

CHAPTER IV

THE TIME OF TROUBLES

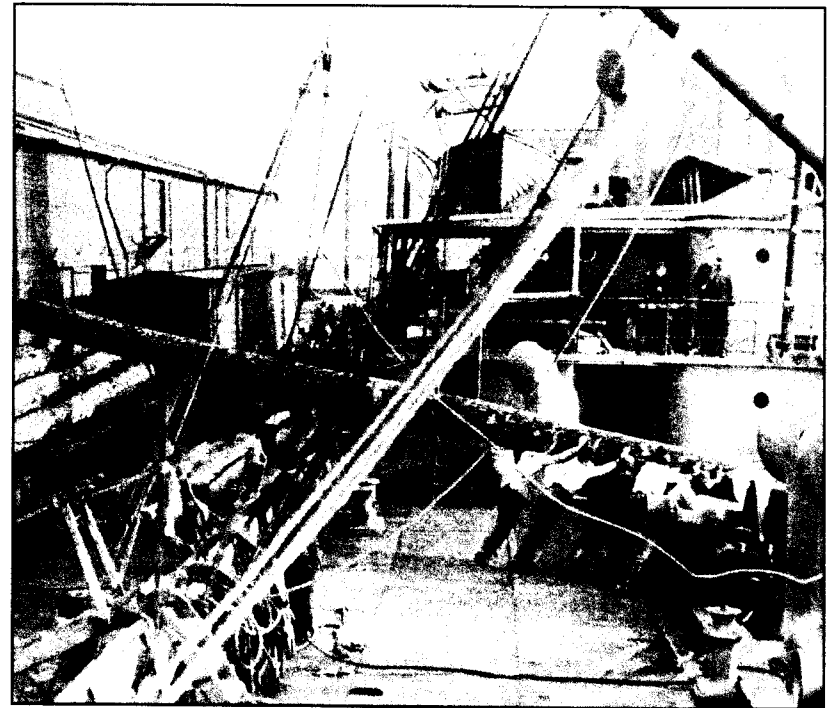
Three major New York banks trying to corner the copper market closed their doors on October 16, 1907, causing a nationwide run on financial institutions. Financiers called in outstanding loans that ruined cash-short businesses. Tens of thousands of workers were laid off as the nation struggled to overcome its second economic depression within twenty years.¹ In Tacoma, the number of factory workers dropped from 11,794 in 1906 to 10,713 in 1907. For six years the employment level stagnated below 11,000.² Similar to 1893, the Panic of 1907 brought about regional and international freight rate wars. For five years steamship lines and freight forwarders vacillated between rate cutting and pledges to hold the price line.³

On the Tacoma waterfront, the panic caused wild gyrations in the volume of lumber and wheat shipped. Deep-water and coastwise lumber shipments dropped from 202,559,628 board feet in 1907 to 115,774,150 in 1908. Panama construction orders caused lumber increases in 1909, 1910, and 1911, but the market declined again in 1912 and remained weak into 1914. In 1908 Tacoma exported 10,154,264 bushels of wheat, but the market dropped the following year to 3,958,353 bushels and did not return to the 1908 level until World War I.⁴ Recognizing the lumber and wheat markets were declining, stevedore bosses drove Tacoma longshoremen harder and faster. On January 11, 1908, wheat packers loaded 12,459 138-pound sacks in seven hours on the *Schwarzenbek*, and on January 15, the men stowed 17,840 sacks in nine hours on the *Macedonia*.⁵ During May lumber loaders stowed 600,000 board feet on the *C. S. Holmes* in five and one-half days.⁶

Already deeply affected by the inroads of the oil industry, coal shipments decreased from 162,209 tons in 1906 to 41,879 tons in 1910. The coal passer practically disappeared from the waterfront.⁷ As the coal handlers left the scene, a new group of longshoremen emerged. General cargo men unloaded tea, crude rubber, oil, tin, and spices from the Orient and stowed cotton, tobacco, and explosives for the return trip. In contrast to the fluctuations in commodity shipments, general cargo tonnage demonstrated steady growth from 1907's 703,936 tons to 1,260,645 tons in 1914.⁸

The Panic of 1907 forced McCabe & Hamilton out of business. This stevedoring company had relied too much on grain and lumber contracts. In May 1908, Captain James Gibson of Washington Stevedoring purchased the name and gear of the twenty-year-old cargo-handling company. During the same week, William J. Jones of Rothschild's announced the opening of a Tacoma

stevedoring office to bid on freight, wheat, and lumber-stowing contracts.⁹ Rivalry between Henry Rothschild and James Gibson for lumber-loading contracts had been intense since Gibson established Washington Stevedoring on Seattle's Pier 6, directly opposite his rival's office. Rothschild had not joined the Puget Sound Shipping Association. The Red Shield stevedore boss had refused to support Gibson in the 1907 strike. When informed that Rothschild was coming to Tacoma a Washington Stevedoring dock boss told a *Ledger* reporter, "They or we must get off the earth. The Sound is not big enough for both."¹⁰



Loading logs for the *Orient* at the Milwaukie dock, 1907.

(Magden Collection)

The 23 Strike

After three years of disorganization, general cargo and grain handlers combined to form Longshoremen of the Pacific Coast (LPC) Local 23 on January 29, 1908. Three months later the new Tacoma union requested recognition from the Puget Sound Shipping Association. Employers refused Local 23. The bosses said the contract covered only unions in existence when the agreement was signed on January 20.¹¹ On July 21, all LPC locals, except Tacoma Lumber Handlers' Local 1, struck Washington Stevedoring demanding recognition of Local 23. Captain Gibson called a special joint session of the

shipping association and wharf owners. Employers immediately cancelled their contract with LPC locals. The bosses voiced unanimous condemnation of union longshoremen for quitting work without proper notice.¹² The waterfront truce had lasted exactly 180 days.

