

Mike Livoda
11088 (11-8-68) #170
Interview by Harold Black
From Lee Scamhorn
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NOVEMBER 8, 1968, AND HAROLD BLACK IS CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

L: 1910 I came to the state of Colorado as a union man from Montana and went to work in the coal mines right up above here at the Leiden Mine. Conditions at that time of the mining were. . . miners of the state had the coal miners, in fact the law was passed in 1908, which would have a bearing to all these things that came about. That all the men working underground should work no more than 8 hours a day or 48 hours a week at that time. But the coal operators of this state made miners working 10 hours a day, so that's one reason why the coal miners thought that they needed the organization, to bring about the companies to comply with the law. This is the northern field then, the whole state, for the whole state, yah. In addition to that, there was a state law on the statute books that the coal miners have a right to select a checkweighman of their own choosing and place it on the tippie to weigh their coal. And they paid him themselves. It was deducted according to proportion of each man a day to make up that man's wages. And in ~~x~~ return, he weighed their coal. The operators would permit the miners to select their own checkweighman, that's another reason why the strike was caused. So, when I went to work in mines, I went down in the southern part of the state and worked in the mine for, oh, a couple of years before John Lawson found out that I was down there. And in the southern part of the state there were no United Mine Workers. United Mine Workers was up in the

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northern part of the state, but none of the mine workers was in the south. So, we decided that we would begin to organize miners beginning January 1, 1912. And John Lawson interviewed me and asked me if I would quit the mines and come out and help organize the miners. And I told him at that time that I thought that I could do more to convince miners under cover in the mines because if the companies found out that any man belonged to union or that if I were in the ~~efforts~~ efforts of trying to organize miners, they'd killed the organizers prior to that. In fact 2 years before I came to state, there was organizer killed while he was waiting for a train to come by in the barroom, he went into the barroom there and the guy come along then and shot him to death because he was an organizer of the United Mine Workers, right down in the southern part of the state. ~~John~~

I: John Lawson had also been shot once, hadn't he?

L: Lawson was shot 10 years before that in the Newcastle, Colorado, a few miles below Glenwood Springs. And he was organizing then, connected with the United Mine Workers and the superintendent of the camp of the company shot him. And they. . .In fact, he lost his eye during that time. He only had one eye when I knew him. And John was elected during that period; he was a board member, national board member of the United Mine Workers. And John McClennan was the president and Ed Doyle was Secretary, Treasurer. They hired 3 of us as organizers for the southern part of the state: one Italian and myself and fellow by the name of Bob

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Yulich, 3 of us. Immediately after we were placed in the field of bringing about the organization amongst the coal miners, coal companies begin to import thugs from West Virginia, Baldwin-Phelps people and they hired a lot of individual guards and trailing us everytime we were. . .I lived in a place in Trinidad.

I: _____ [Knock at the door]

L: Yah. And what we did, where I stayed in the hotel that's ~~was~~ where we broke off in Trinidad. They used to put on one man in the front and one in the back to watch, to see that I didn't get out. And it was a difficult problem to try to get into the mining camps to try to organize miners.

I: May I ask you a question, interrupt a minute?

L: Yah.

I: You said that you told John Lawson that you thought you'd be better off or better able if you stayed in as a miner, how did you decide. . .or what caused you to change?

L: Well, he asked me ~~to~~ come to. . .come out. And he said we're going to make this drive and we'll see what we can do about it, he said, cause if we don't get the operators to agree to our demands, to certain things, we're going to have to put on a fight. And they eventually fight, this was in 1912 and 1913 we came out on the strike in the southern part of the state. I got beat up at Ravenwood, Colorado, that's three miles out of Walsenburg. I went in at night, see, and they didn't complete the job, collec~~t~~ the dues and see the miners, those who wanted

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to sign up. They wanted to sign up but they didn't dare to sign up in front of anyone that they could see him. It was all in secret because each man was afraid of the other man. And I even would insist that even not to tell their wives because wife might slip the word out that the husband joined the union and the word might get to the operators and they fire the man out. They fired a bunch of our boys in the Delawa. One Sunday afternoon they were in saloon and somebody, you know, and the boys get a little too much to drink, he said something, and they fired him on a Sunday afternoon and kicked them out and their family and the whole thing, put their furniture and the kids and ~~xxx~~ everything out of the camp on Sunday. That's how bad that situation was. So three of us started out and the first local union that we organized was Aguilar, Colorado. When we organized that local union in that little town there was 65 gunmen came into that town. And the town was one of those that liberal good people lived there and the marshall, town marshall, made all those gunmen come down into his office to leave their guns there. And then when they get ready to go home that night, come down, pick up their gun and keep on going. Spying to see, who, what, how many men were actually coming to the meeting and where they come from and so forth and so on.

I: Do you want to close that for just a minute and then we can show you something.

L: But when this local union was organized in Aguilar, we made quite a drive in Aguilar to bring about the hours of labor down,

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from 10 to 8 and tried to get the checkweighman. Well, we made threats of striking and one thing after another, but we know that we could not strike the Aguilar without the other camps because it was around about. . .in two counties, Las Animas and Huerfano County was about 10,000 miners in Walt, in the two counties, and it was full-time job to try to handle that thing with only three men. But April 1, 1912, operators finally come to a realization that there was going to be strike and they finally put the hours down, 2 hours, from 10 to 8, and raised wages from 2.95 to \$3.15, made it 3.15, made it 20¢ wage increase, but no checkweighman, see. So, it was the point for us to get to the miners and more miners keep coming into the union and joining. And in meantime, it was case that we were not allowed in the camps, they wouldn't. If they ever got us. . .If got into the camp and they got a hold of us, there was a danger of losing our life. In fact, the five of them come into the house when I was located with some friends in Ravenwood, Colorado, which is 3 miles out of Walsenburg going towards Trinidad, and they took me out and just beat the living Jesus out of me. All I did is to try to hold my hands on my eyes, protect my eyes, because I was ~~æ~~ afraid, that, you know, knocks and one thing after another, and kicking me in the back and then they fired several shots after I was turned loose and the. . .Another time I went into the camp just two miles away from this one, Cameron, Colorado, which is 2 miles out of Walsenburg, and I spend some time in the camp and

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walked back into Walsenburg, stay over night. While I was in restaurant getting a sandwich, there was 4 men walking on the sidewalk in town there and when I got through one of them said to Jeff Farr, want to see me. And Jeff Farr was the county scherriff. So, I say all right. If you want to see me, he said, we'll take you up there and they took me up on the Main Street and there was a barroom there in this barroom we walked in. And the old days, those days, they had the wine rooms in the front where you could take a woman into this, you know, that's the ~~old~~ way the old saloon used to be running. Women were not allowed in the barroom like they are now. And the, we walked in and there was a big fat man, oh, I suppose he weighted over 200, good 250 pounds, and he used the wild language. He said, is that the son-of-a-bee. And then he asked me, he say, you know who I am? I said, yeah, I know you county scherriff. He said, I'm. . .my name is Jeff Farr and I'm the king of this county and if you want to do any of ~~my~~ your dirty work, you going to have to do it down in Las Animas ~~County~~ County, not in this county while I'm scherriff. That's what he said to me. I didn't say nothing. I had to take it because there was 8, ~~and~~ 9 men there around him, you know. So, when he give me that lecture, to get me to understand that I had to get out, he say, tomorrow morning you better get out of town. Asked me if I had a room in town. I say, yes, I have rooms. So when I got out on the sidewalk and the 4 men said, let's put him out of town tonight. What you going to do, it was about 12:30 in the morning, and no people

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on the street and nothing, I couldn't ask for anything. I just had to take the medicine, that's all. So they walked me up to Seventh Street where C&S railroad crosses the street and he said, get on ~~the~~ that track and walk back towards Trinidad. So, I walked 3 miles and the moon was shining. This was in the month of March, 1913, no 1912. And the. . .When we. . .When I got to this Ravenwood again, this was before I got beat up, I got beat up in June, ~~and~~ and this is in March. And 3 men on horseback followed me out in the camp, so I had to take off again and I went 2 miles further over to Globe Mine and I got to friends of mine there and I asked them if they would let me in. I said they've chased me out of Walsenburg and run me out of Ravenwood. And a miner and his father and son got up and wanted to pick up a shotgun and another one a six-shooter, he say, you come on in the house and go to bed. And I went to bed and slept couple, three hours I suppose, and the lady that was mother of the boy and the wife of this coal miner, she gave me breakfast and I left 50¢ on the table and I walked back to Walsenburg because I figured that if I made that guy stick, make his mandate to me stick, that I was through as far as the organizing was concerned. So, I went back to Walsenburg and got a friend of mine there and I called three that, that afternoon 2 more men came along and we walk up and down the street there towards the jail to see but there was no disturbance, nothing, just to ~~x~~ walk up and down. They didn't bother. And that's how I broke the ice to stay in Walsenburg. I defied him after he ordered me to stay out.

And then this led, little by little, getting a little bit stronger and occasionally a man gets fired. We finally had the convention in 1913 in Trinidad, Miner's convention, and decided that we'll put up demands to the coal operators. And John was also the head of it, you see, he was a the national board member, represented the ~~xxxx~~ district 15, in the executive board of the United Mine Workers of Indianapolis. And he, course, he worked through International Union to, if we did come out on a strike, that the international union get behind us and support us with the relief.

I: So those were the. . .

L: Those days miners couldn't strike a week without some help from somebody else because they didn't. . .some of them were in the hole, in debt. They didn't make enough to pay their own bills. So, we decided. . .

I: Is where the operators said it was financed from the outside, this is their. . .?

L: Well sure, the operators were getting the help from the big shots, big people from the east. And the. . .We had a convention and made a request on the operators to meet us and negotiate in the depth. . If you had that book, Out of Depth, there are demands in that book, what we ask for, which today, why, showing those kinds of demands to working man and women today, they'll say, well, my gosh, you people were pikers, you didn't ask even, but that. . .we couldn't get it, we didn't even get that, let alone get anything more. So, little by little, it was decided that on September 23 that we came out on a

strike, and we did. When we did come out and snowed down at ~~knudkn~~ Ludlow, I was there. And the railroad companies was in cahoots with some of the operators. We had some tents ordered to come in by the train and they were delayed and those people were dumping their furniture right on muddy ground and snow and the kids and all of that mess there. We had finally bought a tent. It was 40 by 75, big tent. So most of those people were housed in that big tent till our own tents came up. When our own tents came up, they set them up and the people. . .we organized them and they got, you know, there was Spanish-Americans, Mexicans, Mexicans I mean from Mexico, and ~~knudkn~~ then there was Greeks, there were Slavs, there were Czechs, there were Russians and Poles, Scotch, English, and Italians. You'd be surprised how well those people got organized, that they ~~wx~~ were getting along so well, like one family. In those tents we used to have meetings, maybe 2 or 3 meetings a week. If anything came up we called them all together. And they ironed things out and they were getting along swell.

I: How many people approximately were at these camps?

L: There were about 1800 at Ludlow tent colony.

I: Just at Ludlow itself?

L: Yah. Ludlow itself. Aguilar had ~~n~~ about 20 some hundred, about couple thousand. But Aguilar had a tent colony, but they also, people lived in houses, see, because that was a free town. Then we have a tent colony in Walsenburg and the tent colony at Forbes, ~~nx~~ tent colony at Suffield. But Forbes ~~knudkn~~ colony was destroyed by the guards, these Baldwin-Phelps that I told

you about it. There was one case one afternoon, came along there and set up a, what we used to call, one of these. . .it's iron, raise the side and a machine gun sets in the center. If you shot at the. . .of course ~~x~~ iron was terrific, the bullet ~~xxxx~~ won't do any harm. They shot at this tent colony and there was an Italian boy laying in one of these cots that the union furnished, regular little like army cots and mattress on it. And 53 bullets in the mattress, tore it in there. There was only 2 of them that hit him in the leg, in the flesh, so it didn't hit the bone, so the flesh. And little by little they destroyed that, so we had to move those people from there someplace else. These Baldwin Phelps, Belk and Belcher, they came in here, they were the chiefs, they were the head of the procession. This is the fellow that, this Belcher killed the organizer right down on Commercial Street in Trinidad before we came out on a strike, this ~~xxxxxx~~ happened. And of course, two months. . .no, let's see, this was in September, and Belcher was killed in November; about 3 months later why, Mr. Belcher got knocked off.

I: That's the man they accused. . .Zanzinella. .

L: ~~XX~~ Well, Zancinalli was picked up to be the man, but they never found the gun on him. And the man was held in jail for so long, but he got free by the jury. And then later on, that is. . .They tried him twice. First time hung jury. The second time there was. . .they convicted him, but only the jury was loaded. There was one man down, businessman ~~down~~ in Trinidad, old Steve Burkhardt, the hardware store and a harness, those days, you know,

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he was a harness maker. Use lot of ~~hox~~ horses for farming and all of this stuff. And he make a crack in a barber's chair in Trinidad that if he happens to serve on that jury it'll be a hung jury or hung dago, see. That means he'd work for conviction and he finally served on that jury. And the barber who shaved him, he was so sympathetic to the miners that after he made that kind of a statement, he went to our attorney, gave him the evidence. He said, this man serves on the jury, that'll be enough for you to get the appeal to the supreme court of Colorado and get a new trial. And that's what happened. And the man~~x~~ was never tried later one. He was. . .They saw that there was no use to prosecute anymore. They just figured that it was a useless case and a useless ~~xxxxxxx~~ time and effort and spending tax payers money. And you know who ~~xxxx~~ prosecuted the miners? State, Attorney General of the Colorado, prosecuted miners all during that time whenever they were tried. Now the guard was indicted, now the operator was indicted and there was 435 miners indicted throughout the state for that rebellion, when Ludlow Massacre was burned down. Ludlow was burned down and the fight broke out all over the state ~~wherexxxx~~ wherever the miners were out on the strike. And the. . .Mr. Farrar, who was the Attorney General in charge of prosecution, when the strike was over that job was the chief counsel for Colorado Fuel and Iron Company and he died there as their counsel. So, that's~~x~~. . .How can you get a square deal with people like that, yah.

