so at the county convention Elmer Benson got the endorsement for governor in Pine County and Hjalmar Peterson lived in Askov and couldn't get an endorsement from his own county which killed him I mean which made it that Elmer Benson become our governor and there is no comparison between the quality of the men as far as between Elmer Benson and Hjalmar Peterson. Hjalmar Peterson is an opportunist and that, you know, wishy-washy, but Elmer Benson was a real kind of governor, he was an honest governor whatever else [unclear] like you said, but whatever else he, well you might not always be right but if you're always honest that's the most important thing I think that is what.

ST: Were, okay the reason I'm asking this question sort of more in detail like I go to meetings sometimes and it gets to be where there's you know, excuse me for taking up your time too but you might have questions, well sometimes I get where there's political meetings today and you have a meeting and have 20 people and there always will be 2-3 people it seems recently that'll try to take the whole thing and over and just kind of say well you know here's the answer you people line up and sign up here or something, I was wondering if like at your local meetings there was more of a real sharing of ideas or if there was that too where there'd be two or three that would kind of...

M: Oh yeah it was the same thing too of course but the thing is the progressive forces you know were much stronger you know...

CJ: Yeah, there was more...

M: ...and so let's say those who had a [unclear] reactionary [unclear] things you know they didn't get too far you know.

CJ: But I also know, it doesn't exactly have to be a reactionary but just somebody that sort of dominates but we were pretty, it was in some ways better in those days you know, you could tell somebody, not [unclear] people who when they'd get up to speak they would antagonize people you know, they just had, it weren't because there was anything the matter with the people, they meant well and stuff like that but they just had a way of putting the, you know so we just tell them, don't [unclear] on it you know because he sort of you know would kind of want to speak on everything then and then if it was something that was worthwhile it'd sort of help I mean, who have time you know that it would pass [unclear] and we could tell people honestly you know and they would take it sort of criticism, well don't talk on this, we also used some tactics like with them, some [unclear] was a very dominating type of a person I mean so you know if there was something that really had to be hammered you know down to the finish line see then we had him do it, if it was something that had to sort of be different, you know kind of a little smoother, then his wife'd do it, she just had a way of putting it you know and these are some of the things that is sort of kind of forgotten, I mean I don't see it anymore you know this kind of collective thinking and of how do we best do it to the best of our ability to get the best for [unclear] the people that we can, it was the way of a cooperative venture you know, a cooperative thing, that people they honestly tried to do the very best that they could, they weren't trying for [unclear] you know a lot them, I mean a lot of these dedicated people you know.

ST: Why do you think, if you could answer, you always been so active, or were you always, was there a point at which you suddenly...

CJ: No, but I was quite young and I really think it started with first of all Red [unclear] you know that was when they started to talk about social security so Red [unclear] oh there was editorials and editorials and stuff like that against it and I think that's when I started to think about that it didn't sound bad to me this social security for people you know if they're old and if they're unemployed and things like that, of course now it's about the law of the land but we don't know how few started that you know, but that's actually the way, they wouldn't think of not having the social security, well the fact of it I don't know how we would exist today if people didn't have social security. What would these old people do if they didn't have social security, the little bit that they get. Then of

course we got married right in the depression you know so there was never enough, no money you know, that's a very good educator you know when you don't know where you're going to pay for this or pay for that you know when you have a cream check in a month for about three dollars or something like that you know and eggs, eight cents a dozen and this is kind of a income you have, you kind of, you have a rough go of it, it teaches you, it, you can learn a lot in a short time I tell you which I know a lot of people are going to learn now because of the even in the you know like in the cities, it isn't just in the farm but all these unemployed and in fact [unclear] I says unemployment is rising so fast that a person can't even comprehend it, thousands and thousands get laid off, used to be in hundreds but now it's thousands and thousands you know that come, and what does it mean as far as here like what was it six, over six percent here in Minnesota wasn't it.

M: 6-1/2% they said the other day.

CJ: But that's not the whole story see...

M: I think it's more than that...

CJ: ...but, and that was in November, middle of November, so now another one will come out, but I can't remember how many million, they said how many people that was rather, thousand [unclear] in Minnesota that are without work...

M: But that's just...

CJ: But you see there's many of them that's not, that are not counted as unemployed, the minute that you haven't got a job and you take unemployment, but when your unemployment runs out then you're not counted anymore...

?: You're still unemployed.