On the day the strike started employers sounded the battle cry, "It will be a fight to the finish! All the employers of longshoremen are united on this matter," announced shipping association Secretary William Dawson. "Hereafter, it will be an 'open shop' over the entire Sound. In our fight we have the sympathy and assistance of the wharf owners. There are plenty of men seeking work and there will be no difficulty filling the places of those who quit."¹³ Local 23 President John Reynolds and Secretary August Seitz replied the next day that "We are doing well in our fight for recognition. Stories that our ranks are being deserted are untrue. Only one of our members has deserted."¹⁴

On July 23, a free-for-all fight took place at Pier 2 in Seattle. Longshore union Flying Squadron members pummelled scabs discharging Alaska-Pacific's *Buckman*. Two nonunion men were hospitalized.¹⁵ When the *Buckman* moved to Tacoma on July 25, another fight occurred between pickets and strikebreakers. Scab John Cline stabbed Local 23 member Melburn Lewis. Cline was jailed.¹⁶ After the *Buckman* incident, Alaska-Pacific and Alaska Steamship obtained a temporary injunction from Federal Judge C. H. Hanford. This restraining order prohibited the longshore federation from picketing Alaska Steam and Alaska-Pacific vessels. Judge Hanford made the injunction permanent on August 6. In his oral opinion Hanford found "despotic unionism" incompatible with the Declaration of Independence. "It is," the judge added, "in violation of the constitutional rights of a man to peacefully follow his vocation and earn an honest living."¹⁷

After the permanent injunction was posted, federal deputy marshals patrolled Puget Sound waterfronts. Union longshoremen no longer picketed dock gates or carried large signs proclaiming "All Workingmen Requested to Keep Away." Strikers walked alone or in pairs up and down Dock Street and Ruston Way. Occasionally they watched scabs work from the Eleventh Street bridge. Strikebreakers worked the ships, ate in warehouses, and slept on the steamers where they worked.¹⁸

There was no doubt about how striking Puget Sound locals felt about the defection of Tacoma Lumber Handlers Local 1. During early August 1908, LPC's executive board revoked the charter of Local 1. Grays Harbor and Portland lumber locals notified Rothschild that "unless the company refused to employ the members of Local No. 1, the union employees of the stevedores elsewhere would declare a strike."¹⁹ Accordingly, Rothschild locked out about 100 Tacoma lumber handlers on August 4. The Tacoma Lumber Handlers sent a committee to other ports to protest the injustice of their charter revocation. Local 1 President Charles Leuistadius Brown argued, "We refused to go out with them (Local 23) because we thought they were not thoroughly organized, because we consider that the calling of the strike in the first place was illegal and because we considered that the time was inopportune."²⁰

Rothschild hired union men from Local 23 and other Puget Sound ports to replace Tacoma men. At the same time members of the Tacoma Lumber Handlers scabbed on Local 23 at Washington Stevedoring. The strike irked longshoremen who worked for Gibson under the McCabe & Hamilton name. A majority of this work force had been members of the ill-fated ILM&TA Local 306, which had perished in the aftermath of the lost strike in 1905. McCabe & Hamilton waterfront workers refused to strike for Local 23. Still, these company men cursed vociferously when strikers called them scabs.²¹

Two members of the Puget Sound Shipping Association supported the longshore federation during the early phase of the strike. Humboldt Steamship and Schubach & Hamilton disregarded shipping association directives. Both continued to hire union longshoremen. The association and wharf owners delivered a "strong ultimatum" to Humboldt Steamship in Seattle and Schubach & Hamilton in Tacoma on August 16, 1908. If the companies persisted in hiring union men, their ships would not be allowed to berth at wharves owned by²²

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Certificate of Membership.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">This is to Certify That:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">IS A MEMBER OF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LOCAL NO. 3, L. U. OF P.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OF TACOMA, WASH.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ADDRESS:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">SECRETARY:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ARTICLE I.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Aims and Objects.</p> <p>Section 1 This organization shall be known as the LONGSHOREMEN'S UNION OF THE PACIFIC, LOCAL No. 3, Tacoma, Wash.</p> <p>Sec. 2 We, the members of this Union do publish and declare that our aims and objects are as follows:</p> <p>First—That whatever right belongs to one member belongs to all members alike as long as they remain in good standing in this organization.</p> <p>Second—Chief of those rights is the right of each member to receive a fair and just remuneration for his labor.</p> <p>Third—An injury to one is an injury to all and we pledge to each other all possible mutual aid and assistance.</p> <p>Fourth—The object of this Union shall be to secure Justice for its members and to establish and maintain as far as practicable a uniform rate of wages in this port.</p> <p>Fifth—These being our principles as governing the actions of this organization, we submit them as such.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ARTICLE II.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Membership. Applications.</p> <p>Section 1. All propositions for membership must be in writing stating name and occupation, accompanied with the initiation fee and signed by three (3) members in good standing.</p> <p>Sec. 2. All propositions shall be referred to a committee of three, appointed by the President, who shall make due inquiries into the Candidate's fitness for membership and report at the next regular meeting when the proposition with the report of the committee shall be submitted to the Union.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2.</p>
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Membership card and Constitution of Local 3, Longshoremen's Union of the Pacific, 1908. The aims and objects in Section 1 are identical with the declaration of principles in the 1886 Constitution of the Seattle Stevedores, Longshoremen and Riggers Union. A migrating union activist could have brought the statement to Tacoma. (Noonan Collection, Tacoma Public Library)

association members. Schubach & Hamilton acceded to the ultimatum, but Humboldt continued to use union longshoremen.