I: A couple of comments that I, was questioning, was wondering about

was how effective was the strike before they had drawnⁱⁿ other people to be strike breakers? Some of the accounts I read said that no more than. . .

L: The strike was effective to this extent, that the. . .as far as the strike was concerned, ~~there~~ they were bringing in the, what we call scabs, strike breakers, from Michigan, Pennsylvania, different places, but they were not coal miners, you see, they hired anybody to go in. Those people. . .Men had to be experienced to try to make a dollar in coal mining in those days. Today, everybody's paid by the day to work in the coal mine; you get so much a day and you do the work that you are told to do. Those days, 60% of the coal miners that if they didn't get that coal out they starved to death, see. So much a ton, ~~if~~ if you didn't get the tonnage out, you didn't get anything.

I: This is why the weighman was so important?

L: Right. That's why we wanted the checkweighman there to see that each miner gets square weight.

I: I had a ~~2~~ question. It was, concerning the amount of ~~expense~~ expense or trouble with the mines, one of the reports I read about the operators said that their efficiency, that they were operating at about 79 to 82% after the miners were out.

I2: No.

L: They might have that number on the payroll but they surely were not putting out the coal. Coal is the thing that they actually want and ~~there~~ they was not putting it out. That was the thing

that's so terrific, that after the Ludlow Massacre, the fight
~~xxx~~
broke out in Aguilar, destructin of property, ~~xxxx~~ ~~xx~~ killing of
people. The fight broke out in Walsenburg, destruction of
property, killing of the people. The fight broke in Freemont
County, same thing. The fight broke out up here in Lafayette,
same thing. ^{Rout} Raus County, same thing. So that the women stormed
on the Governor's office in Denver here, 300 women, appealing
to the Governor to get him to wire President Wilson, at that
time, Woodrow Wilson~~x~~ was president, to send federal troops.
Milita was not able to cope with. . . militia was on the run
because there was people. . . I saw the train that came in below
Ludlow. We couldn't get to Ludlow, but I saw a train with over,
between 4 and 500 men. They were. . . not the miners alone.
There were carpenters, there were plumbers, there were bartenders,
there were saloon keepers, there were ~~xxxxxxx~~ store keepers,
railroad men, all had the guns to go out to help the miners.

I: These are people in sympathy with. . .

L: Right.

I2: Yah, sympathy with the ____.

L: The people's sympathy was with the coal miners because they were
justified to get these things and the companies wouldn't give it
to them. And John and I we left Trinidad when we got a call on
a Monday, it was 20th day of April was a Monday morning, and we
got word that the fight broke out, need help. When they need is
the guns and ammunition. So, the militia start this fight
because militia camp was only a quarter of a mile away from the
tent colony of Ludlow and that's. . .

I: Could I ask you to make a distinction between this part of the militia. . . In the Beshoar book, I think the one company was led by Linderfelt and another by a man named Cise, C-i-s-e. One company the miners were able to get along with, in fact & even mixed.

L: Well, Frank Cise, I don't think he was leading the company. I think he was more on the background, he was an attorney.

~~I~~x But Linderfelt was the tough, he was the gunman, natural born killer. Pat ^{Handbrock} ~~Handbrock~~ was the one who actually was in charge, see. He was colonel of the National Guard and he was a bad egg, see, to be frank about it.

[The sound dropped considerably here, much & harder to hear]

L: And the fact. . . the pretense was that there was a boy in our camp that they want out and the boy wasn't there. And Tikas would just tell them that the boy wasn't there. Then when he went across the ^{road} ~~xxxx~~ they tried to make peace with him and tried to tell him it wasn't so. And they killed him. And there was 5 men killed _____ got there. Charley, Charley Costa and Bosoloro, and Costa and Louis Tikas and there was 2 more that was killed there; 5 men I know. And there was two women and about 13 children that was killed during that day.

I: _____

L: Yah, of some guns there so that the people can protect themselves. It wasn't a case that you would. . . Now here's a point, a guy comes over to you & and you haven't got nothing to protect ~~xxxx~~ yourself, what are you going to do. You & just have to do certain things. Now if he's unfair, you're going to say, why no,

I'm not going to. . .I've got a rifle here that I carried there,
that I got and I bought it at. . .It was a union ~~xx~~ rifle.

I: He saved it for his grandson.

L: Yeah, and I still got it.

I: This was during that strike?

L: Yah. The union had to buy rifles to protect ourselves after they
burned the tent colony. If we didn't buy them we would have been
destroyed and kicked out and deported like they did 10 years
prior to that. They used to ship them down on the Texas plain,
Kansas and Nebraska plain, some of them never did come back.
But we decided in 1913 and 14 we was not going to permit anybody
do deport or separate us from our families, yah.

I: Weren't they to have supposedly disarmed. . .

L: Well they got federal government. . .when the federal troops come
in, when the president Woodrow Wilson ordered the federal troops
to come in. Then of course we~~xx~~ were asked to ~~xxx~~ surrender the
guns to the federal troops, which we were willing to do it. But
when the federal troops got ready to leave they turned the guns
back to the people. You went up there with a receipt and got
your gun back, yah. That's the way it was handled.

I: Did you want to see that inside?

I2: Just let me _____.

L: And these people, there's two women and the 13 children, went
down into this hole. So when our people run out of ammunition,
they didn't have anymore ammunition, these dogs keep coming closer
and closer. When they got in they set the. . .the tents were dry,

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you see, in the spring, it was in April, everything was so dry
~~xxxx~~ that when they touched the canvas with the torch, it all
went into flame. And these people were down in that hole, just
got suffocated to death. Charley Costa, his wife and 3 kids,
whole family was wiped out.

I: There was 13 in that hole?

I2: Did they have different. . . .

[End of side 1]

side 2

TODAY IS NOVEMBER 15, AND HAROLD BLACK IS CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW.

L: . . .now it's Yugoslavia, formerly known as Ulstra-Hungary,
now known as Yugoslavia.

I: What was the date when you were coming to this country?

L: I came in 1904.

I: I didn't realize you'd been that long.

L: Well, and I went to work in the steel mills in Ohio first, was
there for 2 or 3 years.

I: What city ~~did~~ did you go to?

L: Huh?

I: What city did you go to in Ohio?

L: Stubenville, Ohio.

I: Stubenville.

L: ~~Q~~ My father helped to build that plant from ~~the~~ the ground up. Then
he went back to the old country and I came in cause it was a
feeling in the old country at that time, there was a feeling of
war, World War I. And the. . .He couldn't even get over here on

the passport of my own. A friend of mine was working in the county court house back there. We arranged that he'd have my description, ~~xxxx~~ features and my brother's name. And I came on that passport. Went to work in the steel mill loading a pig iron at night, 13 hours a night for a x kid about between 16 and 17 years of age. It was a little bit tough. America didn't look good to me from the things that I x had, feeling there. And in the meantime it was the conditions of the Slavs that we were congregating together and I figured that for a young man trying to make this country his home that I had to get out there and get some education and try to improve my own standing and working and knowing people and things of that nature, so I proceeded to leave Ohio for. . . .

I: May I interrupt you a moment?

L: Yah.

I: How much education had you had in ~~xxxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ Yugoslavia?

L: I had 6th grade.

I: 6th grade.'

L: Yah. And the repetition of ~~xxx~~ 70 or, ~~xxxxxxxx~~ repetition of what you. . . from start to finish, then from there you had to enter into the high school. And high school to college and so forth and so on, but I didn't have the opportunity to do that. Then those days there was a feeling of, you know, the old say so, young man go west. And a good many of them from every walks of life proceeded to look for a new country, a new ground, a new. . . Most of them thought that there was opportunity in the West, talk of gold. There was 3 of us, we started out, we wanted to go to

Alaska. There's some men went to Alaska and they made a stake and that makes the impression with a young man, that if they made the ~~x~~ stake out there, well, there's possibility that I can do it too. And we proceeded to take off. We got as far as Montana and I think I had \$20 left, and figured that there was. . . that was the end of the Alaska trip, so we had to go to work. I went to work in Red Lodge, Montana in the coal mine. And the United Mine Workers of America at that time had the first contract just negotiated with the coal operators in Wyoming and Montana. And it wasn't everything just ~~was~~ what the miners want, but it was free expression. Men did their own thinking, they know the actual price what they were getting from their coal, coal was weighed by the man who represented them and if the grievances arrived of any kind between the individual and the company, we had a committee who took it up. So I had a little knowledge of knowing there what was there, how well it worked. That should work anyplace else ~~xxxx~~ ^{if} there was any ~~xxxxxx~~ situation of that character.

I: When was this?

L: Huh?

I: You said you came in 1904. Was this about. . .

L: Well this/^{was}about in 1907 and 8, see, ~~y~~ yah. And as a rule the people there, there was 4 nationalities there--English speaking, natives of United States, northern Italians, ~~xxxx~~ Finns and Slavic people. They were getting along so fine and all through the instrumentality of union, by living together and working together for the ~~xxxxxx~~ betterment of all, and they were dressed well, ~~must~~

much better than they were back east in the steel plants. That I decided that the. . .might change from there, that things slow down in summer, see. Young fellows usually ~~don't~~ don't. . . You got to keep them busy or else they get restless, so. . .

I: They didn't have the coal market then?

L: That's right. That was. . .We moved from there to Sheridan, ~~Wy~~ Wyoming. In Sheridan was a union and it was good conditions, a good place to work, good place to live. But ~~it~~ it wasn't working. Street car come around in the camp and you got on the street car and went downtown and you broke all the time. So, we decided that we come to Colorado. I came to Denver in 19 hundred. . . I ~~think~~ think it was in around about the first part of May in 1910.

I: Then there was already a strike going on here?

L: Yah. In the northern part of the state here the strike was on. The coal miners were organized in. . .that;s where I figure miners made a mistake. Striking in the north here, when they were working 8 hours and having a checkweighman, and having better conditions than the miners in the southern part of the state, where they were working 10 hours a day, no checkweighman, and wages wasn't as good as it was north. Sometimes, those days, at least, I think that men are better educated today and they know more about, how ~~to~~ to gauge the economy from one section ~~of~~ of the country against the other section. But they came out on a strike and the strike was going along there in 1910. I think they came out first of April 1910 and lasted almost till 1913. And then the southern part of the state, ~~the~~ the miners

came on when I was working down there and organizing. But in the meantime, I went to work with a mine right up here at Leiden ~~mine~~ which was not tied up with the strike at all. It was out of strike zone and there were conditions there, we didn't have any checkweighman, the conditions were there just like anyplace else in the southern part of the state. Men were ~~xxxx~~ cheated on their weights, no payment for the dead work and things of that ~~xxxx~~ nature. So I kept talking about difference between the union organized mines and non-organized mines and all of these things. And they say, you better keep quiet because if the company find out, you'll be out, you're not going ~~xxxxxxx~~ to have a job here, and might get kicked the hell out of you besides. So I decided to go, from here to go on the southern part of the state. And I went down to the southern part of the state and it was hell down there. ~~xxx~~ To tell you the truth about it. Conditions were bad. Stole half of your coal. I think that you see it in the book here how they were cheating the miners on the weights. And the miners thought that they should have their own checkweighman naturally. When I was working amongst those men I used to tell them, yes, but we have got a state law here on the statute book, ^{can} ~~and~~ we get together, can we do something. But I said, there's no chance for individual men to try to get these things for ourselves but if we are jointly organized into the union we might be able to get this thing function for us. And there was no United Mine Workers down in

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the southern part of the state at all till January 1, 1912. I worked down there from October of 1910 to January 1, 1912. And working from ~~px~~ place to place and planting the seed of the United Mine Workers. And then when John Lawson came down to get in touch with me, he knew that I was doing this because I had ~~sent my card~~ to send my card here to the district. They knew I was down there. And asked me to come out and start organizing. They were going to make an attempt to organize the miners in the southern part of the state. And I told him that I didn't think that I could do as good for the United Mine Workers ^{amongst} being an organizer as I was doing it by working ~~amongst~~ the men in the mine. And, because I know, from the feeling of the coal operators what they were attempting. . .they knew that there was something brewing, ~~that~~ they were going to resent it. And he asked me to come on anyhow, so I came. And I worked from January 1, to June, I think, the first part of June, that same year. And they got a hold of me about 3 miles out of Walsenburg and I got terribly beat up. ~~A~~ I laid in the coal shed in Walsenburg for 3 days before they got a doctor down ~~x~~ to me and before some help from the district organization from Denver here came down to help me out. And those times like that, you know, sometimes men will do things in the interest of his own economic status as well as the other man, that their own lives don't mean anything for the well being as the civilization as it stands. I know that I was marked, but I just kept going. I ~~g~~ figured ~~that~~ somebody's got to ~~x~~ do it because they. . .through the stooges and through the

thugs who are hired by the coal companies, several men got killed before. In fact, one organizer, he was Russian, got killed a year and a half before I took his job, ahead of me. He was working for a western federation of miners, which was the organization that had the strong organization in the metal mining of the Rocky Mountain States, like Leadville, Telluride, Cripple Creek and Victor and all of those places. They had a good union there. But in 1903 they had strike and with the assistance of the state government and the operators and the combination of ~~wx~~ wealth in the state, they destroyed the union. And never could get the union back on its feet. So, I kept going. ~~I~~

I: I think, the other day when I was in speaking to you, if you'll excuse me a minute. . .

