

INTERVIEW WITH ARTHUR SANDS
WENDELL, MINNESOTA
INTERVIEWED BY MARCIA OLSON AND BOB BUCK
ACTIVE IN GRANT CO. DFL

As long as I can remember or as long as the, I just can't name the date when this labor party started or Non-Partisan League, I suppose is what it was first called wasn't it? (Ya) Ya and I used to go to Elbow Lake and listen to, what was his name that came down from North Dakota and organized here? (Townley) Townley. A.C. Townley I think his name was and I think I've been active, maybe not so active, but interested in this type of politics all of my life.

Q. Didn't A.C. Townley have something to do with cooperative movement in North Dakota as far as the flour and milling and so on?

Yes he did. He was a promoter of that, that's right.

Q. Did he try and promote that in Minnesota too?

I can't recall that. I'm not so sure about that.

Q. But he got pretty successful in North Dakota?

In North Dakota he was quite successful with his operations.

Q. Were you ever a part of the Non-partisan League?

Ya. Ya. (You were) Ya but I wasn't running for any office or anything. I was just a participant or helping the ones that were like Carl Iverson. And like I said he would have been the, he was very active. This was when he first run you know in 1918, he run on the Non-Partisan.

Q. Ya, he told us about that. (Ya. That's right) Now when it first got started going, the Non-Partisan League, there was quite a bit of opposition to them wasn't there?

Oh, without any question. Oh certainly. Oh sure the bankers and all of the newspapers were very much opposed to them.

Q. Was that because they were Republicans or they were afraid of the financial competition or...

They just, I think, thought that these Non-Partisan Leaguers were too liberal, I think that was the cause. I can remember, I think the first that I took an active part was during Floyd B. Olson's, when he was Governor of Minnesota.

Q. Yes, he was one of the first Farmer Laborites.

Yes, I think he was one of the, I believe he was. (Yes, him and Elmer Benson I think.) Ya, and Elmer Benson. I followed them very closely.

Q. Were they very popular in this area?

Oh yes, without any question. Yes. Yes, both Floyd B. Olson and then we had a Representative from, well that was when Carl was a State Senator for a while and Harold Barker got to be Representative from Elbow Lake and I think Harold Barker was Speaker of the House at one time.

Q. Oh yes. Was he a Farmer-Laborite too?

He was a Farmer-Laborite.

Q. Do you remember Henry Shipstead or Magnus Johnson at all?

Not so much Magnus Johnson but Henry Shipstead I knew him personal.

Q. He wasn't from this area though was he. Was he from the area?

No, but he was from Glenwood. (Oh, he was from Glenwood?) Ya.

Q. And he was, I believe, one of the first Farmer-Laborites party candidates.

Senator...yes. Ya, I'm sure he was too. And later on didn't he change to Republican? Didn't he? (I don't know, I can't recall.) I wonder if he didn't run, the last time that he ran for Senator. (He changed to Republican?) Ya, I think he did and then he lost.

Q. Was that because he didn't like it that the Farmer-Laborites joined with the Democratic party?

I just don't recall what was his reason. But it seems to me that he switched over but I won't even say for sure now. I used to visit him in the later years. I was out to his lake home several times by Alex there but we never touched on that. He just talked about foreign affairs and different things like that when I was there with him.

Q. How closely did the Farmer-Labor organization through here follow on the footsteps of the Non-Partisan League? Was it pretty much the same people involved or...

(5 min.--063)

Pretty much the same people involved I'd say, yes.

Q. And would you say Townley was quite responsible for all of the organizations throughout this area?

Yes, I think he kind of set the thing going. I'm quite sure he did.

Q. And that was his reason for coming to Minnesota, for Townley to start these organizations.

Oh yes sure. Of course he was a, I think the Townley family were Otter Tail County people. I think he was originally born and raised in Otter Tail County, he had one of his relatives was County Attorney up here in Otter Tail County for a while, Jack Townley, and then later was Post Master in Otter Tail, Fergus Falls.

Q. Were these organizations on the County level or in individual communities?

I think on the County level. It seems to me it was.

Q. So there was at least an organization in Grant and Stevens?

Stevens, that's why I don't know too much about Stevens because we had our own county.

Q. Was it very active in Stevens County being they are so predominately Republican?

No, like I was telling the young man here, I don't remember too much about Stevens being too active. Oh, I'm sure he talked to Audie Anderson. (He's the County Auditor isn't he?) No, he's a former Representative. (Oh, I see.) Years ago when Carl Iverson and Audie Anderson and what did I say the old fellows name was again? (Over in Donelly?) Ya. (It slips me) Ya I forget his name. They were all out to my cottage one time. Out on Ten Mile Lake. Peter Erdahl, I think was one of the old timers.