By the sixth week of the strike, the situation of Puget Sound longshoremen was grave. Employers had hired all the strikebreakers they needed. Cargo moved freely across the docks. Strikers pinned their last hopes on the upcoming coastwide convention of longshore locals. If the other unions could be persuaded to help financially and boycott unfair cargo from Puget Sound, the strike could still be won.²³

The executive boards of the Oregon Pacific Coast Association of Longshoremen and Washington State's Longshoremen of the Pacific Coast invited the last Sailor-dominated local, Eureka, and the San Francisco Longshore Lumbermen's Protective Association to meet in Portland on September 21 to discuss plans to federate.²⁴ Local 6 hosted the unity session. On September 29, 1908, delegates voted to establish the Longshoremen's Union of the Pacific (LUP). The new coastwide organization claimed jurisdiction from Cape Nome to San Diego, and included 2,000 longshoremen.²⁵

LUP's first action was to call off the Puget Sound strike in all small lumber ports. A financial appeal by LUP netted \$495 for the Seattle and Tacoma unions. The LUP executive board tried to get an appointment with Puget Sound Shipping Association officers, but the bosses refused.²⁶ It was now clear to everyone that the strike had been lost. Seattle ended the strike on October 19, 1908, and Tacoma longshoremen followed on January 15, 1909.²⁷

LUP turned out to be a transitional step toward reaffiliation with the International Longshoremen's Association. During September 1909, President T. V. O'Connor attended the second LUP convention. O'Connor proposed LUP amalgamate with the ILA. He promised that a Pacific Coast district would have complete autonomy, a separate defense fund, and organizers paid by the ILA. On September 16, LUP officials signed a tentative agreement. After 2,000 West Coast union longshoremen approved, twenty-five locals received ILA charters. Tacoma General Longshore Workers became Local 38-3. Within a short time another thirteen locals were admitted to the district, including Tacoma Lumber Handlers' Local 38-30.²⁸

The first action of District 38 was to head off the spread of the Puget Sound Shipping Association's scab hiring halls. The employers' association sent gangs to Eagle Harbor and Hadlock, where locals 38-2 and 38-32 were already hard pressed by the downturn in lumber demand.²⁹ The shipping association men working at mill spit docks had been dispatched out of the Seattle Pier 8 hall. On jobs controlled by the dispatcher of the scab hall, workers had to carry green cards listing bearer's name, date of registration, and the signature of a member of the shipping association. According to Captain Gibson, "A rigid check is made as each man is employed and no labor organizer or agitator is to have employment."³⁰

Two of the blacklisted longshoremen were David "The Danish Consul" Madison and William T. "Paddy" Morris. Madison and Morris had quit the

"OPEN SHOP" IS THE ULTIMATUM

ASSOCIATION WILL NOT RECOGNIZE LOCAL UNION.

Steamship Men State They Will
Fight Longshoremen to a Finish Now.

An "open shop" in the future is the ultimatum issued by the Puget Sound Steamship Association to the longshoremen who went on strike Monday, in a fight to force the recognition of Tacoma Freight and Grain Handlers' Union, No. 23.

As stated by The Leader yesterday, the Tacoma union has been endeavoring since April to get recognition, but the employers have refused. The Seattle local No. 18 is recognized and the longshoremen's Union of the Pacific gave permission for the Puget Sound locals to strike in sympathy with the Tacoma union.

"We have decided to end our agreement with the longshoremen, which we made January 1, for the year 1908," said a prominent ship manager yesterday. "We will maintain an open shop from now on and intend to fight this matter."

STRIKE RESULTS IN SERIOUS ROW

UNION AND NON-UNION LONGSHOREMEN ENGAGE IN
FRACAS AT DOCK.

BUCKMAN BEING LOADED

Alaska-Pacific Company Says It Has
Declared No Lockout—Arrests
Are Made.

Strike conditions along the local waterfront assumed a more serious phase yesterday when a clash occurred between striking longshoremen and John Cline, a non-union man who is working on the Alaska-Pacific company's steamer Buckman.

The 1908 strike in the Tacoma press.

(Tacoma Daily Ledger, July 22 and 26, 1908, Tacoma Public Library)

sea in 1906 and turned to longshoring in Seattle. Both had been elected picket captains in the 1908 strike. Blacklisted by the scab hiring hall, "The Danish Consul" and "Paddy" moved to Tacoma where employers hired at dock gates and saloons. Both men joined the Tacoma Lumber Handlers' Union. Madison and Morris were short in height, strong in body, and quick of speech. The Dane with his homespun wisdom went on to lead Seattle longshoremen. The Irishman with his tart tongue became the most successful organizer the West Coast ILA ever produced.³¹

After the 1908 strike, Lumber Handlers' Local 38-30 and Freight and Grain Handlers' Local 38-3 persevered through six years of open-shop working conditions. To survive, seventy-five Lumber Handlers' exploited close ties with captains and mates of steam schooners and tramp freighters. When work grew extremely slack, some of the handlers shipped out on deep-water vessels or found jobs on Alaskan fishing boats.³² There was continuity with the past. Of the forty-two 1886 charter members, Charles Johnson, Peter Peterson, Charles Trench, and Peter Wessels were still working on the front. Another twenty Lumber Handlers had been members of the Number Ones or Number Twos in the early 1890s.³³ From 1909 until his death in 1920 longshore lumbermen elected Peter "The Total in the Bank" Wessels president of the local. Wessels started every meeting of the local by announcing the bank account balance.³⁴