L: Sure.

I: You mentioned the fact that prior to the time that you were beaten up in June, you'd been asked to leave Walsenburg. . .

L: Town of Walsenburg?

I: Yes. And I think that was on the side of the tape. . .

L: Well that's ~~the head of~~ ahead of before I got beat up. That's in February of 1912, see. Right after I was on a job, second month. I went to one of the camps by Cameron, about 2 1/2 miles out of Walsenburg. I walked out and walked back. And while I was ~~x~~ in a restaurant there having a cup of coffee there was 4 men walking up and down the street. So finally one of them come in and he said to me, he said, Jeff Farr want to see you. He said, you know who Jeff Farr is. I said, yes I do, he's schefiff of this county, county sheriff. He say, he want to see you. I say,

just as soon as I get my cup of coffee I'll be ready to go with you. Well, he got out and talked to the other 3 men there and in a little while while I was still eating there, I wasn't too anxious to finish up too fast, you know. I know that I was in for trouble. So, he come back in and I got through and ~~and~~ came out on the sidewalk, and 2 in the front and 2 in the back, and I was in the middle. We walked up Main Street into the barroom, saloon, old time saloon. In those days they used to have the wine rooms in the front where if you had a lady. Now days they don't have those kind of rooms. Women go there and set at the bar. Those days women did not set at the bar. If you had a lady friend you could take her up into this wine room and they serve you in there. They had a table there and then when you got through she went the front door or back door and nobody ever would respect a woman that went into the barroom those days. And we walked in this room, there was ~~an~~ Jeff setting in a big chair like that, big man, oh he must have weighed over 250 pounds. He was from Texas, Texan, ~~and~~ moved, immigrated out north, you know, and got elected as the sheriff. Through this book, shows how he was elected too and how he stayed in the office. And he say, is that the son-of-a-bee, he calls me. And I stood up and they searched me and took all the papers, everything away. He say, you know who I am. I said, yes I do. He said my name is Jeff Farr and I'm the county scheriff of this county, I'm the king of this county and if you want to do any of your dirty work you have to do it down in Las Animas ~~county~~, not in this ~~county~~ county while I'm sheriff. He say, you understand that. I said, yah.

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Well he kept lecturing and calling me all kinds of names and there was about 8,9 men was standing around. They all stood up. He and I was the only two that was sitting down. He said, now you got your lecture, you got your instructions. Tomorrow morning you take out of this town and stay out. So. He said, if you got a room in town. I said, yes I have. So we started out. I thought he was going to let me stay in town, you know. These, four of the men took after me, he said, let's put him out of town tonight. So it was 1:00 in the morning, there was no chance of getting any help or anything like that, you know, there's nobody on. . .those days nobody, everybody was in bed. And they took me on down Seventh Street where the C&S railroad crosses the Seventh Street and stay on this track you'll go back to Trinidad. So I started walking, that's all you had to do because what the heck you going to do. I have no help or no guns, no, couldn't protect myself in any way against 4 men and they all have ~~gun~~ guns. And I walked to Ravenwood. The place 3 months later where I got beat up. And I got in there to a friend of mines house and the curtain was up and I looked through the window while I was getting ready to go to bed, you know. This was about 2:30 in the morning. And I saw 3 men on horseback riding towards superintendent's house. So I say well they followed me out here so I better take off again. So I got my stuff and got through the back door and walked 2 1/2 miles to the next camp back around ~~xxx~~ towards Walenburg, Globe Mine, ~~x~~ I had some friends there and I got. . .it was ~~about~~ about 4 o'clock in the ~~m~~ morning when I got to ~~their~~ their house. And rapped the

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A = his/wife

L: . . .trade wherever they please. And they should have right to go out and come back without being molested by any of their thugs or gunmen, but those things existed. It was a regular peons that the miners were in most cases in the southern part of the state.

I: Did any of the miners have any savings that they could. . .

L: Savings?

I: I've been told the. . .I don't know how voluntary it was, but that sometimes at these company stores they also had an official savings plan where they, ~~xxx~~ that the miners could ~~xxxx~~ save some of their money.

L: Hah, hah. They were lucky if they were not in the hole at the end of the pay month. They were only. . .Oh yeah, another thing that led into the strike, state law said that the ~~xxx~~ miners should be paid in currency, twice a month. And the company were only paying them once a month, see. So, 30 days, you know, is a long time and a ~~xxx~~ man got to have, have to have occasion when he has to have a dollar or two once in a while and the only way he could get it is go in the company store and get the script. And then turn that script at the discount to get the cash. You know what I mean discount would be. You get a dollar of script and you got 90¢ in cash. The company made 10¢ on that dollar, see.

I: Then if you wanted money, say if you're paid the first month, if you wanted some money by the 15th of the next month, the only thing you could get was a script, this was the time you were paid in script?

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L: Right. If you had enough earning in the company office you can do with script and turn that into cash. But if you didn't have enough earning, why you didn't get it. And most of the poor fellows like Spanish Americans or some of these fellows, well even Slavs or Italians, you see, they were. . .The miners, actual miners that worked in the coal mine. . .

[Tape cut]

I: Do you want to start talking I'll see if it's. . .

L: Yah. Little by little that you could see that there's nothing left for us to do except to carry it on to the point on economic strength to see if it could be won ~~it~~ by the United Mine Workers.

I: Can you describe again some of the things or the areas that you went into, the different camps and how you conducted it or enrolled people in the union, so that. . .You remember^{er}~~er~~ the types of things ~~were~~ were talking about.

L: My effort in going into the camps before the strike was a case from individual to individual. And my effort of instructing that individual, not even tell his own wife because it was. . . the reason that I instilled on a man that she might tell her neighbor that he joined the union and he was subject to being discharged just as soon as the company find out, that ~~some~~ somebody has ~~spilled~~ spilled the beans, in other words. That's the way we planted the seed. This is prior to the strike. That's the way it went from one camp to another all over. Cause I even went as far as sometimes as taking a man aside and instructing him not to tell nobody that he ~~was~~ has joined the union. And we had

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planted ~~xxxxxx~~ seeds so strong in some of the camps and we had enough nucleus or organizations in each camp that the, most of the men in categories especially with large families, they had the union at heart but they were afraid to join because of women and children. They had children and wife and they were afraid that if the company found out they joined the union that they'd be kicked out.

I: Can you remember some of the camps that you worked in and who was the other man that you said was down here with you working in these fields?

L: Oh, this was after the strike.

I: Oh, after the strike. I thought you said someone else was ~~xxx~~ down here prior to the strike, down helping organize?

L: No. There was only 3 of us. There was an Italian boy, a fellow by the name of. . .and GERman fellow, died in Pueblo, he died in Pueblo. And 3 of us that was working in the southern part of the state. Which took Walsenburg and Trinidad. ~~xxx~~ Occasionally I used to run up to Fremont County to work with. . .Fremont County was a little bit different. You see the miners lived off the company ~~gmx~~ ground, most of them.

I: Was this Aguilar?

L: No. Canyon City. Florence and Canyon City. Most of them lived off the company ground. So there was only two camps there that was company controlled, that we couldn't get in. And we had a good membership. Much easier to organize up there ~~xxxxx~~ because you're talking to a man and the man would know that we had to have a union if we were going to get anyplace with it. But

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in Trinidad and Walsenburg, things were so bad that anytime the company found out the men belonged to the union they were out, they were out altogether.

I: ~~Did~~ ~~you~~ Did n't you ~~men~~ mention the other day that you ~~had~~ worked at ~~the~~ Aguilar.

L: AGuilar was the place that was a free town. In fact, I spent more time~~s~~ in Aguilar than I spent anyplace else, even more than Trinidad where the headquarters was because people were good people at Aguilar. We were carrying, the first 3 months, when the company finally boosted the wages up from 2.95 ten hours to 3.15 for 8 hours, by a little agitation in~~the~~ 90 days that 3 of us made in the southern part of the state, brought it down to 8 hours.

I: Was that in about April?

L: This was in 1912. Then we kept that. . .It was little more strength you know, than something to talk about it, so we went on along there and kept organizing, kept organizing, ~~xxx~~ till we had to have the convention in Trinidad, decided. . .You know, you keep going till it gets to a point where something is going to have to give. So, we had a convention in Trinidad and decided to call a strike, this was in 1913, 23rd day of September. And in the Walsenburg in Trinidad, all of the camps under the control of the company, Victor American Fuel, Colorado Fuel and Iron Company and Rocky Mountain Fuel. A few small ones, but. . . And the men lived in the company houses, company stores, saloons, and everything was company controlled. So when the actual strike came, to take a fact, the first of. . .uh, 23rd day of September,

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it was stormy like it was yesterday, snow, sleet. And at Ludlow I felt sorry whenever I think about it, those poor men and women and children were moving their stuff out from the mining camps into that mud. We had to buy a tent; we set up a big tent, 40 by 75, big tent, so kind of a headquarters. And they were all getting into that tent. We had a ~~xxx~~ thousand tents ordered someplace in West Virginia and the railroad or somewhere they were derailed and they didn't arrive, see. And it was a mess, but men and women had enough courage. And of course, the company had their guards. Ludlow was the place where ~~xxx~~ the train used to stop and occasionally they'd come in with the strike breakers. And our men would go there, try to talk to them and a company of men come down on horseback, they rode horseback, 15, 20, 25, up to 50 of them, a regular big group with rifles.

I: Which group are you referring to now?

L: Ludlow.

I: Yeah but who was riding on horseback with the rifles?

L: The company guards.

I: Okay.

L: Company guards. And our men first used to go up to the Ludlow station. Naturally they want to be peaceable but these guys with these guns always tried to stir up trouble, see, make funny ~~xxxx~~ remarks. A saloon used to be there. They go in the saloon, get a few drinks and then they get. . .they're huffy, you know, want to start trouble. Till our men began to say well hell, if they go there with the guns, we'll go there with the guns. So, the first thing they have a clash. A fellow by the name of

Nemo, John Nemo, that was the man that was killed and John Lawson wasn't even there. He was maybe 500 miles away from there yet he was tried to killing that guy, and convicted by the jury in Trinidad, see. This was the first thing that begin. John Nemo, I remember that so well, but I didn't even quote it before, but. . . And little by little until finally National Guard moved in.

I: Were you there, were you there the day that Nemo was killed?

L: Yes. Yah I was at Ludlow. It was a battle of our side, started right at Ludlow and they had machine guns till finally we had to break away from there. There was a railroad coming from Barns, Colorado, taking the cars to the Hastings and Delawa, and that railroad was sort of cut in there and our men used to get in there, into that, get behind something so that the machine gun would be set. . .the machine gun can shoot quite a distance away, you know. The only thing about the machine gun, when you're away 2 or 3 miles or a mile and a half, you may ~~be~~ get hit but the... It's not up to the. . .They're not as accurate as they are when you're close, see. So, we lost some men there, you know it's in this book too. And usually when this Nemo was killed, that was sort of a reason that the governor send the troops out. Well, the troops come out. . .

I: Could you tell me more of actually whan went on when Nemo was killed? Did. . .

L: Battle. Battle, it was a fight between the miners and the company guards. This was right south of Ludlow tent colony, at Water Tank Hill. You noticed Water TANK Hill, did they talk about it? Our men took to Water Tank Hill when Nemo was killed because they

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kept fighting and the result was that the company guards were chased off the Water Tank Hill and miners took it. There was a bridge running over the C&S track and that bridge was a steel beam, a big tall ~~xxxxxx~~ steel beam about 4 feet high. You see, you get behind that and you just can go around that kind of high there. And battle last all day. Oh finally decided they're going to send troops. The general came down. . .

I: Was John killed early in the day during the fighting or. . .

L: During the day sometime, I don't know just when, ~~any~~ but, anyhow during that day John Nemo was killed. He was a company guard. They shipped these guards from St. Louis, Detroit some of them, a good many of them from Texas came in, took the jobs with the company and. . .

I: Where'd you say this company was from ~~xxx~~ though?

L: Huh?

I: The Boston Phelp company was basically from. . . .

L: They came from West ~~xxxx~~ Virginia, Baldwin Phelps. But they were in charge of the other guards, you see. They directed, see. They always were the main, fight was, where actually somebody got killed, they always had their hand in that, see, Baldwin Phelps. These other guys they. . . more ~~xxxx~~ skirmishes were they made happen and kind of spread out. you see, several times they were trying to. . . when these fights were going on, they mobilized the train in Trinidad, come out with the guards, see, put those who were at Ludlow. One particular time I remember, we took this cut, and the train from Trinidad, they usually tell us, they say, train coming from Trinidad. It took them, oh, a good

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8 hours before they got. . . You see the railroad men wouldn't run the train, they ~~xxx~~ refuse to run the train, cause railroad men were sympathetic to the miners. They finally got some guards that were experienced, ~~xxxxxx~~ and they run the train. And this train came within about a mile a half of the tent colony and was put out of business, see.