Q. And they were active in the Farmer-Labor Party?

Yes, I'm sure they were.

Q. And you said one of them was elected to Representative, Audie Anderson?

Audie Anderson was. And I'm not sure whether Peter Erdahl was in the House at one time or not. I can't tell you for sure.

Q. Was the Farmer-Laborites predominately people who were Democrats or were there Republicans in there too?

No, I don't think many Republicans were. They were mostly Democrats.

Q. They were mostly Democrats? And the reason why I am asking is later on they combined with the Democratic Party and I was wondering what happened to those people who were Republican then. But there wasn't too many, right?

There wasn't too many (Republicans?) NO.

Q. Did most people favor the combining the Farmer-Laborites with the...

Ya, I think so at that time. I wonder when did that come about? Was that in the...

Q. I've got 1944 as the year.

That was the year. Was that the year that Hubert Humphrey was one of the first candidates? Ya. When he was the Mayor of Minneapolis. (Ya, and then he went on to become) to become U.S. Senator. In '47 wasn't it? (Ya, somewhere around there.) Ya in '47 or '48 somewhere in there because I know him and I were candidates. I was candidate for County Commissioner that year and

he was candidate for U.S. Senator. And I won and so did Hubert Humphrey.

Q. Did the county support Hubert Humphrey?

Oh yes.

Q. One thing we were noticing when we looked over County Politics and State Politics was a lot of times they would support a Democratic, a U.S. Senator like Humphrey and Mondale, but the local candidates, like the Minnesota legislature has always been conservative. (Ya.) Why is that?

This is a funny thing isn't it? I just haven't got the answer. I just don't understand that.

Q. Ya, they'll have U.S. Representatives as Democrats and have local representatives as Republican. (Ya, I don't know how that came about. But this is true though.) Ya and Minnesota is like that too, like the state and the counties went for Eisenhower and they went for Freeman as Governor. They split. (Ya they split) And they went for Lyndon Johnson in the same year that they voted in LeVander, I think.

(10 min.--126)

Ya that's right. So I just can't...(There is a lot of splitting there.) I can't give you an answer on that how that came about.

Q. Back to the Non-Partisan League for a moment. I'm interested in the transition from the Non-Partisan League into the Farmer-Laborite Party, was that in the late 1920's that that came about? (No.) I've got 1922. (1922 was that...?) 1922 and 1923.

Oh, that long ago that the change was made.

Q. Ya, that's from the Non-Partisan League. Why did that change come about?

No, I don't recall now. I did know but I just don't recall.

Q. Was it because the Labor Party wasn't with the Non-Partisan League before that time?

Well it could have been that. I presume that maybe this was it. There was more farmers in the Non-Partisan League than laborers so that the Labor and the Farm combined. I think this was how it happened. I'm sure of that. That's it.

Q. Were there many people on the farms that didn't support it wholeheartedly because of the labor aspect, that there might be different interests involved?

Oh, there might have been a little of it but I don't recall too much of that.

Q. Generally the farmers naturally would better the Farmer Labor Party.

Ya, but remember there are still farmers that are still Republicans and there always have been too.

Q. Yes quite a few of them too. (Yes) Was there quite a split way back then between the Farmer's Union and the Farm Bureau in that way?

Ya. See the Farm Bureau never supported many of the Democratic movements in agriculture and any place else they would always be opposed to, the Farm Bureau would.

Q. They were predominately Republican weren't they?

Ya, that's right and this is right.

Q. Has the Farmer Labor Party ever associated itself with any of the other farm organizations like the Farmers Union or the NFO?

Farmer's Union is part of it. I mean I don't know just how, but if a fellow belongs to the Farmer's Union you can be sure he belongs to the, I mean he votes Farmer-Labor. (Farmer-Labor?) Yes. Farmer-Labor you can be sure.

Q. Have they ever been recently associated with the NFO at all?

No, not that I know. Not ours and not here as far as we're concerned. But maybe on the State, I just don't know. But now as far as our county is concerned, our local party...(never has been associated with the NFO?) No. But now I presume maybe they are, aren't they? (I don't know.) No, I kind of think they are.

Q. I understand there was quite a bit of Farmer's Holiday active around here? (Yes, it was) Was that largely the same members that were supporting the Farmer-Labor Party then too?