CJ: I will never forget Arn Doty, I don't know if you know him, [unclear] he's been with the [unclear], they were, there's four brothers that went through, they wouldn't, they were conscientious objectors and they went to prison in Kentucky and they lived up here for a while, but he lives in the city now, anyhow he was running out of, he got laid off for a job and he was on social security so he wrote to Hubert Humphrey, he says, after another week he says I won't even be a statistic you know, as long as he was having unemployment compensation then he would be at least counted as a statistic but if he didn't have a job you know wasn't, didn't have any money coming in then he wasn't even counted and that's the way with a lot of people they've been looking for work and you know they don't look for work anymore so I'm sure it's much higher, the percentage in Minnesota than they would allow.

ST: You have to be, to be defined as unemployed you have to be actively seeking employment, so if you've given up...

CJ: Or all of those who would take a job if they could, you know if there was a job to be had, just like here oh what was it, about a year ago here they were talking about like in Duluth and I think it was Carlton County there was some of them, were going into, they were getting trained for different

jobs you know, these people that were on welfare, well it was just as silly as can be because there is no jobs to be had so what, they can retrain them all they want to but if there's no jobs to be had, it's just like these engineers in the national, there's so many engineers that were laid off of these oh like Boeing and all these aircraft places and stuff like that so they didn't have a job, they were, we were draining the brains of other countries, especially Great Britain and then we were teaching, or we, then they had to get re-taught so they could be teachers, well a teacher can't get a job.

ST: Could you tell about the People's Lobby you mentioned and just sort of go through cause that's another thing that hasn't been much written on, just sort of like when you found out about it and the trip down and what happened.

CJ: Well there again it was through the organization you know that this was all prepared and who you know trying to get as many people to go as possible and I was one of them and there was another woman from Askov with me, that was there too. There was other people from Askov too I believe, I can't just remember who, there was you know a thousand people and I can't just remember who but from all over the state and they specifically came to get free seed, free seed you know because they couldn't feed their cattle and they had mortgage on them and they couldn't sell them or even if they couldn't get nothing for them if they sold them but they couldn't even sell them because they had a mortgage on them you know and so these were some of the demands and they were buttonholing their particular legislator, our senator, our representative...our representative wasn't very friendly, you know some of them left town in a hurry and couldn't be seen but some of them were friendly and we had a list of demands that we had and we had a big meeting and the governor was there and we, he supported the people and then some of the people went home and the, it wasn't alone the Farmers Holiday, there was also the Workers Alliance in the city you know, the workers and some of the people couldn't be away any longer so they went home but a lot of us stayed in the capitol that night and I slept in the Senate chambers and out of that we did get you know some gains you know for the people and that was what it was really about.

ST: What, this might sound like a [unclear] but like what would you while you were sitting around there with other people what were talking about doing when you were there inside the capitol, do you remember any?

CJ: Well there was a lot of speakers for one thing and when we had the meeting and Susie Studberg[?] was a very witty woman you know had dry humor and she says had to stop her, you know guiding her eggs and then all this here come down and put this house in order, it's sort of like this and this is really what we were talking about more or less I imagine about oh the conditions and of course what was in our minds was can we get these guys to move you know our legislatures that we had elected see, so many of them forget the people elected them, I think that's, that was some of our prime concern was to get these guys to move and how do you get them to move you know and put pressure on them, a lot of them they'd come to terms you know cause there was so many people so they got to think about maybe we better change our tune and do something or we ain't gonna get elected again and that was really a threat on it you know that they, cause after all they were politicians you know and they know how to sway with the tide you know, quite a few of them but, so that's, you know after complete, that was '36, it was almost 30 years ago, you know your mind isn't so vivid of what took place as it was yesterday you know, it's '64 now and so it's, it's a long, no what is it, 37...

M: 38.

CJ: Yeah, 38 years ago, that's long time, [unclear] you know you don't remember what, when so much has taken place you know since, the war, the McCarthy period, the depressions all the time more or less you know...

M: From one into the other.