I: Did the miners attack it, is that what you're saying?

L: Well, we. . . What they did, that was. . . from this we had some guns that shoot quite well, quite a distance, because I heard that some of those men that were in those gondola ~~amxxx~~ automobiles, you know, those cars used to have a number, one, whatever the weight would be, 50 thousand it said, some of those. Them miners he said, they were so accurate that everytime they shot at that car they hit the number of that armored ~~xxxxx~~ car, and a mile and a ~~xxx~~ half away. And we had some doggone good men that could shoot pretty well. They were involved in the war and over there ~~xxxxx~~ during that time and they came over here and they were good at it. The Serbs and the ~~Sx~~ Slavonians and the Greeks, Montanegros. Montanegros ~~xx~~ was very good. That is the. . . I know some of them, there's . . . I'll show you the ~~xxx~~ picture here when we get through.

I: Could you tell some more of the other nationalities. . . I think I read in the book ~~xxx~~ that there was about 21 different nationalities were there. What nationalities really. . . you mentioned a few of them already?

L: Well, there were Mexicans, that is Mexican citizens, from Mexico, Old Mexico, Spanish-Americans, which our our own, Scotch-English,

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Russians, Polish, Romanians, not too many Romanians, we had a few Japs, we had Serbs, Montenegrans, Italians, negroes, not too many negroes, there wasn't too many. And all of those. . .you see the rea. . .the one thing that I was, needed so bad, also a good many of the. . .all of the Russians, ~~a~~ Polish, Slavocs, Czechs, Yugoslavs, ~~Montenegrans~~ Montenegrans, I could talk their language. And it was the need that I should be amongst them and with them because of that ~~x~~ situation, and made it just that much more important that I, if I hadn't been foreigner of the Yugoslav board, for now in something like that, it wouldn't be needed because most of our people in this country are Americanized and the kids grew up in a different situation, it was then. But those days they had to have their own native fellow to talk to them. And I happened to be around and I came right from amongst them, see, and that was another important thing that was very effective amongst the men here. And, but they put this train out of business. Engine couldn't go forward but could go back. So, they gradually ~~x~~ backed down to the Forbes, went out to the Forbes Canyon and came over the hill. But they didn't come anywhere near close to Ludlow cause our people were prepared for them. You had to be or else be exterminated off the situation all together. And then the troops came in cause. . .the troops were in there for quite a long time. They were in till after they found out that they're going to remain in the strike zone for a long time. ~~Ordinary~~ Ordinary national guardsmen asked to be relieved of these duties as a guards man on account of his business. And in his place they mobilized new men who was looking for a job or else

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the company guard. We have ~~xxxx~~ proof that ~~the~~ a good many of the ~~xxx~~ national guardsmen were mobilized as national guardsmen who were company guards. In fact the man who set the torch to the tent colony at Ludlow was the son of ~~the~~ one of the chief guard. . .

I: Who is this man or can you recall?

L: I. . .It will come to me. They're both dead; the son is dead and the father is dead. The father was the company guard in Tertio, way up here above the Trinidad, 40 miles, for years, His father was a company guard. And it'll come to me gradually.

I: Can we go off on one other thing while we're talking ~~xx~~ about this. You mentioned that you did have direct contact with Mother Jones.

L: Oh yah, Mother Jones and I and the Italian organizer and Mexican organizer used to go from local to local. You see, we'd start out in the morning and we'll cover maybe 4 local unions in a day. And then the meeting would be say, the first meeting would be scheduled at ~~k~~ 10:00 and the next one at 2:00 and the next one at 4:00 and next one at 6:00, see.

I: Well how could you do this. . .The union saw that you had an organization there.

L: By an automobile.

I: No, I mean, if the mine operators knew that you had an operation, weren't you exposing the men unnecessarily, or when were you, what was the date that you were working with Mother Jones?

L: During the strike.

I: Oh, during the strike.

L: This was during the strike. See Motehr Jones would come in.

Naturally we come in, we try to keep men pepped up and their ~~xxxxxx~~ families. The union supported it but sometimes it might be individual situation, that the individual may get discouraged and didn't want to be away and go back to work. You had to be on the job to try to keep those men informed, what's going on, and try to keep them together. It isn't always. . . You know, those things. . . not always just pleasant the way you wanted to see, but you try to make it because you ~~xxxx~~ dare try to keep men and women together, and we did ~~xxxx~~ especially in Ludlow, one of the best organized and most unified feeling amongst the men, women and ~~xx~~ children that you'll ever want to see in your life. That's how it was in Ludlow because of that fear of being attacked all the time, see.

I: This led them together?

L: Yah.

I: Could you tell me ~~xxxx~~ some of the things, some of the other things that you did personally with Mother Jones. You told me last week but it was on the side that we lost.

L: Well, Mother Jones, usually here's what we. . . She was pretty well up in years then. They said that that time, during that 13-14 strike that she was over 80 years old. And I suppose she was, but she had enough strength, enough vitality that she could raise, heh, heh, hell quicker than any human I ever saw, getting the men ready to go right now. And when we get back in I knew, the fellows who knew her~~x~~, worked with her, he said, always, Mike, when you get back in town see that you get a bottle of beer for Mother Jones. So I ~~x~~ usually do that, get out there and I said

to Mother, I'll be going out, I'll be back in a few minutes.
So I always know where to go to get the bottle of beer, take it
up there, she try to give me 50¢ back pay for that beer. I say,
forget about it. Then when she'd get. . .I'd pour it out in a
glass, you know, she'd get rid of that beer down in her system
and she just come right, strength come right back, you know.
Yah.

I: You also talked about, I think, making some trips and the types
of things that you had to do, even though you were in a car,
you didn't have roads you were talking about.

L: Yah. Oh ya, well, we used to travel and sometimes like weather
like today, from Trinidad, started out. . .well the first one
would be Suffield, the next one would be Ludlow. . .Oh yah,
Suffield, Forbes, Ludlow, Aguilar, Rugby, Prior, Walsenburg,
those were ~~the~~ all tent colonies where men and women lived,
that the United Mine Workers got, ~~the~~ leased the ground and set
up these tents where the people could live, was their homes.
And roads were terrible. Four men in a car, driver would try
to, you know, car would slid off because it was muggy, muddy and
by the time we get back to town, you know, Jesus, covered with
mud all over. But it was the job and we just kept on doing it.
And the fellow who drove the automobile, we had, we paid him so
much a month and keep his car in shape, see. And he was not. . .
He was a miner's son, but he was making a living in those days
using his car for hire, taking people around, you know. There
was only 3 or 4 cars in the whole county and two of them were
company cars, belonged to CF&I, and one for us, and the sheriff

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had one and that's all. And I don't know whether you want this or not but there's a case that, if you shut it off I'll tell you.

I: Go ahead. If you don't want it in there, we can cut it out.

L: I think that you possibly would. . .

I: If it's a personal experience of yours, go ahead.

L: WELL it's a personal experience with me because it's the job that ordinary. . . ~~would~~ wouldn't be done with the ordinary men, maybe one in a hundred that would do it. Saturday night a small town like Trinidad, why, national guards was in town and everybody was in town. We. . . I was someplace and a guy come along. He was a company stooge. He said to me, Belcher was killed, the guy that killed the organizer 3 months before. No, not even 3 months. See, September, this was November, see. He said, Belcher got killed down the street. Well, I didn't say nothing. I don't. . . I . . . jump up because this Belcher used to have a steel vest see. You could shoot him but if you hit him around here you couldn't kill him because he had steel on, on a six-shooter. This guy, anyhow when he was in the. . . He didn't drink but he went across the street in the drugstore to get himself a drink in the drugstore and he got a drink. And he was, when he came out. . . As he came out of the drugstore, walked on the sidewalk, one step down, then the next one is the street, see. And this guy that killed him, he must have been so doggone close that his hair was singed in the back before, out of that gun when he plugged him, one shot, just right straight in. . . and he turned around and fell back in the street like this. And the guy dropped the gun. It was ~~crowded~~ crowded,

see. ~~Nobody~~ Nobody saw who did it and what was done. And the
guy ~~walk~~ walked on into the alley there and no gun. Got arrested
and they picked him up and said that he was the guy that was
supposed to. . .Zancanelli. See, you read in the book about
Zancanelli. And I know the two men that. . .If there was anybody
~~that~~ that did it, these ~~two~~ two guys had their fingers in on
it, see. So, about 11:00, a little later, around about midnight,
a guy called me up who was the head guy in the office, fellow by
the name of Diamond, he say, Mike, there's two men at certain,
certain place in town. He say, you got to get them out of
town tomorrow morning or now. Well, one was from Oklahoma and
one from Iowa. One was Sam Carter, his name was from Oklahoma and
A. B. McGary from Des Moines Iowa. I said how am I going to get
them out of town when our car ~~is~~ is noted, I said, everybody in
town knows the car. He said you got some friends, you'll get
them out. So, I called, immediately called up a garage man there,
a fellow by the name that was Harlow Bennett, he's still alive.
He was running the Overland garage in Trinidad.

- I: He had a garage although there were only 4 cars. What did he
repair?
- L: Well he was selling the ~~automobiles~~ automobiles and running the
garage, agency. He was selling Overland, ~~little~~ little Overland.
I don't know whether you ~~remember~~ remember. . .
- I: No, I don't remember the Overland.
- L: It was made in ~~Toledo~~ Toledo Ohio. Sold why, \$625, see, brand new
one.

[End of side 1]

side 2

L: So, I said to this guy, I said, I got to have a car 6:00 Sunday ~~morning~~ morning. He said, Mike, he said all the cars I got here they're all new. I said, I don't care, but I got ~~to~~ to have it. I said, you fix it up. He said, but when the car gets back here it'll be a second hand car. I said, never mind, goddamned it, if I had to buy it I'll buy it myself. I got to have it. So, I go up there, get the driver, see. And this Diamond, he give me a couple of checks, one for each man, see. We drove up to this place. They were upstairs in the little apartment upstairs, you know. Got them down, get your suitcases down here. I said, here's a check for you, a check for you. This man will take you to Dodge City, Kansas and from there on you're on your own. Get out and stay out. You're not putting this on, are you?

I: No, we can delete it.

L: Yah. And they never. . . It was better to get these two guys out, see, than to spend a hundred thousand dollars in defending them and even maybe more. And that, why the courts were loaded at that time. I know that if they stayed here they would have been indicted and thrown in jail because if anything, they had something to do, and they know. . . they were planning because they wanted to get rid of this guy and they did, that's all there was to it, see. And this guy come back, so when I got down to the office Monday, I told the man what I did and I said I'm going to have to take ~~\$625~~ \$625 check for that guy to buy the car, that's all. I said, second hand car now, I say, that's the only way. He pat me on the back, he say, you pretty good. He said it's better to do that, Mike, than spend a hundred thousand

dollars in defending them. And he said, we'll buy the car and take and give it to Walsenburg gang, they need the car anyhow to get around to the local unions see. So we just transferred the car from Trinidad to Walsenburg and they could use it up there, see. So that's the way those ~~xxx~~ things worked, you had to work fast. If you didn't work fast, the ~~xxxx~~ the courts were terribly against the miners, judges, sheriff. . . But the good people were with the miners. Yah, over. . . there was about 168 men indicted in Trinidad I think alone, in one county. And I don't know how many millions dollars were in the bonds, tried to get the bonds signed up, every bond was a property bond. It was not a cash bond, property bonds. People voluntarily signed the bonds for the miners to get out of jail. So that shows that the people were sympathetic towardd the cause of miners. The law and the companies, the government were corrupted, owned, body and soul by the coal companies' interest and the poor man didn't have no chance. But we. . . .

I: I think I'd better stop it again. Just a minute here.

[Changing tape]

This is the third part of an interview with Michael Livoda conducted on November 15, by Harold Black.

A: Our granddaughter gets one of them because she reads them.

L: You see, there's a fraternal organization formed by early pioneers in the state of Pennsylvania and Ohio, as an insurance. There was no, you know, there were not the insured like they are today.

And these people are still pioneering and carrying on. And today

is the officers and the. . .The whole thing is done in American, but the name of the paper is still in their own language as the heading of it, but half of it is in American and half in the Slavic. And I happened to join with them. I was just beginning to get interested in the work of the United Mine Workers and I thought that to prove to those people that I was on the right track for the cause of freedom for themselves and as well as myself, that I was even willing to join their own organization ~~xxx~~ before I ask them to join mine, the United Mine Workers.

I: How did you get interested in the United Mine Workers? Was the steel mill organized?

L: Nooo, no. I want to tell you something about steel mills. The. . . I got into the miners' union because, first when I joined in Montana, joined the United Mine Workers in Montana, I find out how nice it worked amongst the 4 nationalities there. That the same thing could be done here if they had the same opportunity as they did up there and get a fair and ~~xx~~ square deal for the things that they were doing. They didn't get paid for anything that they did inside of the mine: laying tracks or anything else. They were. . .Half of the coal was stolen from them. It wasn't a situation that these men got love of union because it was the case that the union was a necessity and it was the only source for them to get in to get some protection and some freedom. And right, to being free men and get everything that's coming to them.

I: Then you think that if they had some freedom that there are some better opportunities, these people can get along better, but when

they're really struggling, this developed animosities?

L: Right. Right.

I: Did the organization, did the mine operators, do anything which might encourage the people to keep them separated?