Yes, they were. You see, this is where Carl Iverson could have been so much more help than I would. He was very active in that Farmer's Holiday business. (Yes, he was.) Sure he was. (Also in the moratorium, I think.) Yes. (When they got the farm loans or mortgages extended.) Yes. Sure. He was in the legislature at that time. And I can remember I was to a committee meeting in the House where they argued the moratorium and I think there was a representative from Fergus Falls that was on that committee and I don't remember whether Carl was or not. I can't remember that representative's name but he was a Democrat or a Farm-Laborer. And I know the lawyers of the insurance companies said that if they put a moratorium on these mortgages there would never be another cent loaned in the state of Minnesota. But they put the moratorium on and they were still glad to loan money in Minnesota. So it didn't make (it didn't make any difference?) No, it didn't make any difference.

(15 min.--186)

Q. Were there a lot of townspeople who opposed the moratorium? (What?) That opposed the moratorium on farm loans?

No, I don't think so. This was mostly the insurance companies. They were lawyers for the insurance companies. Like Prudential and those big insurance companies that argued that if they put the moratorium there would never be another cent loaned in the state of Minnesota.

Q. Was that because they were collecting on the farms?

Oh yes they had a lot, you see these big insurance companies had a lot of farm mortgages you know.

Q. And they were collecting on them.

Oh sure. (They were taking up the farms.) Oh, sure.

Q. And what did the moratorium, it didn't cancel the loans did it? It just postponed them? (No, it just postponed them.) For how many years then?

Well I just don't recall that but of course a lot of these sales that they forced you know the fellow that had the mortgage on those sales didn't get anything out of it because they didn't bid on it you know. They just let it go. But mortgages that was a different deal. I mean farm mortgages. But I'm talking about Chattle Mortgages here. When they would foreclose on a farmer and they would go out there and wouldn't bid on it.

Q. You mean the rest of the farmers wouldn't bid on it.

Ya, that's right.

Q. On these auctions, was that because they didn't have any money or because they were against the selling of it?

No they were against the selling out of this poor farmer.

Q. Were there animosity against these bankers?

Oh sure. Absolutely. I suppose it was bankers that had these chattle mortgages. It wasn't the insurance companies, it was the bankers that had these mortgages that were being foreclosed.

Q. On whose side did the townspeople lean to?

Well of course that would maybe be split. But of course the bankers were against the moratorium. There is no question about that.

Q. So there were probably a lot of people in town who were against it too?

Well I wouldn't say that too much because there were a lot of these townspeople who were in the same shape as these poor farmers were.

Q. Because they had to depend on their income on the farmer's buying power. (That's right.) Would there be anything to redeem those that had already lost their farms. I suppose the moratorium couldn't help those who had already been foreclosed on?

No. (Nothing could help them.) Nothing could help them. The only help they got was when Roosevelt got in and revamped the Federal Land Bank, that was the beginning of the changes.

Q. And what was the Federal Land Bank then?

Well he revamped it. They had a Federal Land Bank before but you know they didn't make any, they were hopeless. But he introduced more money into it and so they took over a lot of those loans. The Land Bank was very active and they had, was it PCA or whatever it was, it is PCA now but that is not how it started, Farm Yard Loan or something. That's in chattels now. So if a fellow had a chattel mortgage in a closed bank or one that they were going to foreclose on or had to do something with, this program, Barn Yard Loan or whatever they called it, took these loans over.

Q. They took these loans over from the closed bank?

Yes. From the closed banks.

Q. How did the depression affect the membership in the Farmer Labor party? (Membership?) Ya, as far as participation or members, did your organization become more active or less active during the depression?

Well I think they were more active I would say. (They were more active?)

Q. Did it fluctuate like was there a parallel that as the depression got worse there were more members or wasn't there necessarily that parallel?

Well I don't just remember about that part but I'm sure that there was a lot of them in favor of the Farmer Labor. Well both in towns and in farms.

(20 min.--246)

Q. Well now you pretty well helped organize the Farmer-Labor Party didn't you?

Ya. I'd say so.

Q. There was no Farmer-Labor Party before that time or what kind of political organizations were there?

Well that Non-Partisan League, I've forgotten just about how that, there's another one that Carl could have, but they were first and they they (turned into the Farmer-Labor Party?) And then turned into the Farmer-Labor Party.

Q. What kind of things did you personally do to get it going?

Well we had meetings you know and speakers.

Q. Were there a lot of people against you?

Oh no. Not, they were over that. They had already taken their licking. Cause 1932 put them all pretty much into shape. All of them were on the same basis. (That was in '32?) Well I'm talking about this one, really the drop came when all of the banks closed and everything. There were a lot of banks in Grant County that were open again you know. And that brought them all down to size. They were I mean on equal footage pretty much.