The Freight and Grain Handlers survived the lean years after the ill-fated 1908 strike, but just barely. The foundation of the local resided in thirty-eight men who had been union longshoremen since the early 1890s. Only eight new men joined the local in 1908, five in 1909, fifteen in 1910, and twenty-six in 1911. Not many of the new members stayed in the union.³⁵ Local 38-3 reached its lowest point during July 1911 when only fifty-one members paid dues.³⁶ In that era longshoring was an endurance contest. The men who stayed had to pack a wheat ship in six days, shovel ore into buckets for a week, or break out bricks for ten days. Each shift might last nine, twelve, or eighteen hours with time off only for meals. Unlike the longshore lumbermen, general cargo workers did not have side jobs to fall back on. There were months when the men caught a ship and worked steadily one week, only to wait for two weeks for another vessel.³⁷ The average number of days worked by a general cargo longshoreman in 1914 was 183.³⁸ The greatest problem was the unemployed worker undercutting the 30-cents-an-hour pay scale. The casuals showed up at the dock gates after reading ship arrival notices on a saloon blackboard. On January 12, 1910, the Central Labor Council business agent and union longshoremen pleaded with saloon owners to remove the boards, but without success.³⁹

Reformers and Radicals

After David Crombie's appearance before the Washington State House of Representatives in 1893, Tacoma union longshoremen were not involved again in state legislative matters until the 1911 campaign for the enactment of the State Workers' Compensation Act. This legislation mandated that employers accept responsibility for injuries suffered by their employees. After coal mining and logging, longshoring had the highest accident rate of all Washington industries. State Industrial Insurance Commissioner Hamilton Higday persuaded waterfront employers to pay into the reserve fund.⁴⁰ In 1916, Federal Judge Jeremiah Neterer ruled that longshoremen hurt aboard ships were ineligible for state compensation. Eleven years passed before Congress enacted the Longshoremen's and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act.⁴¹

Tacoma longshoremen also demonstrated interest in the legislative struggle during 1911 to create public port districts in Washington State. For sixteen years, House and Senate advocates of public ownership of docks had tried to get a bill through the legislature and signed by the governor. Private railroad companies, dock owners, and warehouse managers defeated the legislative efforts of progressive senators and representatives.⁴² In 1911, municipal ownership advocates gained control of the legislature. A port district bill passed the House by a vote of seventy-eight yeas, no nays, and eighteen absent or not voting. In the Senate the bill passed with seven more votes than necessary. Governor Marion E. Hay signed the Port District Act on June 8, 1911.⁴³

Tacoma longshoremen were enthusiastic about the possibilities of a Port of Tacoma. Since economic development, not profit, was the primary objective of a public port, it could charge cheaper wharfage fees than private

docks. Inexpensive docking fees should bring more ships to Tacoma. Besides, there was a good chance 126 union longshoremen could persuade voters to elect port commissioners in favor of the union shop. That had happened in Seattle during the September 1911 port election campaign. The three successful candidates for port commission had lined up with Local 38-12 when waterfront business tried to defeat the port measures. Once in office Seattle port commissioners declared for the closed shop.⁴⁴

Pierce County residents voted on the public port propositions on November 5, 1912. The vote was so close days passed before the result was announced. The final tally showed 10,186 in favor and 10,581 opposed. An analysis of the defeated port proposition indicated that a large majority of the City of Tacoma and precincts near the city were in favor, but Pierce County residents voted three to one against establishing the port district. The *Ledger* attributed the defeat to county opinion that the Port would "benefit Tacoma only." Six years passed before a successful attempt was made to create a Port of Tacoma.⁴⁵

To protect their members and reduce accidents, Washington longshore unions asked the Washington State Federation of Labor to recommend to the 1913 state legislature four waterfront safety measures. Waterfront workers sought a law requiring a first aid program on the docks. And the men desired a hatch tender on every ship to warn men in the hold when a sling load was descending. Another piece of legislation reduced the weight of wheat sacks from 250 to 100 pounds.⁴⁶ The only measure to reach the 1913 state legislature was Senate Bill 248 requiring the sealing of bulk cement in containers to lessen the chance of contracting "stony lung." SB 248 was reported out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation, but died on the floor.⁴⁷

Using the political process to reform the waterfront was too slow for the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Since its founding in Chicago during 1905, this nationwide union proclaimed, "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common . . . Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery of production, and abolish the wage system." Speaking on soapboxes in skid roads, IWWs gained thousands of adherents. The IWW fight for free speech against Spokane civic authorities during the summer of 1909 brought worldwide attention to their movement. Many working people in the lesser skilled jobs found the IWW concept of one big industrial union and the use of direct action to obtain redress of grievances more to their liking than the trade union emphasis of the AFL.⁴⁸

While the Wobblies were most active in Pacific Northwest logging camps, the construction, agriculture, smelting, and shipping industries also "felt their bite." The IWW first made its presence known on the Tacoma waterfront in 1907 during a smelter workers' strike. As far as Tacoma longshoremen were concerned, there was no overnight conversion to the IWW cause. Wobblies were more successful in "boring" into Seattle Local 38-12. During the spring of 1911,

Pacific Coast District officers J. A. Madsen and Cornelius Fouch tried to eradicate the growing IWW influence in the Seattle Riggers and Stevedores.⁴⁹ Madsen recommended, and delegates to the 1912 district convention approved, a resolution to "denounce and condemn any one that will undertake to inject or confuse trades unionism with I.W.W.ism."⁵⁰