L: Well, they did. . .The method that the operators used is the law of the county and the sheriff. That the men and women were afraid to get together. The operators were using the law besides their own method in the camp, like store ~~manager~~ manager, like superintendents in the mine, and the. . .Rockefeller understand here when John Lawson took after him in this book, when you get in, if you read that. That gives you an idea just exactly what went on here. That the company knew because I remember when. . . One of the things that I wanted. . .see, we had several investigations during the strike by the congressional committee, by the Secretary of Labor, by the University of Colorado and the state of Colorado appointed a committee, this fellow Brewster was on one of the committees.

I: No, wasn't that under the governor and just happened to have a person from the university on it?

L: Yah. That was the first commission that was appointed to investigate these brutality that existed ~~in~~ between the mine guards and some of our own people, and that was the first. Then the congressional committee and congressional committee. We produced people that testified before that committee. I brought them in myself, that testified that they were not citizens, him and his wife, both voted for the county sheriff and county officers and the state officers and they were not citizens.

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I: ~~Q~~ Can you remember any of those names?

L: Yes. Old Jack Kirpin and him and his wife, his brother and there were just hundreds of those men that were ~~herded~~ herded into the. . .

I: See I can go to those records and pull them out and. . .

L: Yah, yes. Yah.

I: But you personally brought some of those people. . .

L: Personally ~~bring~~ brought them in to testify before the committee that they have voted and they were not citizens because the marshall told them come on, get to ^{vote} ~~work~~, get to the polls.

I: We got side-tracked. What were some of the things that led you into be joining this union and then also when did you join. . . could you name that paper again, the Slavic paper?

L: Oh, the paper here. I joined this lodge and another ~~one~~ one down there. . .

I: Down there or in Montana?

L: In Aguilar and Trinidad, to gain the confidence of those men that I was one of them and I wanted to take a lead to try to form the organization and they believed in me.

I: What was the name of that again?

L: This one here is Zionechar and the name of it is Unity, that's what it actually it.

A: It mean ~~is~~ unity.

L: It means unity.

I: Oh, it says the official organ of the Croatian Federal Union of America.

L: Yah, Creatian for Eternal Union. That's Tito's outfit, from

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(chuckle) from Tito's country there, most of those people are.

I: Yes, today, but most of these people left long before Tito.

L: Yes, yes. Tito is one thing I agree with in a way. He believes in communism but he believes in his own communism, he ~~don't~~ don't believe in international communism. Russia is trying to control the communism of the world. Tito thinks that. . . He works with the United States as much as he does with Russia, that is, he tries to work things for his own people from both ~~xxx~~ countries, from both Russia and the United States. And sometimes I get a little aggravated by our own country, think that in case of a pinch, I think Tito would be a communist if there was a choice made between communism and the democratic system of the world, that he'd go with the communists. That's my personal opinion, yah. Now, where are we?

I: Well you were telling me some of your personal reasons for having joined the union and as you said it was because of the success you saw that the union was having in Montana, is this. . . Did you have any union background prior to the time you came out and got into coal mining?

L: Well, the union background, all the union background that I had before I came to Colorado was in Montana. And then gaining little by little, reading the literature and things that they. . . I thought was right for the working man to try to protect his own union, is the union, only source of protecting his own interest, is the union.

I: Do you remember any of the ~~xxxx~~ authors or some of the people that influenced you, the things you read? I don't know if

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Mother Jones wrote anything. . .

L: I followed the examples and theories of old Sam Gumpers. Sam Gumpers was the first president of the American Federation of Labor and he was the president of it till he died. In fact, Sam Gum. . .they had a meeting. . .They had a convention in Mexico City and he took sick and he adjourned the convention and told his friends to rush me out of here, I don't want to die on foreign soil. You know where he died? In El Paso, Texas.

I: Just made it across the border then.

L: Just made it across the border and that's where he passed away. And the foreign born, born in. . .came over here, made strife, the struggle. Building the country, in the meantime, trying to make progress along with it. And I think that even today with all of our difficulties that we have, that this is still the best country in the world and I begin to believe that when I came over. And I still believe in America, that America is the best place in the world. The only reason that we disagree with each other because in my estimation, I get sometime aggravated by colored people. Minority groups or the desegregation in other words. You are not putting this down, are you?

I: No, if you don't want this, we'll. . . .

L: No. I just wanted to express myself to this extent, that I have never been prejudiced against the minority groups. In fact I'm part of a minority myself, and I can't be against it.

A: That would be all right to put down in there.

L: My belief isn't that way. My belief is for pulling people together and making it best for all of us. But when I see these

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minority groups in our own country, like colored people, they're born and raised here, this is their country. And have them ~~■~~ come in here, they were found here. And then when you bring the ~~fx~~ freedom or equality amongst them, they don't want whites around. They want their own police force, they want their own university, they want this and they want that. They don't know what they want. That's what. . .that disturbs me terrible.

I: But this is the same way you were disturbed at the whites and the student unrest at some of these other campuses too though.

L: Yah.

I: It wasn't a. . .

L: ~~xxxx~~ It's~~a~~ a thing that. . .In my estimation, that here we ~~gx~~ fight for something and when we get it. . .Now in the mine workers you ~~dx~~ don;t, we ~~mx~~ never had any difficulty with these people. If they were found in industry. . .In fact the United Mine Workers and the CIO, which later one, after the United Mine Workers went to work ~~wixkx210~~ for CIO, our best members of the CIO in the packing industry and in steel, good many sections of the country are colored people. Very good members and loyal members. Right out here east, northeast Denver, Swift, Armours and Cudahy, we have 3 local unions out there, used to. Of course now they're done away with prattically. Those men, a good many of them, moved away. At least I would say 80% of the membership over there is Spanish-American and Negro. And they're good people. And they. . .Sometime I think that the unions themselves are doing more in educating those people and try to bring them together than some of these government agencies. Sometimes I

think when I see in the paper about the. . .that the organized labor is depriving the colored people of education or colored people of their job, they don't realize that the New York, Detroit, all of the. . .even in Denver here, that a good many of these jobs that they're driving for, you got to have a license, to be a licensed and full fledged journeyman, electrician, plumber, steam _____, all of these things, it takes training. Apprenticeship training, 4 years. When you get a full 4 years, and you'll get these licenses. City cannot hire these people right off the streets and they come on and send him out here, ruin certain things. But that's what they ~~nx~~ want. They wanted to go too fast. I noticed in New York that the Building Trades Department of the AFL-CIO asked for 100 printers, apprenticeship, start training them. They're asking now, what do you want to be, plumber, you want to be an ~~electrician~~ electrician, whatever you are, you have to make a decision and then from there on you can ~~nx~~ change tomorrow or next day because that's what some of them want. If they don't like it they want something else. It's just, It don't work that way.

I: It takes time.

L: Sure. Now boy goes to this school and now it takes almost 3/4 of his life. When he gets to be 21 he's been in the school for about 18 years ~~nxnx~~ almost.

I: I've been in school almost 21 years.

L: There you are. All right. No matter what we drive today it takes a long time, but some of our people that the. . .I noticed here on the TV, 40% drop out of the high school, that's terrific.

I can't believe that.

I: It seems pretty high to me.

L: Huh?

I: That seems like a high figure to me. I do not know.

L: Yah. And some of those people tomorrow is going to come up and demand the best jobs and they can't have it because they haven't got the education, they haven't got enough development. Now my time, ~~xxx~~ _____, it wasn't education in my time, it was just guts to know how to go about it and get things that you know was right. Now that's the difference between my time and your time. You have to be educated in your time and in my time, if you know what's right and you think you're right and if the law is not fair you're going to win anyhow, that if you keep driving but you have to be on a firm foundation to know that you are just and fair and right driving for the things that you should have.

I: It's also when you came in there were a lot of southern Europeans coming in at the turn of the century.

L: Yah.

I: That's the. . . I think it's our biggest immigration period, was between 1900 and 1910. This is a need for labor.

L: Right, right.

I: So this is what was the. . .

L; And you know, I'm a great believer in the. . . Now father worked harder than I did when he. . . I used to listen to him when he come back to the old country when they used to mix concrete this way you know, with a shovel, and then put it in the buckets and

~~take~~ take it down there. He worked with the construction workers in Stubenville, Ohio and they build a plant out there. And then when they completed the plant he got one of the jobs there. And he worked there and he come back to the old country. Now those things. . . America was built that way. I wasn't the. . . When I read this story about the General Palmer. . . Did you ever read about General Palmer here, the head of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad?

I: Oh, I've heard of it but I haven't read that much on it.

L: Yah, well he was the president of the Denver and Rio Grande. And the Santa Fe Railroad and ~~the~~ Denver and Rio Grande made the bid to. . . They employed a lot of thugs and guards trying to fight against each other too you know. First one got into Canyon City would be allowed to go through Royal Gorge and Denver Rio Grande got into Canyon City 5 minutes before Santa Fe and Santa Fe quit. They didn't go any further than Pueblo, see. And the Denver & Rio Grande went through the Royal Gorge and go on to Salt Lake. And they were rough and they were rugged. A lot of people went to work for them and they used guns and they used methods that you and I wouldn't ~~think~~ think about using it today. But at the same time, ~~they~~ there were enough honest people that came over here that wanted to build ~~an~~ America with a ~~my~~ much ~~fi~~ different atmosphere and better things in life. And I told my wife a lot of times, I said, well, this is a good many years ago, when I saw a foreign name on the football team, especially Notre Dame or some of those foreign names you know. I said, well, I'll bet his grandfather or father may be a steel worker or coal

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miner. But he saw that his grandson or his son didn't have to work as hard as he did and I was glad that the progress is made that a good many of our generations are working for better for all of us in America. That's ~~wax~~ ^{the way} America is built. A Swede came over first. Scandinavians, Polish, Russians, French and then the others from southeastern Europe and then they begin when the others came over. And they. . .all the tunnels and all the railroads built by Swedes, you know, the early. . .

I: A lot of it was this way. Can we get back to what you were doing in 19. . .well, during the strike and during this time, the types of things, ~~x~~ personal accounts that you can recall, not just the historical impact ~~xxxx~~ because some of the historical side lights I can pick up from the things I read. But looking for the parts of this historical thing that you were doing personally that I can identify with Mike ~~xKx~~ Livoda. You know, you mentioned some of the, as an organizer, this is the type of thing I'm looking for.

L: Well first. . .

I: You mentioned that you took. . .

L: Personal thing, I. . .

I: ~~Dixie~~ Didn't you go up. . .You came to Denver I think on the last tape, the ~~w~~ one with the section that was lost. and your wife ~~xhxxx~~ showed me the picture with one of these demonstrations and you were just a couple people behind the flag with the deep snow, do you recall this?

L: Oh yah, yah. The thing that. . .I didn't do it in the early days of the history of the United Mine Workers because I wasn't looking

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anything for myself. In fact, a good many of the boys those days decided they wanted to run me for vice-president of District 15. I said oh don't do it. ^{I said,} /I'm too young. In the first place I want to. . .I want to gain more experience and the. . . they decided that they want me to go for the vice-president of the United Mine Workers for the district. And I couldn't just keep ~~my~~ them off. They decided, yah I must go. And whether you agree with us or not we put your name up there. So I finally agreed to it and I got elected all right. I got elected. In fact I was elected vice-president in the last election ~~of~~ ^{that} the Colorado miners had in 1924. And I think that. . .I don't know. I felt this way, that. . .

A: Turn this up just a little.

I: If you want to speak, go ahead.

A: Well, honey, if you would just think of it like this. When you started, what you did, and you came up here to the state house, you started as an organizer and then you were vice president, when we were married you also were vice president of United Mine Workers. But your work from then on. ^{were} You/going from place to place organizing and helping out. Then you were sent to Canada for 7 months. . .

L: ~~I~~ Oh, I don't know whether you want that.

I: I'd like. . .I'm going to have to come back cause I'm running out of tape on this one, but what you're saying is right. Could you tell me, when did you marry?

A: In 1917.

I: Then you married a couple of years after the strike?

A: Yes, it was after the strike that we were married. And, but. . .

L: ~~iz~~ About 3 years after the strike.

A: Yes, because the strike was during 13 mostly, 1913. And we were married in 1917. And but your history, if you just get it down to what you did personally, what your contacts were, what you had done and then you of ~~xx~~ course were sent back there to the steel strike and then you were ~~xxxx~~ sent to Canada and all of your, what you had done is what he wants to get first because now what, ~~going~~ going into other history, he can get that himself, honey.

L: Well I think that. . .I wasn't the particularly, I wasn't looking for glory for myself personally.

I: I'm not saying that you were. But I'm trying to see what you were doing so that I can get more than just the general details. So that I can see from one person on the inside.

A: This is what you yourself had done. And you were at the Black Hills during the strike, during the 1913-14 strike, you carried this rifle at that time. You came home, you took ~~xxxx~~ sick, you were, had to go to the hospital because you needed an operation right after, you were sick on the job, in other words.

L: That was after the federal troops came in.

A: Yes, and then the time that you were beat up that you were left to lay on this dirt floor.

L: Oh, I got beat up before strike. He's got that.

A: Yah, for 7 or 8 days or whatever the thing. . .Well, that's what he wants . He wants your personal, is this right?

I: Yes. When I come back I might ask you just to stay here with us

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cause. . .

A: Well, I think I can help him in that way because he gets a ~~bit~~ little disorganized in his conversation. He gets ~~xxx~~ carried away with what's going on.

I: Well I'm going to try to ~~xxxx~~ take sections out of this and write it~~x~~ out so that you'll be able to follow. Then we can fill in these things if we're going off a little bit on that, because. . .