Q. How many banks closed in Grant County? I know one in Hoffman that closed, the Citizens Bank or whatever.

And we had two of them here in Wendell and they were both closed.

Q. They were both closed? (Ya.) And you couldn't get your money out of there?

No. Just through liquidation. And Hoffman and I think Barrett. No, I think Barrett had reorganized hadn't it? (Either that or I think they had two banks at one time.) They had two banks at one time but I don't think they, and I don't remember Ashby. I think they only had the one bank. But that closed too and had to reorganize you know. (Oh really.) Ya. And the Bank of Elbow Lake had to reorganize.

Q. So people were really out of money. (Oh ya.) And the money that they had saved they couldn't get at.

They couldn't get at, absolutely not. Cause I can remember we were buying turkeys at that time. This would be in 1930. And we were doing business with the State Bank you know. Well we bought dressed turkeys you know and we had hundreds of dollars, checks out among farmers and the banks closed it. Course we had to make the checks good.

Q. But you couldn't get your money out of the bank either could you?

Oh my no. When they closed, they closed. Those years we had our account close in three different banks. We had two here and then when this State Bank closed we went to the First National here. Then that closed and we went to the Bank of Elbow Lake and they closed during the closing. So we had our deposits tied up in three different banks.

Q. Did you ever get that money back?

Just a small amount of it. (Just a small amount of it?) Ya.

Q. How did you go about paying all of those checks out when you didn't have any money?

Well we got the money someplace I'll tell you. I suppose in the sock or someplace. Ya, that was tough times I'll tell you. And then we went to Fergus until the Bank of Elbow Lake opened up again.

Q. In the Bank at Fergus. They had one bank at Fergus that stayed open.

(25 min.--302)

Ya, they had one or two that stayed open, didn't they. I think both of them stayed open didn't they? The two big ones. But there was several of them that closed you know. (Ya, I'm sure Fergus had more banks than those.) Ya, they had four or five I think. At one time there. So that was quite some times.

Q. Ya, I think Carl Iverson was telling about people who would ship cattle and hardly get enough for five head of cattle or maybe more than that (to pay the freight.) to pay the freight.

Ya, that's right, that's true. That happened to all of them. Even grain prices were so poor.

Q. Ya, some people couldn't sell corn enough to get coal so they had to burn the corn instead of the coal. (That's right.) They couldn't get coal. (That's right.) Was there much fluctuation in the county as to how the farmer's crops were affected. For instance I was talking to someone a couple weeks ago that said his particular farm in the drought of '34 was just, he didn't grow anything, when someone just a little bit north didn't have too bad a crop at all. I was wondering if that was the case up here or if that was more uniform.

This was pretty dry all over here. I think in Lawrence Township, that is possibly one of the best agricultural townships we have in Grant County, I think they said in '34 they had had two binders out, just around the edges. And in '34 I drove through Sisseston, South Dakota and all we seen between here and Sisseston was a few stacks of Russian thistle. That was all that you could see.

Q. How many years did they go through that then without a crop?

Well in '35 I think they had a little crop but then in '36 it was another bad year again. But then it started in again and we sure have been fortunate these last years now with crops.

Q. What were some specific issues that Farmer-Labor Party raised that were appealing to farmers? Like they supported the moratorium. What were some other of their proposals that farmers sought?

Well I don't know how these farmers got into such awful debt you know but in 1932 I suppose east, north and all four directions out of here there were very few farms that weren't mortgaged. And then when you had '34 and '36 with no crops how are you going to pay your interest and taxes.

Q. Was that because of poor prices in '32 or poor crops then in '32.

In '32 poor prices. But I think that World War I, when they went into kind of a land speculation, that got a lot of these farmers into buying more land and going into debt. Then the depression came or the drought and the depression both. So there were darn few of these farmers that weren't agreeable to the moratorium I can tell you that now. (That is no matter what party they were?) No, they forgot the party then. Cause most of them were on what you call it, Relief, PWA loan and they didn't ask them if they were Republican or Democrat. They all come. (Under the Work Progress Administrations) on the Work Progress, ya.

Q. But there were still some farmers that didn't support the Farmer-Labor Party?

Oh I suppose there were a few but not too many though.

Q. But around here most of them were? (Most of them were, ya.) How many took any active part as far as the local organization? Was that quite a few too?

(30 min.--367)

Ya I would say so.