In 1911, Wobblies organized Marine Transport Workers' Industrial Union 380 in Tacoma. This IWW local recruited ILA and nonunion warehousemen, dock truckers, and stevedores, but was never able to become a major force on the waterfront. Locals 38-3 and 38-30 responded to the IWW's challenge. Beginning in December 1911, the two ILA unions jointly sponsored a series of "smokers" designed to attract nonunion waterfront workers. After Local 38-3 heavyweights Frank Farmer and Vic McLaglen boxed, the men sang patriotic songs and ate a good meal. Potential members were treated to talks on craft unionism by J. A. Madsen or Paddy Morris.⁵¹ In 1912 sixty men were initiated into Local 38-3 and the following year another sixty-eight. By December 1913 there were 205 members in Local 38-3. That same month lumber and general cargo handlers combined to assist the grain handlers and the warehousemen organize Tacoma Local 38-55. A few Wobblies surreptitiously joined the Tacoma ILA unions during the pre-World War I era, but borers were not successful in dominating the locals.⁵²

The Grays Harbor Strike

During the spring of 1912 Pacific Coast District Organizer Paddy Morris became involved with IWWs when he assisted Aberdeen and Hoquiam longshore locals in a dispute with the Grays Harbor Stevedoring Company. Wobblies and International Shingle Weavers had struck the sawmills first. ILA longshoremen entered the strike when Manager W. R. Jones refused to negotiate. Jones hired members of the IWW's Marine Transport Workers to replace the ILA men. A week later the Wobblies walked out. A joint ILA-IWW committee tried to get Jones to bargain, but he "absolutely refused" to discuss a settlement. Seattle and Tacoma locals offered work opportunities to Grays Harbor ILA men until the stevedore company came to terms. At the 1912 Pacific Coast District ILA convention Morris reported, "After abusing the trade labor unions to the utmost, the moment they are in trouble they send committees to our meetings to ask for our assistance, and then go back to their soap boxes and call us fakers and grafters."⁵³

Pacific Coast District President John Kean asked the 1912 ILA convention to declare the Grays Harbor Stevedoring Company unfair and to conduct a nationwide financial appeal on behalf of the Aberdeen and Hoquiam locals. During discussion of the resolution, Kean told delegates that he was afraid many of the West Coast locals would stage impromptu strikes in support of locals 24 and 26. Kean believed the district was not strong enough to win a coastwide fight because the San Francisco's Riggers and Stevedores' Union was not a member of the district. "I feel quite sure that inside of the next six

months they will be with us and when that is completed the whole Pacific Coast including Canada and the Hawaiian Islands, will be organized."⁵⁴

The 1912 Pacific Coast District convention decided to make an all-out fight for the ILA men in Grays Harbor. Delegates passed a resolution levying a penalty of 10 cents an hour for each man discharging vessels loaded by the Grays Harbor Stevedore Company. If the ship's captain refused to pay the penalty at the first port of call, the second port was authorized to charge 20 cents a man hour. The convention designated Paddy Morris to notify all series 38 locals when a Grays Harbor vessel loaded by the unfair stevedore company had cleared the harbor.⁵⁵ Seven unions, including Tacoma locals 38-30 and 38-55, carried out the penalty policy. The fines collected were turned over to the striking members of the Grays Harbor unions.⁵⁶

On September 4, 1912, the new Grays Harbor stevedore boss, H. M. Delanty, suddenly agreed to give preference to ILA locals 38-24 and 38-26. Ninety Aberdeen and Hoquiam union longshoremen would receive 50 cents an hour. District President Kean believed the system of fining an unfair business had endless possibilities in solving disputes "It does away with the stoppage of work and the spreading of a strike."⁵⁷

The Grays Harbor strike proved Pacific Coast longshore locals could work in concert to achieve a common goal. Their solidarity attracted the interest of the San Francisco Riggers and Stevedores who issued on January 17, 1913, an invitation to the ILA locals to join a new coastwide organization espousing IWW tenets. Not one ILA local applied for a charter from the Pacific Coast Waterfront Workers' Federation.⁵⁸

The 1913 and 1914 Negotiations

From San Diego to Prince Rupert, British Columbia, sentiment was growing among the ILA membership to demand recognition for their unions and an increase in wages. The 1913 district convention instructed its officers to insist on recognition and pay raises.⁵⁹ On May 22, the Puget Sound Shipping Association signed a contract with nineteen longshore unions conceding recognition, but not the closed shop. Nine hours was stipulated as the workday, with overtime counted from 5 p.m. until 7 a.m. Extra pay was also guaranteed for working Sundays, holidays, and the noon hour. Wages were set at 45 cents an hour straight time and 50 cents for overtime. Employers insisted that ILA men accept a clause in the contract that "any member of a local who violates any part of this agreement or agitates a stoppage of work under any circumstances, shall be discharged and will be given no future employment." In case of a dispute between employees and management work would continue while one representative from the employers and another from the men tried to resolve the problem. If the two could not clear up the grievance, they would select a disinterested third party to resolve the dispute. The contracting parties set December 31, 1914 as the termination date for the contract.⁶⁰

When the 1914 Pacific Coast District Convention assembled in Vancouver, British Columbia, the San Francisco Riggers and Stevedores were present. Dealing with radicalism came to the fore on the first day of the convention. The credentials committee recommended seating an avowed IWW member, F. C. Muller of San Francisco Local 38-33. Delegates voted to sustain the committee on the grounds that each local had a right to send who it wished.⁶¹ In his presidential address, John Kean denounced the radical element's clamor for "no compromise" with the employing class. Everyone must recognize "this is a world of barter and compromise," said Kean.⁶² When it came his turn to speak, Delegate Muller attacked trade unions and the employing class for misleading workers "into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers."⁶³