L: We got through the strike, the strike and milita. How much more do you want?

I: We've gone through it ~~nx~~ once, but I think that there are probably things that she has mentioned, like your role, on the types of things you were doing~~x~~ when you were at, when they were at the Black Hills, while they were up there. The types of things you were doing, the fact that you got sick or the fact that you overstressed yourself or something like that. ~~Xxxxxx~~
Your role in that demonstration.

A: Didn't eat ~~xxxxx~~ properly, didn't rest properly, and. . .

[END OF TAPE]

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A = His wife

A: This will be the other voice in there.
Sounds like a woman's voice.

I: . . .your role in that demonstration.

A: Didn't eat properly, didn't rest properly and he's had so much on his mind. And of course, you were sick at the time and you had to be operated on in the Pueblo hospital right after this was over because of the fact that he was, the condition he was in.

I: I wondered. Were you one of those persons who was indicted?

A: Oh yes.

L: Oh yes.

A: He was indicted definitely.

I: Okay. What you were indicted. . .If you can recall what you were indicted for. . .

L: Well, all of the miners, including Lawson and Zincane and all of them, were indicted for the arson, murder, I think arson and murder was mostly in most cases. And the 182 in Las Animas county, I think in the state, throughout the whole state, was 4 hundred and some, appeared in Lafayette in Boulder County, Route County, Fremont County. The fights when the. . . This was before the. . .After the 20th day of April.

A: But you were indicted. . .you were in prison several times, for that matter, right?

L: Oh yes. Well, I was. . .

I: See, some of the times you were in jail, this is. . .

L: I was in jail when I started to work for the organization. I went up to Primero and two fellows got a hold of me. . .I think what happened there, we rode up on, delivering grocery with a man and I went with a guy up there and while we were in the

saloon, we stopped in the saloon there and maybe this fellow that was with me driving this wagon said something. And by the time we got in the camp they were waiting for me already and picked me up and I was in jail 3 days before they find out I was in jail.

A: And when they searched him they said he had, was carrying weapons. He had one little penknife. I have the article here on all of this stuff, which will help you. I know that it's time to have just a little of something because. . . .

I: Oh, I'm ~~gonna~~ going to. . . I don't want to hold you past lunch time because. . .

A: That's all right.

I: And I'm also running out of tape so that if. . . going to have to. . .

A: Do you drink coffee? Or don't you?

I: Cup of coffee would be fine. I thank you for that. This is. . . I'm really. . . You're doing me a service just by telling me what you're doing. . .

L: Then I was in jail at the early stage of the strike, I think it was in November, just before we ^{came} ~~came~~ up to Denver here, for two weeks. We went to Aguilar to have a meeting. . .

I: This is November in 1912?"

L: This was in 1914, was already strike. . . 13, early part of the strike. And secretary of the district 15, Ed Doyle, we took him from meeting to 5 miles below Aguilar. He didn't come back with us. On the way back to Trinidad, four of us got thrown in jail. Well, they were picked up and they took us down here to the hotel in Trinidad and kept us there till late in the evening and

finally throw us in jail. It was nice weather when I. . .When I came out of jail there was 4 feet of ~~was~~ snow on the ground. Oh my God, I said, what the heck do you, why don't you keep me inside, I don't want to go in this kind. . .But anyhow I got out, but the, . . .Eating food in the Black Hills, that is the. . . You see we used to organize these men and ~~to~~ send them in different places to fight and eating dry bread, water and. . .

A: Salt pork and beans.

L: No, baloney, mostly baloney, that would be, that was the food. And you eat that, not 3 times a day, but couple of times a day and water. Man will get thirsty, even when they're hungry they'll get thirsty.

I: There were springs there, weren't there?

L: Well, ~~we~~ we had the spring there close ~~enough~~ enough so that. . .

I: I thought that was one of the reasons they said they picked this as an area because you had water supply.

L: Yeah. And we had a wagon that used to carry water to us. And as far as the sleeping was concerned, nobody ~~was~~ slept at anytime for that matter. If you sleep five minutes why you thought you slept five hours. (Chuckle) And that's the way the things went. For about, let's see, from Monday night to Saturday morning. On Saturday morning of that same week the federal troops were coming in. But during the period from Monday night, the fights were breaking out, in Aguilar~~x~~ it was first, then Walsenburg, then Fremont county.

I: WERE you at any of ~~these~~ these fights?

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L: Huh?

I: Were you there at any of these fights?

L: Forbes. Forbes fight. That was the last Saturday, see. I was with the couple of guys in the mobilization ground there to. . we ~~was~~ used to check on these guys. We'd find out if they were man enough to stand through, that they wouldn't. . .

I: Wouldn't desert in the fight. .

L: Right. Back out. And the guy knew that I know all of them, that I. . .And they trusted my judgment. But on the last night, Saturday night. . .

A: I can't do anything fancy, I've got a bum arm, but I'm going to let you have a sandwich.

I: Well thank you. This is. . .

A: And here's some coffee.

I: This is more than generous. I didn't. . .

A: Well.

I: I didn't mean to invite myself for dinner.

A: Oh well, you didn't invite yourself.

L: Friday morning, uh, Friday night, we organized 175 men to go to the. . .

A: My husband always has a half sandwich for lunch, he doesn't want a whole one cause he eats a big late breakfast.

L: . . .to go to the Forbes, to go to the Forbes. In this Forbes, there was the superintendent of the company, fellow by the name of Nackel, he was a Scotchman, bad egg, very bad. The boys want to get him. We instructed everybody that the women and children should be left alone, kept. . not to touch them.

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A: [Whispering] Do you take sugar and cream?

L: And they didn't. But going into the. . . You see, we surrounded,
we went on the hill up there and you had to come down off the
hill, but we got a couple of machine guns up on the top of the
hill.

I: You did, or the guards had?

L: Boys did. We got it, but nobody knew anything about it so we
tried to break it up. And it's hard to break the machine gun,
you know, there's nothing there that you can break except damage
it ~~as~~ as much as you could, but. . .

I: You mean you captured. . .

L: Yeah.

I: Okay.

L: Yah. Cause the man that was with the machine gun was, that was
the. . . _____ in the camp.

I: Mike we're going to have ~~to~~ to quit, we're ____.

[Tape cut here] [I guess his tape ran out]

This is an interview with Mike Livoda. Today is November 30, 1969
and Harold Black is conducting the interview.

I: Now Mike if you would tell us where you're from. . . I mean, . . .

L: I was born in the, what's known ~~as~~ at the present time in
Europe as Yugoslavia. And I was 17 years of age when I came to
this country. It was 1905 when I came here.

I: Why did you come?

L: Well I came from the. . . It was the feeling over there at the
time that World War I, and in fact, I didn't even get my own

✂ passport. I got the name of my brother, but the features and . . .that I had a friend in the office where they issue passports. He fixed it up. And I got the passport and I got away. Otherwise 17 years of age, they were not allowed to leave the country because the government wants them there for the army.

I: Although World War I didn't break out until about 1913, they thought about it. . .

L: Didn't till 1917.

I: Okay, but from 1903, they still had this feeling already.

L: Oh yes, yes, . . .1917 war broke out and I came over and I went to ~~work~~ work in the steel plants ~~and stayed~~ in the state of Ohio, Stubenville, Ohio.

I: How did you know to do to Stubenville?

L: Well my father worked there before I came over and he, in fact, he build the plant up and he decided to come back to the old country on account of the family. And we had a farm, little farm and he was interested more with the family.

I: How large was your family?

L: How large was the farm?

I: How large was your family?

L: Oh, the family was grandfather, and grandmother, and my mother and father, and. . but the two brothers and a sister, my brothers and sisters. And then the two aunts, my father's sisters. We were all living together on the farm.

I: One household. And then he was working in the United States to

help support you?

L: That's right, that's right. I send him some money as often as I could from the small amount that I was making in the steel mill out of \$1.75 a day for 12 hours work. And steel plant decided to, in 1907, the plant was tapering off, sort of, didn't work steady. So, we decided, three ~~of~~ of us, we decided ~~xxx~~ that there was a feeling of the gold rush in Alaska. We decided we want to go take for Alaska, but we never made it. We got as far as Butte, Montana.

I: May I interrupt you a moment. Were you unionized in Stubenville?

L: No. No, there was no union there. There was no union there, there was no union anyplace else ~~from~~ for that matter wherever I worked and I worked. . . First contract that we had negotiated in Red Lodge, Montana, in the coal mines, that's where I joined the union. This was in 1907. And I worked there. . .

I: What was the name again?

L: Red Lodge, Montana.

I: Red Lodge.

L: And I worked there 2 1/2 years. And then the mine slowed down again and they. . . I had the feeling to move. . . Young fellow those days, why, ~~you~~ you had to have steady work or you just can't stand idle. So I moved from there to Sheridan, Wyoming. From Sheridan I came to Denver. I didn't work in Sheridan. It was slow work there too. And then I came to Denver here and went to work above Denver here in Leiden Mine. And I worked there 2 months, worked steady, but it was 10 hours a day, see, even there. So, it was too close to Denver. And Saturday night you

come to Denver. Sunday afternoon you go back and whatever you make, what's left that you didn't spend, you go back, board in a company boarding house and it was not very good conditions. So I decided to change, to to southern part of the state.

I: What did you want to do with your money at this time?

L: Well, what I wanted to do with the money if I was making any, if I had any that was. . .there was not very many left after you pay your board and you cover up your expenses, as a young fellow, there isn't a great deal left. I want to ~~xxx~~ save some, so look into the future to see if I could do something that's more looking to the future, how to make a living.

A: Better yourself.

L: So I went from here to, from Denver to Walsenburg. And I asked in Walsenburg when I got there, I get a job. And I asked the night policeman there in Walsenburg if there was any union. He said, are you union man. I said yeah, I belong to United Mine Workers. If I was you, I wouldn't tell anybody..X That's just what he told me. So I found ~~x~~ out that the union existed in Trinidad, I put my card there. And then from there I started to work in the mines. And working amongst the miners on the QT, get them to sign up into United Mine Workers.

I: Now wait a minute. Earlier you told me that, excuse me, that John Lawson had had an interview with you.

L: I'm coming to that. The. . .In 1912. . .This is in 1910, I worked for about. . .In the fall of 1910, I ~~xxx~~ worked for a year in the mine, see.

I: Were you trying to get people to join a union then?

L: Yes, even when I was working in the mine.

I: You weren't authorizing anything. You were just a . . .

L: No. No, but I know that was the right thing for them to do because I belong to union and it was. . .at those days, we figure out if any union man, if he was a union man, should advise the other worker if he's a non-union that the union is the best interest for him and his co-workers if he join with the rest of them, that they might be able to better their conditions. So the result was that John Lawson find out that I was down there, so he came to interview me and then asked me if I would come out and go to work for United Mine Workers the ~~day~~ first of January 1912. And ~~that's~~ that's when I went to work from the mine, came out.

I: How did he find out about you if it was dangerous for people to know that you were union worker?

L: Well there was a secretary of the union in Trinidad, fellow by the ~~name~~ name of Robert Yulich. He was a German ~~from~~ fellow. He came from GERmany and he kept in touch with Lawson in Denver here. And told him about me, that I was working in the mine, and the work that I was doing. _And John asked me if I could recommend some good Italian that. . .You see, they hired me and the Italian boy, young ~~from~~ fellow, both us we went to work. And that's when really the company hopped up to get after us. The hiring guards, putting ~~them~~ them on the trains behind us, ahead of us. So it got so that I couldn't even do my work when I got into a town. I don't know whether I told you here before that I was put out of Walsenburg at night, at midnight.

I: Yes, you said once that you were put out. . .your interview with

Jeff Farr.

L: Yeah, yeah. But I went out of the town and stayed with friends of mine and come back the ~~x~~ next day into town, defied them to put me in jail. They say that they would keep me in jail and they said if I wanted to do any of my dirty work to organizing miners that I'd have to do it someplace, not in Huerfano county. But nevertheless I kept coming back, I kept coming back.

I: How did you work as an organizer?

L: How ~~dx~~ do I work?

I: As an organizer~~x~~?

L: Well, we usuallyIn those days you had to single out a man. You didn't dare talk with him openly because you don't know if there's 3 or 4 men together. You don't know whether it is, there might be one or there might be two, there might be all of them for union. But there might be some that ~~mx~~ may be against the union. The result was that that man that was against the union ~~mx~~ may report those ~~thxx~~ who are favorable to union, along with me that I was, that we both ~~wxxxx~~ would get into trouble with the law and the man would lose their jobs. I didn't care so much about myself, but I was very much particular~~x~~ about the man that sign the union card, not to lose their job because they joined the union.'

I: You ~~ke~~ mean that when you went in to the union. . .I mean, into a company area that you only tried to visit with a family or with one man at a time?

L: One at a time and ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~xxx~~ sometimes if we get so friendly and then would get more closely together with the rest of them if they were the right kind of men. If they were not right kind, we tried

to keep away from them. ~~Was~~ You usually know. You usually know whether the man is favorable to union or not because the others would tell me, see. And that's the way we used to work. I was in Aguilar. Aguilar was a little ~~was~~ town. God bless its people in there. They were so good to me that. . .

I: May I ask you another question dealing with this?

L: Yah.

I: You've mentioned before that there was an Italian, Bob Yulich and yourself, you weren't working as a team then, these 3 people? You were just out as individuals contacting people?