Q. Did they have quite a few candidates from this area that were Farmer-Laborites or didn't you say there were a lot of Farmer-Labor candidates?

When you talk about Farmer-Labor candidates, you know Carl Iverson was the only one we had and there was no question that he was a Liberal all the way through. And he's the only one we had for all of those years.

Q. For all of those years? (Ya) How about the other counties around like Stevens I don't think every had many Liberals.

No, I don't think so. But Otter Tail had switches up there, they had liberals in there.

Q. Did they also have a strong Farmer-Labor Party?

Ya. They had a Representative. I can't quite remember their names right now but I know that there was an attorney up there that was for that moratorium that time he was a Farmer-Laborite from Fergus Falls, but then it is kind of surprising to get a Liberal out of Fergus Falls. It was in those days.

Q. They are predominately Republican?

Yes, they were but there were those that got in.

Q. In our county Grant was predominately Republican too weren't they?

Oh yes.

Q. What other issues did they support during the 1920's like for the farmers? Other than the moratorium, the Farmer-Labor Party, what other did they push for? Higher prices, obviously, I suppose.

Ya. Grain prices was one thing I suppose. But I suppose that was the main thing. The moratorium came up later but I think that it was the declining in farm prices that was the main issue I would say.

Q. And like the Non-Partisan League, they tried to get cooperatives didn't they? (Oh yes.) Weren't they associated with the Farmer-Labor Party? (Oh yes, that's right) Was there quite a bit of opposition from the businessmen here against the cooperatives?

No, I don't think so. You know maybe Carl at Ashby started a co-op there you know. Both a store and an elevator and different things.

Q. He was telling about it I think when we interviewed him that there was so much opposition from the businessmen that they wouldn't rent them a building and the banker wouldn't lend him the money to build a building either.

I'm sure of that but we didn't have any of that here. (Here?) No not here. And I don't think in Elbow either. I think all of the elevators there were independent elevators. I'm pretty sure they were.

Q. How about here in Wendell? I see that you have a Cooperative Oil?

Oh ya. We've had that for several years now.

Q. Did you have any other cooperatives?

No. We have a Farmer's Elevator. (Farmer's Elevator?) Ya (Did you help organize that at all?) No, that has just been organized now and the oil company I did but not the elevator. Course this elevator is not a cooperative but is just a group of farmers that put in so much money and I am not interested in that. I mean I have no interest in that. But the Co-op Oil I have had stock in when they started that.

How did you get that started, the Co-op Oil? (I don't remember just what they..) Didn't the farmers lend you so much money?

Ya, bought stock. And then we had a Farmer's Co-op Creamery here for many years. That was here for years until they quite milking around here so they had to close the creamery. We had the Farmer's Co-op Creamery and it was one of the best ones in the county for many years.

Q. In the '32 election did the Farmer-Laborers, what was their reaction to Roosevelt, to his ideas?

Well they were 100% for Roosevelt. (They were?) Oh sure.

Q. How about for Truman later on were they supporting Truman too?

Oh ya.

Q. Was there a Farmer-Labor activity supporting Roosevelt or did they come mainly from the Democratic party the first years?

Well I think it came from the Democratic party maybe. I won't say. Cause I can remember Floyd B. Olson down in Minneapolis. I think I was there when Roosevelt said, "I wish that you would come to Washington and help me." he told Floyd Olson. So he was one of the promoters for Roosevelt you know. Course Roosevelt carried big.

(35 min.--447)

Q. Course he carried big all over the United States. Was there a lot of opposition to Floyd B. Olson or Elmer Benson when he run or any of these or did they have a fairly easy election?

Well (Well then again I suppose they voted again down party lines.) Well I think so. Pretty much so. I think it is my idea that Benson would have stayed if he would have stayed Senator I think that that was a bad move when he went back from Senator to take Floyd Olson's governorship. You see Benson was a United States Senator.

Q. Oh United States Senator? (Ya) Why do you suppose he didn't get elected again for governor?

Well, there was something...

Q. Wasn't there a split in the party then?

Ya, there was something that happened in there and I just don't know. I think that Benson got in with the wrong crowd myself. Down there, I mean not intentionally, but it just happened that way.

Q. He had certain allies?

Ya, I think so.

Q. How about some of the unsuccessful candidates from the Farmer-Labor Party? Do you remember any of those, like candidates before Floyd B. Olson or candidates before Elmer Benson?

No. I don't remember much before Floyd B. Olson. I just don't remember too much.

Q. Did any of these, like did Floyd B. Olson or Elmer Benson or Roosevelt come anywhere near these conventions around here or campaign for anyone locally?