Both the radicals and straight trade unionists were represented on a special coastwide Wage Scale and Conditions Committee. This committee recommended that the membership be polled on whether or not to establish uniform working conditions and a minimum coastwide wage scale of 50 cents straight time and 75 cents overtime. Among the working rules to be submitted to the men to accept or reject were the eight-hour day, eight-man hold gangs for general cargo, and fifteen-man gangs for loading lumber. The executive board was instructed to present the results of the referendum at the 1915 convention.⁶⁴

The outbreak of war between twenty-one nations in Europe during the week of July 28, 1914, caused the *Tacoma Daily Ledger* to predict prosperity for the United States. While the fight was on, America would take over Europe's trade with South America, Mexico, and Canada. For the first six months of the war, it appeared that the *Ledger* had erred on the effect of the war. Not even the opening of the Panama Canal during mid-August 1914 caused an upsurge in West Coast shipping business. Charter agents laid the blame on high insurance rates.⁶⁵ The uncertainties posed by the war on world trade made the officers of the Pacific Coast District ILA cautious. Results of the membership referendum on a coastwide minimum wage scale were kept secret. Locals below the minimum wage scale might strike at a bad time.⁶⁶ On Christmas Day 1914, the Tacoma general cargo men hosted a huge feed for the hungry. Five hundred down-and-outers were fed by longshoremen and members of the Cooks' and Waiters' Union. "It was all cleaned up to the last scrap," said Business Agent August Seitz.⁶⁷

The Tacoma grain and lumber charter business suddenly increased during January 1915. In April 1915, the *Tacoma Labor Advocate* began printing Local 38-3 notices that any union man who wanted to work on the waterfront should report to Business Agent August Seitz.⁶⁸ In the spring of 1915, a surge in import and export tonnage began in Tacoma that reached its apex in 1917 when 2,909,530 tons crossed the docks.

1914	1,260,645
1915	1,595,846
1916	2,670,209
1917	2,909,530
1918	2,054,111 ⁶⁹

A month after the shipping boom began officials of steamship lines, stevedore companies, and chambers of commerce met in Portland, to establish the Federation of Waterfront Employers' Unions. Captain James S. Gibson of Washington Stevedore and G. K. Magill of American-Hawaiian Steamship Company represented the Seattle and Tacoma employers. While there was considerable secrecy about their proceedings, employers released a press statement of their general purpose:

*"Better to meet the increasing and often unreasonable demands of union labor; to forestall by discussion with employers or their representatives such demands; to promote harmony with employees and employers, to the end that greater efficiency without injustice to either employees or employers may be had; to take such united action as may be necessary on legislative matters affecting the shipping interests."*⁷⁰

The Vancouver Lockout

Without notice on March 1, 1915, Vancouver employers reduced wages from 45 cents to 35 cents an hour for longshoremen, and from 40 cents to 35 cents for dock truckers. Then the union men were locked out and replaced by strikebreakers. Pacific Coast longshoremen believed the Vancouver wage reduction and lockout was the result of a "deliberate understanding" reached by the new employers' federation to try out "the temper of the men with the view of making further and more sweeping reduction of wages in the rank and file of the association from one end of the coast to the other." The Pacific Coast District Executive Board announced on March 15 that every local on the coast would boycott all Vancouver steamship lines as unfair.⁷¹

Victoria, Seattle, and Tacoma longshoremen immediately quit working Vancouver ships. Seattle Riggers and Stevedores demanded that employers accept men dispatched from the union hall in alphabetical order so that the work lost because of the Vancouver ships would be spread over the entire work force. Waterfront employers immediately locked out all Local 38-12 men. Since Pacific Coast Steamship Company ships called at Vancouver and all major Puget Sound ports, this line was the hardest hit by the boycott. When strikebreakers failed to unload merchandise fast enough Pacific Coast Steam carried cargo back to San Francisco.⁷²

On the Tacoma waterfront ten scab gangs were hired by Tacoma stevedore bosses to work three Vancouver ships. Local 38-3 President Robert Turnbull told the *Tacoma Labor Advocate* that his union was a conservative organization, but "if there must be trouble the Tacoma members will be in the front rank when it comes to doing their part of the disagreeable work."⁷³ At 11:30 p.m. on March 25 at the intersection of Eleventh and Pacific, strikers met scabs getting off the tide flats car line. Armed with razors and guns, strikebreakers tried to break through a circle of union men. As the two groups

clashed, police waded in with night sticks, bashing heads indiscriminately. After the first face-off, strikers chased scabs down alleys and into saloons and office buildings. For an hour chaos reigned amid fist fights, razor cuttings, and wild shots careening off buildings. As police came upon small groups of men fighting, they pounded the fighters into submission. The paddy wagon was busy carting men to the station. Union longshoremen Emil Anderson, Jerry Hofsted, and Marshall Wright spent the night in jail along with strike-breaker Fred Ripley who had been arrested for using a razor as a weapon.⁷⁴



Members of Local 38-3 sentenced to the McNeil Island federal penitentiary for assaulting scabs March 25, 1915. Steven Ray, later secretary of Local 38-30, is right front.
(International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union Library)