L: Yah, yah. Then we, ~~was~~ when we get enough of them signed up, then we would call them together and organize a local union. And when we organized a local union in this town of Aguilar there was 67 gunmen there from different camps and from Walsenburg and Trinidad and different mining camps, came in. And the marshall of the town made them all to leave their guns into the mayor's office. And then when they got through after the business that they came in ~~for~~ for, and they came in to see and try to find out how many miners actually came there to join the local union. We met right down at the saloon in the basement and there's little holes there on the side, they would sneak up there and look through to see if they could recognize any of them down in that basement. ~~Was~~ But we covered everything up, you know. What I wanted to tell you particularly, that after I was in the town of Aguilar for about 2 months and a half, we had the sentiment pretty well worked up in this little town there.

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I: Is this January and February of 1912?

L: 1912, yah. ~~But~~ About the first of April, just about the first of March, there was a man that came to, from Denver here to hotel in Aguilar. The marshall of the town pat me on the back, I was sitting right out there, he said, Mike, he said, you've been a pretty good boy coming into town here for the last 2 months. It's your own business, I don't know what you're doing but you mind your own business and you seemed to have a lot of friends. He said there's a man up at the hotel that's, he's working on the mayor of the town to put you out of town. So if you've got any friends, you go down there and have your friends go down and see the ~~mayor~~ mayor ~~x~~ so that they'll let you stay in town. So I told my friends and told a couple of bartenders who were bartenders tending a bar to these two men. And the man that ~~x~~ I took with me was city councilman of the town of Aguilar and we went to see the mayor. And one of ~~x~~ these. . .

I: Who was the man that came down?

L: Fellow by the name of Josh Moscrav and Morris Pibby. Morris Pibby was an Italian and Josh Moscrav was, I don't know whether he was. . .He was from the state of Kansas. He was a ~~xxx~~ saloon keeper but I would say that he was more of a Scotchman or Englishman.

I: Are these the ones that were for you or the people that came. . .

L: They were for me, the were city council of that town and went down with me to protest to the mayor.

I: Who was the man that came from Denver though?

L: Well he,- I don't remember his name but he was sort of a stooge for the National Fuel Company who had 3 mines around Aguilar there.

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And the result was that we went down there, I didn't say a word. But these two councilmen talked to the mayor. In fact, one mayor got pretty. ..I mean one councilman got pretty tough, on the desk in front of the mayor, he told him he said, whose paying the tax in this town. We are the taxpayer, we are people who should x treat everybody right rather than to permit the ~~xxx~~ coal ~~company~~ company stooge to come in here and kick the people, that's good people, out of our town. And the mayor finally come around and he said to me, he said well, if you're that kind of a man, you can stay here as long as you want to. But in the meantime, . . .

I: You were never thrown in jail while you were in Aguilar then?

L: ~~Oh~~ Oh, I was in jail prior to that, not in Aguilar. Aguilar was good to me~~x~~, they were good people. I was in jail in Trinidad.

I: Is this the first time you were in jail?

L: First time was in 1911. I went to, in November, I went to Primero, which is 14 miles out of Trinidad, and the...with the fellow that was going up there delivering groceries and somebody, somehow found out that I went up there for the purpose to try to organize miners. There was 3 detectives come in the house where I was at, the grabbed me and took me out to the company store and I had papers and I didn't have any, nothing serious, except the union papers, pencil and pen. And they decided they want to put me in jail. I was in jail for 3 days before they find out that I was in jail.

I: Before who found out?

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- L: Before the secretary of the union find out that I was in jail.
- I: You were in jail in Trinidad for 3 days?
- L: Yeah. Yeah. And there was an attorney come there and he says, is Mike Livoda here, I say yah. He said, are you, what are you in for? I said, I don't know. Hah, hah, ~~xxx~~ ^{I said,} he just picked me up and throwed me in. I said, I wish you would tell the secretary of the union down there to tell them that I'm in here, and you could tell him to come up and see me. Oh, in about a half an hour, here comes the secretary with ~~the~~ a bond, sign up a bond and I got out of jail. And we called meetings and meetings, protest meetings, why they should do that. There was no reason whatso ever, just throwed me right ~~x~~ in jail there. I was in jail for 3 ~~days~~ days and 3 nights before they find out that I was in there. And during the strike we went to a meeting in Aguilar and ~~xxxx~~ coming back from the meeting, national guards. . .
- I: No wait, how far have you shifted to? Your first is November 1911.
- L: Yeah.
- I: Now when was the strike?
- L: The strike was in 13, two years later.
- I: Okay, I wanted to keep my times straight here.
- L: Yah, yah, and during the strike there was 3 of us that went up to Aguilar with the district secretary-treasurer. And he, after he made his speech in Aguilar, this little town that I was telling you about it, because the miners were located in certain localities where we have, where ~~we~~ ^{they} could all get together for meetings. And he went on to dinner from there. And on the way back to town, we had an automobile, we were traveling by automobile those days, and

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the roads were rough. They're not like they are today, you know, you got. . .sometimes it takes us all day to. . ._____. Sometimes it take us all day to make 14, 15 miles. But what I was. . .
~~Why~~ While we were coming by the fairground, there was two automobiles of the National Guard. They picked us up, took us down there and fed us, then they throw us in jail. I was in jail for two weeks and I still don't know even today what I was in there for.

I: Where were you thrown in jail?

L: In Trinidad.

I: You ~~■~~ were going to Aguilar?

L: Come back from Aguilar.

I: Coming back.

L: Yah.

I: And this was National Guard people who threw you in jail?

L: Yah. ~~Nix~~ National Guard was there, and already in there interfering with the functions of the union. And you know, when you have a struggle like that, you used to have Ludlow, where we mostly. . .most of us used to go to Ludlow to try to keep those people organized and keep them together. You see, there was over 15 hundred people there and they were all practically like one family. And we had Spanish-Americans, we had some colored people, we had the Slavs, we had the Russians, we had Italians, we have Mexico Mexicans, old Mexico Mexicans, Scotch and Irish. And those kind of people when you unify them all together, that in the evening, I used to get out there a little ways from the camp, you know, and listen to music in those camps. They'd be singing in

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every language in the world in that tent colony, how those miners were ~~mx~~ unified together and stuck together. Families were getting along together. I had bunch of Montenegros, they were real genuine guys. They were singles, all singles. And a man was killed in the mine and his wife didn't want to stay in the camp, after the strike break out, she asked me if she could come out on the strike with the men. I said, well I'm going to ask headquarters if they'll. . . And they paid her the relief and I fixed it up for them so she would have a tent to live in, that tent herself and she cooked for all of these fellows. There was 13 of them, they were all singles and she cooked for them and I used to eat with them everytime I eat. I leave maybe 25 or 30¢ whatever I would have in my pocket, you know, pay for the meal. And they eat good food. It was good food there. It was, you know, wholesome food, ~~hnx~~ not fancy food but it was good food. And she stayed with us there all during the strike. ~~And~~ And when there was any fight between the National Guards and our own people, these fellows was always able to defend themselves and protect themselves and protect a lot of other people along with them.

I: You've mentioned that lots of these people were singles and you yourself were single at this time.

L: Oh yah.

I: Did you have to. . .any fear for making friends and letting people know who your friends ~~swere~~ were in places like Trinidad, for fear that they'd be in trouble for the fact that you were a union organizer?

L: Well, no, no. In fact to me, by taking a job as an ~~organizer~~ organizer,

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it increased my prestige and the popularity amongst the people, for the reason that I had enough nerve as a ~~young~~ young fellow as I was to take something like that, that kind of a job to try to improve and better the conditions of those men that's working in the mine.

I: What did it do to you to have been thrown in jail, did this just up your determination or. . .?

L: Well, the jail didn't do no harm to me in particular. In fact, we had, those days, you know, there was no trouble to get in jail and be in there 2 or 3 months before you know what you're in there for. And that's the way it. . .courts ~~z~~ were controlled by the coal companies, sheriff was controlled by the coal companies, saloon ~~keepers~~ keepers were controlled by the coal companies and the combination of the ~~things~~ things that were in that, the men had to just keep bucking and fighting against the odds so terrificly against you. It was no trouble to be courageous, you were just ready to fight, that's all. And we, during that strike, we had to get into politically to clean up the mess. We clean up the outfit. In 2 or 3 years after the strike, all the gangs that was against the freedom of free expression, and freedom of these people being free citizens and free people to live and talk what they want to say and what they want to associate with, what they want to do for themselves and their families; the gang was defeated and the good people were put in there and the democratic party's in power in Las Animas and ~~Huerfano~~ Huerfano ~~z~~ county from that time, and it's always been in power even down there now.

I: Did you have any trouble with the ~~newspaper~~ newspaper?

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L: Oh, critical news, yah, local paper. And the newspapers here in Denver. . .I might as well tell you about it. The. . .See, there was the Denver Post, Rocky Mountain News and Denver Times. All of these 3 papers were against miners.

I: Was there a Denver Expresso?

L: ~~Ok~~ Were against miners and against the miners' organization for the ~~xxx~~ simple reason that the coal companies bought them over. They admitted before the congressional committee that the owner of the Denver Post, he said, I'm with the coal companies because they pay me to be with them.

[End of side 1]

side 2

I: Oh, newspaper. [This first part if repetition.]

L: The man in Pueblo that run the newspaper there, Star Journal, he said I'm with the peoples with me. That means the coal company paid him to be against the miners. And the Rocky Mountain News and the Times. . .You see, the Post and News got together so they done away with Times, years ago. News agreed to be in the morning paper and the Post agreed to be in the afternoon paper. But the one paper that was here at that time was Denver Express, that was a real genuine paper that was for the miners and with miners and give out straight information to the public everyday. In fact, the Don McGregor, I don't know whether you ~~want~~ want this down into your records or not, who was a reporter of the Denver Express. Some of the organizers of the United Mine Workers deserted the miners during the fight between the militia and the coal miners in

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Walsenburg. He took charge; he carried the fight against the militia. You see, we. . .

I: You said, you had some deserters, or what?

L: The officers of the representatives of the union who left the. . .
they got scared of the, , ,there was a regular shooting, regular
war was going on, so they left and this guy took charge of the
miners. You see, I was located in Trinidad. In fact I was in
Ludlow, from the time when the fight broke out and I was there
till about the. . .well, the fight broke out on the 20th day of
April and we didn't come back to town till about 7 days after.
We just keep mobilizing people and sending them here, sending them there to protect the other groups and the. . .try to well, to be simple about it, because the National Guards. . .I don't know whether I told you before about the National Guards. You see, actual guards men who came originally out in the strike duty, he got mobilized out, he went back home. And they brought in the company guards and put them in the state uniform to keep the peace between the miners and operators. So you can . . .You can easily see why the strike fight broke out. And it was the case that the ~~miners~~ miners had the miners had to defend themselves with arms or else be exterminated all together.

I: Can we go back and pick up some of the details of the work you were involved in between 1912 and the time the strike broke out?

L: Yeah.

I: You worked at Aguilar. Where'd you go from Aguilar to start?

L: You mean. . .oh, I went all over the state for the union interest of the Mine Workers.

I:

I: No, prior to. . .while you were in the southern fields. . .

L:A Oh, where I worked? Where I worked in the mine?

I: Well you said your first local union was at Aguilar? Where did you try to start the next union?

L: In Trinidad.

I: In Trinidad. Did you use the same practice of trying to find individual. . .

L: Yah, ~~they~~ then we organized. . .

I: If you were blocked out of the mines, I mean out of the camping areas, how did you meet these people?

L: And then we organized. . .Well, In Trinidad, they were already out on the strike. When they come out on the strike they come from all of the camps and after the strike was over we organized local at Soperus, we organize local at Piedmont, we organized local at the Segundo.

I: How were they on strike before you organized them?

L: You see when they come out on ~~the~~ the strike, you see, they were not all ~~to~~ together organized when they come out ~~on~~ on the strike. But when they came out on the strike, then we had to form the organization so they could keep together at each one of these localities.

I: This was 1913?

L: ~~k~~ 1913.

I: The strike actually. . .Enough people were, decided to strike and did strike before you actually had a union then?

L: A lot of. . .You see, what we did. . .what we did, this is a
pretty deep thing there. ~~We~~ You see, we didn't ~~have~~ have enough

really mobilized men in the, amongst the. . .about I would say
between 10 and 12 thousand men that was in two counties. I don't
think. . .

I: That's Las Animas and Huerfano?

L: And Huerfano county. I don't think that we had more than 2000 in
the union, but when the strike came, they all came out, those who
were non-union ~~and~~ as well as the union. Then we formed the
union amongst them while they were out on the strike, see..

I: What were you doing after you left Aguilar in about April or so,
and got this thing going, In April 1912; What did you do in
Trinidad and these other places to encourage these people to come
on to strike? How did you spread what you wanted, the information
you had?

L: Well what I did really is to go into these camps, sneak in at
night and meet somebody that was sympathetic to union.

I: Did you go in after dark then?

L: Yah. And I would stay inside of that house while ~~xx~~ somebody else
in the house would go down and bring some of those fellows to talk
to ~~me~~ me because I didn't dare to go out myself because the company
would find out and run me out or throw me in jail.

I: How did you find this first man?

L: How ~~did~~ ^{do} I find him? Well I. . .tha'ts a long story. You ~~see~~ see,
some of these people they were foreign born miners like Manual's
father, R for illustration. And we knew ~~each other~~ each other,
associated even through lodges or through some sort of cooperating
way that you meet the people, even in the. . .Say, somebody got
married or somebody died, you meet them even in a funeral. And you

begin to meet together and you talk about ~~differe~~ different things. They know that I was working for Mine Workers union and they would talk to me about it. And then they would tell me where to go to see somebody else that was. . .