Floyd Olson was in Elbow Lake several times, couple of times I know.

Q. Was that for a money raising fund?

Well they had Grant County day of something there and he was the speaker there. I don't know but I am sure that Benson must have talked here too but I went to Fergus Falls a couple of times and heard him talk there. Also Olson too talked there in Fergus Falls.

Q. Is there a great deal of resistance of people in this area to the idea of a third party? Or was that accepted pretty naturally during the depression or actually before the depression with the Non-Partisan League.

I don't think there was too much activity or I mean enthusiasm in the third party. I don't think so. No.

Q. Did the Non-Partisan League or the Farmer-Labor Party cut into the votes for the Democratic candidate?

No, I don't think so.

Q. It was either one or the other candidate. It wasn't both? (No, that's right.) There wasn't like three candidates, for Republican, Democrat and Non-Partisan League? (No) Do you think that in the '30's as the country came out of the depression that that made an alliance between the Democrat and the Farmer-Laborer inevitable? Or do you think that on its own the Farmer-Labor Party had a chance to stand on its own two feet?

Oh I think that the Farmer-Labor could stand on its own feet.

Q. Even after the Depression was ended?

I think so.

Q. What were the reasons for joining with the Democratic Party?

Well I've heard that too. Well I think they were pretty much both the same. Their philosophy was almost the same and why not be one instead of two parties. Now I think their ideas were almost the same.

(40 min.--516)

Q. Ya, except the Democrats I suppose, joining the two would bring in a lot of people that were not farmers or laborites (yes that's right.) professional people or business people. Do you think that that would hurt or help the party?

No, I think it would help the party wouldn't it? I would think so.

Q. Now you mentioned some animosity towards bankers. In Morris from talking to people, I understand that there was some conflict of interest between the townspeople and the farmers. They weren't always getting along that well. Was that different up here or was there some type of friction up here too?

Well, I suppose there was some but not a great deal I don't think.

Q. Could you say there was a clean split in a general way, the town Republican and the farmers Farm-Labor and Democrat or was it more mixed?

More mixed I would say.

Q. That might stem from Morris being a little larger they had more businesses there.

Ya, but they had their banking problems in Morris too.

Q. What kind of problems did you have with the Farmer-Labor Party in this case? Was there problems of getting people to join, raising money?

No, I think they have been pretty good.

Q. How did people contribute to the party as far as money?

Well we'll say the Democratic-Farm Labor, the Democratic Party now or the DFL, we have in certain townships fellows that go out or women that go out and collect and give a dollar or five dollars or whatever they want to to the party. That's about the way that we work it.

Q. And I suppose that bean feeds and other dinners finance it.

Well we don't have too many of those in the Grant County level but...

Q. You generally got it from individuals in the community.

That's right.

Q. Did you have any that were contributing large sums of money around here?

No, I think the largest amount was about \$25, it went to Bergland. Some person with very much interest in agriculture. I don't know, I've been treasurer for the Democrat party here in Grant County for the past 15 years and I don't think we've ever had anything over \$25.

Q. How much money do you usually raise in a year?

Well I suppose maybe a couple thousand dollars. I would say so.

Q. Now that would be to pay for traveling expenses and...

Well it's mostly, well now we donated to Bergland of course I think he got about \$600 from (Grant County?) from Grant County ya.

Q. Do different candidates get different amounts or certain amounts according to...

I don't think we donated anything except to our local, like to Olaf, we donated to him after he got his nomination. We couldn't donate before but after he got his nomination then we donated to him and I think they were the only two that got anything from us was Bergland. I don't think we, I can't remember donating or having checks written out to Anderson, to the Governor. No just (Just the local ones.) just the local ones. (Local candidates.)

Q. Was that the case in the thirties too?

No I think it was all local, I don't think anything went to. For McGovern now we never donated anything. Not from the county I suppose, but we donated individually, \$5-\$10 or something but not from the Grant County DFL party.

(45 min.--607)

Q. Did you ever donate anything to a Presidential candidate like a presidential candidate like Hubert Humphrey or anything? Was anything going to him being he was from Minnesota or from this area?

It seems to me, I don't just recall for sure.

Q. Was it hard collecting payments during the, collecting money during the Depression?

Well no it seemed like they were more willing then now maybe because of the conditions that were existing in those days.

Q. I suppose during certain parts of the history people would become more active than other parts simply because of the conditions. Like when prices went down farmers would become more active in the Farmer-Labor Party, when prices went up they wouldn't become quite as active.