CJ: The Korean war, the Vietnam war, I mean so I was very much you know against the Korean war, very much against the Vietnam war, so you get taken up in them so you're, these others kind of get pushed, pushed way back you know, you don't remember that vividly, at least I don't. I wish now that a lot of this stuff that I'd taken down and written cause it really would be valuable if people would have kept the record, which is something kind of nice nowadays with the tapes, I mean it can be used for bad things too we saw but it can also be used for recording you know for history, I think it's, some of these people, some have lived and died but then tremendous things and they aren't even recorded and nobody is going to know about it, like the three, no there was five sisters down around Hastings and they [unclear] I think, and they, this was with the Non-Partisan League who met the, they were met by the National Guard at St. Cloud with fixed bayonets, see that was a time that Lindberg see that Lindberg voted against our participation in the first world war and he was, and Lindberg was one of the speakers there, what Lindberg said of his own son who we like to make a hero, but he says he's a very, he says beware of [unclear] he's a very dangerous man, his own father said those things [unclear].

ST: You know like I keep, we were talking about [unclear] you know about history and like you say there was a lot of stuff that we don't get [unclear]

CJ: That's what I say, you know a lot, then it has to go by memory which isn't as good you know as is put down in facts you know that you have made a diary of all that was, highlights...

ST: Like Susie Stagberg [unclear] around and many things haven't been written on her or at least anything that's available now.

CJ: I don't think so either.

ST: And Karl Skoglund is a guy who's an organizer from Minneapolis, there's nothing written on, we've got some students interviewing, he's dead now, we've got some students out interviewing people who knew him and we're going to try to reconstruct his biography by talking to his friends but it would have been a lot better for us to talk to him.

CJ: You see Susie Stagberg and I think Selma Sestrom and I think Marian, I know, Marian LeSueur were very much against for the merging of the Farmer Labor Party with the Democrats, but Susie, I think you could get a lot of material on her if you were interested is from Selma Sestrom.

ST: Yeah, how do spell her last name?

CJ: S-e-s-t-r-o-m.

ST: She's in Minneapolis?

CJ: Yeah, and Vienna Hendrickson, her name...

ST: Her I know.

CJ: Oh you do, you know her. And that's, I can't think of anybody right, Mrs., can't think of anybody else that would know [unclear], Art would know her some but I don't know how much, there would be [unclear], but would know of Susie cause she did a lot of talk, going around talks...

M: Oh there's a lot of them, Mrs. Hawkinson [unclear]...

CJ: Oh yeah, Madge, you probably know Madge.

M: She should know...

CJ: Yeah, but anyhow you just get to Selma and Vienna you would get somebody else that might know more and even from her family I don't know it's, what were some of the children [unclear] so I don't [unclear] now one of them was with the, for a while there he was warden of the Hennepin County, wasn't it jail or, something...

M: [Unclear]

CJ: [Unclear], no, it was one of Susie's [unclear] he was trying to I guess a little bit progressive reforms...

ST: When are you going to start writing up some stuff about history of the people you remember around here.

CJ: That's not quite that simple, some of it should you know, it's a little bit late, it should have been done, quite a few of them are dead by now you know, cause I was one of the youngest when see I came into the movement about 21, see when I was about 21 years and that's...

ST: Not much older than [unclear]. Do you have any photographs around here of any of the Farm Holiday and People's Lobby stuff?

CJ: No, I wouldn't have any of that, who [unclear], see somebody has a picture of, one time, that wasn't the Peoples Lobby, [unclear] before, they also had a demonstration and they have a goat up the capitol steps now who, somebody's name is, and who organized [unclear], what had it, I can't remember. [unclear] pictures [unclear]. There was a man and his son I can't really recall who it was that had that picture. Gene [Jim?] Shield I think he would also know quite a bit of when it was that time you know, he's the one that wrote [unclear]

ST: Well do you think you three know what the Farm Holiday's all about now?

?: Yeah, I'd never heard anything about it before [unclear]

ST: [Unclear], we've got one interview with John Bosch that we did the other day...

CJ: Oh you can have him.

ST: ...so the kids went over and talked to him.

CJ: You can have him, he did more, we had to fight him all the time boy he was just like that first, national Holiday leader Marlarino, they were opportunists, they would have sold you down I mean if we didn't [unclear], he's, he wasn't well thought of, not by people that understood much.

ST: That's one thing I want to get, a lot of the Farmer Labor people [unclear] trying to write something about the time [unclear] this whole thing about leadership, you know the relation of leaders to the organizations and today we've gotten to where it's kind of leaders here and the organizations here and the leader runs it where I think at least in the early days the Farmer Holiday or the Farmer Labor Party just sort of, the leader was part of...

CJ: Yeah.

ST: ...the organization but not above it...

CJ: No.

ST: And it's hard to keep that, I'm trying to figure out, I think that's a good kind of a leadership and I'm trying to figure out...

END INTERVIEW

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