I: You were just as a resident of Trinidad then?

L: Yes. _____ Trinidad.

I: What were some of the lodges that you joined to get them, to meet these people? Were they members of lodges themselves although they were. . .

L: They were members of. . .well, they were members. . .I joined the two different lodges to get confidence with me. And then through those two lodges I worked amongst the other workers to bring them in about the union.

I: Can you tell me the ~~new~~ names of ~~the~~ those lodges? Remember you showed me a newspaper from one of them.

L: Well, here's the. . .will you get me that. . .

A: Slavonic Lodge.

L: Just a minute I got the paper here. Here's one of them. Here's one of them. And the other one is Serb. . .

AK: isn't another one that's. . .

L: The other one was a Serb Federation, which is the Serbian association of the groups for eternal benefit, like death benefits or sick benefits ~~and~~ things of that nature. And from that, after I joined ~~x~~ with these groups, they come so friendly and convinced that I was doing the right kind of thing towards the interest of ~~the~~ the working people and they took me into confidence and they ~~help~~ help me and did everything in the world

for me. In fact, they tried to protect me sometimes from being beat up and clubbed to death, some of these people.

I: There was. . . As being a member of ~~fraternal~~ fraternal organizations that you actually met some ~~pe~~ people and used them as leads?

L: Yah, that's right.

I: Would you read this.

L: Yah, you want, you take that.

I: Okay, but would you just identify it, so' I'll have it on the tape with you identifying it.

L: This. . .

A: Read this, ~~xxx~~ read this in here [Whispering]

L: A Zionitrode, that mean unity. Unity in the Yugo\$lav language.

I: Okay, this is a Slavic fraternity then?

L: ~~Ne~~ Name of this organization is the Croatian Fraternal Union. Now the Croatian Fraternal Union would be in the Slavic language, they would call it herdavoska, bratska zion. So that means zion, that means unity.

I: Then this is an ethnic fraternity, right?

L: Yah.

I: And was the other one called Eagles, is that what you said it was?

L: Uh.

A: He belonged to the Eagles, that was another organization. That was English and every [Tape cut]

L: . . .that experience that I had with the ~~mi~~ coal miners, that the request was made by the international repre. . .president of the United Mine Workers, that I should report to the Comission who are designated by the American Federation of Labor to

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organize the steel workers. Well this right after the armistice was signed and I was to report to W. Z. Foster in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, McGee Building, 301 McGee Building, I can never forget that. And when I went there, first meeting I had with him and he sent me to the 12th and Carson Street in Pittsburgh to the meeting. And I went to this meeting, when I got into the meeting and I looked at the crowd that was in this meeting. They didn't look like the steel workers to me. And I think after I checked through how many people was there, there was about oh, 65 or 70 people there and all but three of them were security men, steel workers guards, steel company guards in this meeting, tried to get information what was going on. So when I got a hold of this and I run back to the office next morning, I said, well, that was a company guards meeting, that' was not the steel workers meeting. I said, you'll never organize the steel workers by going in at it like that. And they had a little difficulty up in Youngstown. And they sent me to investigate Youngstown to bring back the report. And I went up and I found out what they were doing. . .

I: Who ~~sax~~ sent you?

L: . . .how they were organizing. That the method that they were using get no ~~place~~. The steel workers was working 12 hours a day and he went in in the morning at, say, 5:30 in the morning and he didn't come ~~up~~ out till 6:30 ~~n~~ that night, punching clock in and punching clock out. By the time he changed his clothes and got something to eat it's time to go to bed rather than go to the union meeting. And I laid it down to him and I

told him, I said, . . .

I: Who?

L: To Fos. . . To this fellow Foster. Up on my investigation that we must take these meetings as closest to the steel worker where they live. Well, how you going to do that? I said, well, let me check in a little bit and I found out who the leaders were. After I found out who the leaders were and went out there to the leadership and found out where we get a hall, so that the people could come into the meeting and after the meeting is over it won't take them 2 or 3 hours to get back home. They could get back home in about 10 minutes walking or 15 minutes. We signed up, the first meeting we had we signed up more men than they signed up in the 9 months that they were ~~had~~ before I got there. And I was there from November 1918 to ~~first of Aug~~ first of August 1919. We had 22 thousand men sign up in the steel workers and they had the strike and I got ordered out of there to report to the Commission in Calgary Canada because after the first World War Canada was almost went communist. You don't remember that?

I: No, that's _____. But wasn't Foster the one you were working with, for?

L: Yah. Foster was not a communist then. He was trade unionist, he was, belonged to the car repairs union with the headquarters in Kansas City. But later on, he changed, he went communist. He was a real genuine trade unionist, but the methods that we used were the type of a method that succeeded in those days and succeed yet if its concerted effort of those who are assigned to organize, get together and get their heads together and work together and

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carry the message to the people because I ~~remember~~ remember that in Youngstown there when I was. . .I used to get postcards and on that postcards we put down where the meeting is going to be and on the front here a poor ~~steel~~ steel worker was pulling ~~the~~ the horns of the cow and the back of it was the superintendent of the plant and the boss was milking the ~~cow~~ cow, see. And those steel workers would come into the meeting. . .We had 22 thousand sign up in less than 6 months. I'd have a Catholic priest was heading the parade on Labor Day there. I wasn't there. I got ordered out for the first of August to report to the commission in Calgary. I want to tell you about that. When I got in there. . .I got out of here of trying to convince working people to try to get in and to try to bring about the 8 hours a day, you see, you were fighting at that time for 8 hours a day for the steel workers cause they were working 12 hours a day. And then I was asked by the commission in ~~Calgary~~ Calgary, this is. . .I was paid by the United Mine Workers to organize the steel workers and I was paid to go up there to save the United Mine Workers from being captured by the communists. And when I got into Canada and I found out that the Canadian Labor Movement at ~~originally~~ ~~originally~~ originally, after Russia went communistic, thought that was a good setup, ~~good~~ good. . .and the labor movement was embued in the communism terrifically. We had 13 thousand coal miners there and we had a hell of a time to put them back to work because they had been working under contract of the ~~United~~ United Mine Workers between the company and operators and the government. And I was up there for. . .well, I was up there almost a year. When I come back

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from up there and took the office here, well I was up there and I decided that I want to run for vice president of the United Mine Workers, District 15, vice president here. And I was up there and they elected me as a vice president while I was in Canada. So the first of April, following year, ~~192~~ 1920, I had to come back and take my office here in Colorado. When I come back my own daughter was calling me uncle, see, she didn't recognize me, she didn't know me anymore. heh, heh.

I: You'd been gone so long?

L: Yah.

A: ~~W~~ He hadn't seen her for so long she called him Uncle Mike.

L: Yah. The thing that I wanted to bring to you about, that sometime what you. . the problem ~~x~~ of labor movement are so. . .sometimes change is so extreme from end to another. ~~Xnx~~ You know, I was in the ~~xxxx~~ struggle like with the coal miners here in Colorado with the steel workers. Then taking me out of there and go up there and try to convince the coal miners to come back and stand by the things, what they ~~had~~ have rather than to try to reach the philosophy that nobody knew anything about it.

I: Okay. Can I take you back now and tell me about some of your relations with. . .You just mentioned the use of the lodges to meet people. Can you tell me about some of these people that you were mentioning and how you worked with them. Remember? We talked about these people, the bartenders, the other people in here, . . .

L: These ~~xxxx~~ people usually. . .

I: See, you~~nd~~ need to mention who they are because, my~~sp~~ spelling's terrible, don't worry about that.

L: That's all right. Blanich was a member of the United Mine Workers.

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He usually would tip me off to tell me just where to go, how to go about it, approach certain people. . .

I: Where was Balanich?

L: . . .about the convincing. . .

A: Where was ~~x~~ he?

L: Joe was working in Cokedale. You see, after the ~~xxx~~ strike of 1913-14. . .let it go. These people here Polanich and ~~xxx~~ Softich and Miller, Jackie Miller, these were very influential people in the groups of unions that we had formed already and they usually get in touch with me and tell me how to go about, where to get the next union formed, you see.

I: Where were these. . .were these ~~xxxx~~ organized so the people know them?

L: No, they were members of the union. They were members of the different groups, different local unions of the United Mine Workers. Like Polanich was Cokedale, Miller was in Aguilar, and the different places. Drusella was a ~~xxx~~ bartender, see, he tended the bar.

I: Where was he a bartender?

L: Delawa. That's the Victor American Fuel Company, that was one of the most bitterest company that we had to fight with in Colorado. CF&I was bad. And here's another thing about these things. Some of these unions were formed, then there was so many of these ~~wx~~ camps that we did not have the union there. We had to go in there through the other people and try to convince them ~~wxx~~ why they should have a union too.

I: How did these men help. . .What was the process?

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L: How did they help? They usually advised me who to go to see. And then through them one would tell the other how to go about it and where we should call a meeting and how to go about it and get the men together.

I: You had the confidence of these men then?

L: Oh yes. ~~They were~~

I: They were the mine workers?

L: Yah, ~~yah~~ yah. Those days, I want to say this, that if a man would tell you that he would give you his confidence and pledge that he would be loyal to you and to the cause that you were pushing forward, they would stand with you till the last drop of blood. They were very loyal. They're not. . .they're different men altogether than what the men are today. Today I doubt it very much whether some of the guys ~~at~~ the head of the union, because the labor movement is entirely different today than it was then. Today, I feel about it. . .I worked for the organized labor prior before we had the National Labor Relations Board and I worked since we had the National Labor Relations Board. I heard the men in the labor ~~movement~~ movement that brags about it, what they did and how they did about it and all of this and that. But I can say this much. That we had just as good a man prior to these laws that were passed and place in the statute books, as we have today. But Roosevelt is the one who, in my estimation, deserves the credit that the working ~~man~~ man is brought about to be free men in this country, that he can make a decision for himself, whether he wants to belong to the union or does not belong to the union.

[End of Tape]

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Tuesday, April 17, 1984

Rites on tap for survivor of 1914 tragedy

By AL NAKKULA

Rocky Mountain News Staff Writer

A memorial service will be held early next month at the site of the Ludlow Monument for Michael "Mike" Livoda, a legend in Colorado's labor movement.

The Ludlow Monument, a short distance west of Interstate 25 about 14 miles north of Trinidad, is a memorial to one of the bloodiest chapters in the history of the American labor movement.

Livoda died last month in New Orleans. He was 96 and one of the last surviving actors of the Ludlow Massacre.

The monument marks the site where a tent colony of striking miners and their families were living after they were driven from mining company houses when they went on strike on Sept. 23, 1913.

Tragedy struck at 10:10 a.m. on April 20, 1914, when machine guns and rifles were turned on the flimsy tents where women could be seen washing and hanging clothes, and children could be seen playing. Many of the men were away on other activities.

The guns were in the hands of the mine security guards, most of whom were also members of the State Militia.

The barking machine guns and high-powered rifles nearly drowned out the screams coming from the tent colony. As tents collapsed and wood stoves toppled, fires broke out. Heavy smoke hung over the area.

By the time the firing stopped, five miners, nine women and two children were dead in the burning rubble. Many others escaped only by lying down in the pits they had dug under their tents to provide more living space.

In the armed fighting that followed, mine guards died in the ashes of burning mine buildings. Other striking miners were found fatally shot and even beaten to death. Some disappeared.

The Ludlow Monument stands over a pit where some of the victims died. A marker lists the names of 20 who lost their lives in and around the tent colony.

The carnage stopped only when the public outcry

stripped the mine guards of their authority and the state soldiers were marched away. Federal troops arrived and the armed miners surrendered their guns.

Livoda was a union organizer and strike leader for the United Mine Workers of America. Despite orders of mine guards to shoot him on sight, Livoda remained active in the strikes in the Trinidad area and organized miners elsewhere in the state.

He walked by night from coal camp to coal camp to recruit members in the struggling union. He was caught once by mine guards near Walsenburg. He was beaten but spent the rest of the night crawling to Walsenburg three miles away.

Livoda died March 31 in the Turo Infirmary in New Orleans after an illness of several months. His body was cremated, and his ashes will be scattered at the Ludlow Memorial Grounds during the service in May at a date to be announced.

Livoda and his wife, Katherine, moved to New Orleans from Denver eight years ago to be near their daughter Patricia Gaudeg and her three children.

Livoda was born on Oct. 22, 1887, in Yugoslavia. He immigrated to the United States at the age of 17. His first job in the United States was a 13-hour-a-day shift loading pig iron in a Steubenville, Ohio, steel mill.

He joined the UMWA while working in a coal mine in Butte, Mont. He came to Colorado in 1910, working first at the Leyden Coal Mine northwest of Denver. A short time later, he moved to southern Colorado.

He married Katherine Zuechon Feb. 11, 1917, in Aguilar, Colo.

Through the years, Livoda served as vice president of the UMWA, vice president of the Colorado Federation of Labor and a regional director of the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

In the early 1930s, he served as a work supervisor of a Civilian Conservation Corps west of Denver. After retiring from the UMWA on April 1, 1955, Livoda served four years as manager of the Denver City Auditorium.



When he retired in 1955, Mike Livoda posed with the rifle he carried at Ludlow. Strikers gave up weapons to federal troops; guns later were returned.