Pressure against the Vancouver stevedore companies mounted when unorganized Tacoma warehousemen refused to work with scabs. Then men employed to trim coal at the bunkers stopped working ships bound to and from Vancouver. Finally, 500 representatives of Puget Sound longshoremen met in Seattle. Union delegates voted by an overwhelming majority "to continue the strike until their demands were met in every particular."⁷⁵ A week later, ILA President O'Connor and Rowland B. Mahany, Commissioner of Conciliation in the United States Department of Labor, came west to mediate the strike. Mahany expressed concern that the work stoppage might spread to the entire West Coast. National policy dictated no interruption in the nation's preparedness campaign.⁷⁶

At a session in Seattle that included all interested parties, O'Connor submitted a proposition for the return to work of Seattle and Tacoma locals under conditions prevailing on March 13. The disputing parties accepted O'Connor's proposal. The boycott against Vancouver cargo remained in force until President O'Connor succeeded in getting Canadian employers and unions to accept a compromise on April 1.⁷⁷

On June 3, San Francisco Local 38-33 signed a contract with employers providing for the closed shop and 50 cents straight time and 75 cents overtime.⁷⁸ A week later T. V. O'Connor and Puget Sound unions presented to employers all of the demands granted by the San Francisco bosses. In addition, the Northwest ILA wanted jurisdiction over all work from ship to pile and pile to ship, and 55 cents straight time and 80 cents overtime for lumber handling.⁷⁹ When WEU refused to accede to the closed shop and ILA control of dock work, Mahany returned to Seattle. The federal mediator was not successful in effecting a compromise before the Pacific Coast district convention opened on July 26, 1915.⁸⁰

At the convention, the Bay City delegation introduced the major resolution considered by the convention. They proposed that their settlement be used as the basis for negotiation with all West Coast employers. The district executive board was empowered to settle for less if that was the best terms obtainable. "If the negotiations are not satisfactorily completed by September 1, 1915, then the Executive Board shall immediately call a strike of all Pacific Coast District Locals." Sixty-two delegates voted in favor of the resolution and fourteen opposed.⁸¹

For three weeks after the district convention, Rowland Mahany met with Seattle and Tacoma waterfront employers and an ILA negotiating committee composed of district secretary J. A. Madsen, Marshall Wright of Tacoma, and L. E. Merritt of Seattle. On August 23, Puget Sound waterfront employers held an important membership meeting. The bosses agreed among themselves that a strike must be avoided regardless of the closed- or open-shop issue. Business had never been so good. Several employers expressed concern about the fate of nonunion employees. A provision was inserted in the agreement that all men hired before April 1, 1915, would be given a reasonable time to join the ILA.⁸²

On August 28 675 members of locals 38-3, 38-30, and 38-55 assembled to consider an identical proposal five employer associations were offering simultaneously to all West Coast ILA longshoremen.⁸³ The offer included the prized closed shop and a 5-cents-an-hour pay increase. The new pact would terminate December 1, 1915, when an automatic renewal and sixty-day opening clause would take effect. Tacoma general cargo, lumber handlers, and warehousemen overwhelmingly approved the new settlement.⁸⁴ Only Seattle Riggers and Stevedores turned down the contract. The district executive board informed Local 38-12 that the rest of the ILA would not support any action "that will have as its object anything but compliance with the will of the district."⁸⁵

After signing the pact with employers, the 572 members of Local 38-3 decided to commemorate their eighth anniversary on February 7, 1916, with a banquet. Since the merger with Local 38-55 in November 1915, Local 38-3 had become the largest union in Tacoma. For the first time in recorded history, waterfront employers and their wives were invited to a union event.⁸⁶ Governor Ernest Lister gave the main address to 500 guests gathered for the festive occasion at Eagles Hall.⁸⁷ Seventy years would pass before union longshoremen, waterfront employers, and community leaders would gather again to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the founding of Tacoma's longshore unionism.



Program of the Eighth Anniversary Banquet of Local 38-3, 1916.
(Courtesy Alice Innes)

CHAPTER IV TIME OF TROUBLES

1. Forrest McDonald, *The United States in the Twentieth Century*, Volume I, p. 119.
2. WCT 1907-1913.
3. TDL, May 1, 1908; May 4, September 27, and December 28 1909; November 12, 1910; and February 12, 1911.
4. WCT 1907-1911.
5. TDL, January 11 and 15, 1908.
6. Ibid., May 6, 1908.
7. WCT 1907-1911.
8. Ibid., 1908. TDL, January 13, 1918.
9. TDL, May 4, 1908. Prior to May 1908, J. T. Steeb & Company represented Rothschild & Company in Tacoma. Interview with Elizabeth Dawson.
10. TDL, April 25 and May 1, 1908.
11. Ibid., July 21, 1908.
12. Ibid., July 22, 1908.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., July 23, 1908.
15. Ibid., July 24, 1908.
16. Ibid., July 26, 1908.
17. PI, July 26 and August 7, 1908.
18. TDL, August 9, 1908.
19. Ibid., August 4, 1908.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., August 9, 1908.
22. ILA 1910, p. 165.
23. PI, September 22, 1908.
24. Portland, September 3, 1908.
25. Markholt, *Unionism*, pp. 456-458.
26. *Proceedings of the 1909 Longshoremen's Union of the Pacific*, pp. 9-10. As a charter member of LUP, Tacoma became Freight and Grain Handlers Local 3. Proceedings of LUP conventions are courtesy of Otilie Markholt. Hereafter cited as LUP.
27. TDL, October 21, 1908, and January 16, 1909.
28. ILA 1910, pp. 23, 32, and 33. The Tacoma Lumber Handlers had already received a charter from the ILA. When LUP amalgamated with the ILA, the international revoked the old charter of the Lumber Handlers' Union.
29. Ibid., p. 165.
30. SUR, November 14, 1908.
31. *Proceedings before the National Longshoremen's Board, Seattle, September 10, 1934*. Testimony of W. T. Morris, pp. 1731-1757. Hereafter cited as NLB.
32. For the history of Tacoma Lumber Handlers, 1908-1916, see NLB Morris, pp. 1731-1733.
33. The Reichl Files. Membership files began in 1908. Many of the early Lumber Handlers' Union dues sheets are missing.