Ya, that's right. But now I'll have to say that McGovern carried Grant County. (He did.) Yes, he did, he carried Grant County.

Q. He carried Steavens too. (I believe he did, I believe Sylvia said that they carried.) I suppose it was easier for Roosevelt in the '30's to carry.

Oh ya. I can remember back when, what was the mayor of New York that run against Hoover what was his name now? (Dewey?) No before him again. (McCarty?) No, what was that New York fellow? (There was Al Smith) Al Smith, sure. I know the Fergus Falls radio station was started in Barrett and I know a group of us went down there and sang "Happy Days are Here Again" on radio for Al Smith, but he didn't make it.

Q. Oh you went down and sang for Al Smith.

Ya, he ran for President at that time.

Q. And he was the Democratic candidate? (Ya, Al Smith was against Hoover, but Hoover beat him. But you see Al Smith was a Catholic and in those days that was quite a, it changed when Kennedy got in, but in Al Smith's time, you just couldn't elect a Catholic in as President.)

Q. Did you have to pay Gerund, the radio announcer, to be on his radio like a paid advertisement or did he donate his radio program to sing that.

I don't just recall that. What was his name, Gerund, was that it? (Ya, Gerund was the guy that owned the radio station.) I don't remember that. I know we had Johnson and Russell Barsness, oh there was quite a few of us. And we went from there to Herman. Somebody was giving a political speech there, I forget who the fellow was there but he was a former Herman man who gave a political speech there. We went from Barrett to Herman I remember.

Q. Did you ever do any other rallies like that, like go through the counties in parades, not parades really, but go through and give some kind of a speech and stuff?

Yes, we did, especially for Carl Iverson we did several times. Carl wasn't so, I mean it was kind of hard to get him out going. But we would go out and promote deals for him to go through.

Q. Give speeches and sing songs for him and so on.

Q. In '28 when Smith was running were farmers in this area in trouble then before the Stock Market crash of '29? (Oh yes, they were in trouble.) Even during the roaring twenties? (Yes) Because of farm prices right? (Because of farm prices. But it hadn't hit bottom yet, I mean they were still struggling. They were in bad shape.) But there wasn't a Farmer-Labor group here then until after the Stock Market crash and later.

Oh no there was a Farm Labor group here before. (There was.) Oh yes.

Q. You had started it before that time? (Oh yes, sure) Was it due to the bad prices for farmers, or was the founding before it was that bad for farmers, or just a party measure?

Well I think it was bad prices for farmers. That's what led up to this badness in '32. You know I mean it had just been struggling along.

Q. And then again wasn't there something about the elevators and grinding flour? Townley said in North Dakota they were getting cheated at the elevator when they ground their flour or weighing or something.

I forget what it was but it had something to do with the elevators. I think that old Senator Langor, Langor wasn't it that was Senator from North Dakota at that time, he too fought those people.

(50 min.--722)

Q. There was something to do with the elevators and weighing your grain, uneven scales or something.

I think they now have a state elevator haven't they. They have a state bank

of North Dakota too.

Q. They have some sort of state elevators. (Ya, they have state elevators) How about the newspapers in Grant County, were they predominantly Republican or predominantly Democratic, did they support the Farm-Labor Party or did they fight them?

They weren't too bad I don't think, now I'm talking about the Grant County Herald. Harold Barker was the editor. And prior to him it was Gutsinger. Of course he was pretty conservative but Harold Barker got in of course it was Democrat. (It was Democrat?) Oh ya, that's what he run on you know.

Q. And Harold Barker ran for office too?

He was representative for several years there. He was even speaker of the House, at one time, Harold Barker was. And then Carl had been out and oh he'd been a Senator for one term, State Senator. Then he lost to some doctor down south here someplace, I forget the doctors name. Then he run against Barker and he beat Barker. (Yes, I know he said that he had beat the Speaker of the House, but I didn't realize that it was Harold Barker.) That was quite a split at that time I'll tell you that. (He beat him in the primary?) Ya sure. That was quite a, that turned a lot of people because some were friends of Barker and some were friends of Iverson. It was a bad thing that two good, Barker was a damm good representative I can tell you that. Very active. (They shouldn't have been runnging for the same office. One could have been running for Senator.) It was too bad that two good men with the ability that they both had that they should go against one another but that's what happened. And the outcome was that Iverson won.

Q. And Barker didn't go on to political office again, didn't try for political office again?

No that ended it.

Q. Tell us, this is getting of the subject of Farmer-Labor Party, but how did the people around here feel about the proposed city near Evansville, the proposed experimental city near Evansville?