34. Morris Thorsen Interview.
35. Reichl Files.
36. *The Longshoreman*, March 1912, p. 4.
37. For the history of Freight and Grain Handlers 1908-1915 see N.L.B. Testimony of Edgar L. Harris, pp. 1701-1705 and 1714-1715. BL 1913-1914, pp. 76-81. BL 1915-1916, pp. 209-217.
38. *Proceedings of the 1915 Washington State Federation of Labor*, p. 137. Hereafter cited as WSFL.
39. *Tacoma Central Labor Council Minutes*, January 12 and May 25, 1910. Hereafter cited as TCLC.
40. Letter from Commissioner Hamilton Higday to other members of the Industrial Insurance Commission, January 17, 1913.
41. See Grant Gilmore and Charles L. Black, *The Law of Admiralty*, pp. 417-471 for the history of the longshore federal compensation law.
42. Public port bills were introduced by Pierce County Senator Edward Taylor in 1895, Pierce County Senator Ralph Metcalf in 1907, King County Senator George Cotterill in 1909, and King County Representative Charles Ennis in 1911.
43. For details regarding the legislative maneuvering to get the Port District Bill enacted see Letter from Scott Calhoun to Hamilton Higday, April 19, 1918.
44. Interview with Tom Green. Padraic Burke, *A History of the Port of Seattle*, pp. 29-30. Among those elected to the Port of Seattle commission was Robert Bridges, onetime union coal miner and organizer. Throughout his tenure on the port commission, 1912-1919, Bridges worked closely with Seattle longshore unions.
45. TDL, November 8, 1912.
46. WSFL 1913, pp. 27-28. William Sharp of San Pedro Local 38-18 introduced a resolution calling on all West Coast locals to have state laws enacted requiring hatch tenders and the placing of cement into containers. See *Proceedings of the 1912 Pacific Coast District ILA Convention*, pp. 41-42. Hereafter cited as PCDILA.
47. *Senate Journal of the Thirteenth Session of the State of Washington*, 1913, pp. 853-854 and 1253.
48. Fred W. Thompson and Patrick Murfin, *The I.W.W.: Its First Seventy Years 1905-1975*, p. 2.
49. PCDILA 1911, p. 17.
50. PCDILA 1912, p. 20.
51. *The Longshoreman*, January 1912, p. 7, and March 1912, pp. 4-5.
52. John Now Interview. Reichl Files. Membership records of Local 38-30 for the years 1912-1914 have been lost.
53. PCDILA 1912, p. 24.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 80-81, and 86-87.
55. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.
56. PCDILA 1913, p. 30. Grain Handlers and Warehouse Employees of Tacoma and Commencement Bay Local 38-55 was organized by Local 38-3 with the assistance of Paddy Morris during November 1912. See Morris's report in PCDILA 1913, p. 30.
57. *Aberdeen Daily World*, September 5, 1912. PCDILA 1913, pp. 18-19.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 104-106.
61. PCDILA 1914, p. 8.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
64. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.
65. TDL, August 2, 3, and 8, 1914.
66. *Ibid.*, December 26, 1914.
67. For the years 1914, 1915, and 1916 see TDL, January 13, 1918. For 1917 see TDL, January 25, 1918. For 1919 see the *Annual Port of Tacoma Report*, pp. 83 and 87.
68. *Tacoma Labor Advocate*, January 22 and April 16, 1915. Hereafter cited as TLA.
69. *Ibid.*, August 7, 1914.
70. *Portland Labor Press*, February 8, 1915. Cited in Markholt, *Unionism*, Vol. 1, p. 611. Shortly after the Portland session, the Puget Sound Shipping Association changed its name to Seattle Waterfront Employers' Union. A branch office was established in Tacoma called the Tacoma Waterfront Employers' Union. See William C. Dawson, *Brief History of the Waterfront Employers of Seattle 1908-1936* p. 1.
71. BL 1915-1916, p. 245.
72. TDL, March 13, 15, and 16, 1915.
73. TLA, March 19, 1915.
74. TDL, March 26, 1915. TDN, March 26, 1915. The *Ledger* estimated that 250 union men and their sympathizers attacked thirty strikebreakers. The "Daily News" quoted Ripley to the effect that there were 100 strikebreakers against fifty strikers.
75. *Ibid.*, March 16, 17, and 18, 1915.
76. *Ibid.*, March 24 and 25, 1915.
77. BL 1915-1916, p. 246.
78. PCDILA 1915, pp. 8-9.
79. Markholt, *Unionism*, pp. 616 and 618.
80. PCDILA 1915, p. 9.
81. *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.
82. H. C. Cantelow, *Chronological History of the Waterfront Employers' Union*, pp. 9-10. Hereafter cited as Cantelow 1.
83. TLA, August 27, 1915. San Diego, San Pedro, San Francisco, Portland, and the Seattle waterfront employers' associations tendered the offer to ILA locals within their regions.
84. PI, September 12, 1915.
85. Cantelow 1, p. 10.
86. TDL, January 23, 1916.
87. *The Longshoreman*, March 1916, p. 2. TDL, February 8, 1916.