I think they were against it. (They were against it?) I think the majority was. I would feel that way, of course I myself I think it would have been all right. (You think it would have been all right?) Because that country down in there as far as farming or anything, I can't see anything wrong with it. (It's not good farm land?) No, my no. That country down there could just as soon be a, turn into...but Douglas County of course opposed it quite a bit. Well is that still alive to some extent?

Q. No I don't think it's alive anymore but I think it was quite a reality for a while there.

But I can't, take all these kids now that are graduating from schools here and that, what are they going to do?

Q. Do you mean as far as employment here?

Now I think this would give something to do for them. They could have gone and had some work. In different types of work in this model city or whatever you call it. Where now they have to go to Minneapolis or a ways to get any which isn't so good either so far away where here they could just drive down and commute back and forth.

(55 min.--827)

Q. How do you feel about, and how does the party in Minnesota feel about gun control?

Well I feel they should have gun control. Some of these sportsmen clubs, I know Morris is quite opposed to gun control but I think that they need gun control.

Q. Do you think it will keep the people who would use guns wrongly away from guns?

Well you could just go back to those guys that they shot out in California. Those guns that were found in the debris there were all checked out and found who they had been sold to and where they had been sold to by registering. (Oh they had been registered?) It gives a list of who they had been sold to. There is just an example there of what gun control, I don't mean to take everybody's guns I don't think that was the intention, I never read Spann's law on the gun control but I don't think it was that serious. (Was that Harold Spann's?) The attorney general of the state, (Warren) Warren Spann's.

Q. No his proposal wasn't to take the guns away.

That wasn't anything so dangerous. I don't think that it would curtail anybody but it would register hand guns and put a, and I think that's a must and we'll have that some day soon, I'm sure of that. Maybe the next legislature.

Q. How did you feel about Minnesota Income Tax? I know Carl Iverson said he was on the committee to consider Income Tax. (He said what?) He was on the committee to consider income tax.

He was one of the starters (the promoters of it). Well I don't see anything wrong with that.

Q. It takes off of property tax? (What?) It takes off from property tax?

Ya well, it's supposed to do that of course but it seems that these legislators, if there is any money available they'll get ahold of it regardless of where it comes from. (Ya that's true.) That's about the size of it. So if you open up one thing why it will get that and more besides.

Q. Can you tell us anything about the Wendell community here in Wendell as far as businessmen in the past or...

Well this has been a very good, I think this time I'll tell you about our little bank down here you wouldn't believe that. We had a bank meeting yesterday afternoon, I'm one of the directors and vice president. And we have over a \$6 million footings down here in this little bank. (Over 6 million in the bank?) Over 6 million. (That's quite a bit of money.) Yes it is, so that should speak for this community pretty well. Cause we don't have any Chicago money or any New York money, Alexandria money either. It's all local money.

Ya, farmers.

Q. Have you had any fires or anything that have destroyed buildings in the town or businesses or anything?

No. I think Wendell is holding there own pretty good.

Q. As far as the population goes?

We've had, we haven't had too many new houses, but there is always a new house going up now and then and I think last year there was 2 of them or 3. Of course we have quite a few people who commute to Fergus Falls to work, especially women, up at the factories, I think they have a couple of factories, quite a few of them work in there and commute back and forth. (And live in Wendell) And live in Wendell and even work in the State Hospital and commute back and forth.

Q. Can you tell us anything about some of the doctors that have formerly lived in Wendell. Do you ever have a doctor in town?

Dr. Parsons is the last doctor that we had here but he lived in Elbow Lake and just came up here 3 times a week or just twice a week or something. But Fergus Falls and (Elbow Lake) Elbow Lake that was when Parsons done the work here. Now there was some doctors here years ago but that's before my time, I mean I don't have much recollection on those. They were permanent doctors here in town. (You don't have any recollections?) No not too much.

(60 min.--964)

Q. Do you remember anything about the town of Hereford?

Ya, I remember Hereford, I've been there.

Q. How many business places were there?

Oh that was quite a town at one time. I think they had 3 elevators, a lumber yard, a grocery store, and that was quite a town.

Q. Do you remember any of the businessmen that were in Hereford?

Well I'm trying to think of the old fellow who started the store there but I can't remember now. I know a Carl Larson run the store there for several years, and he moved to Nashway. I think maybe Carl was the last one that had the store there. I'm not so sure about that but like I say the elevators and the lumber yard was there.

Q. Did you have a railroad man through there?

Ya sure.

Q. You did have a railroad that ran through there.

The Great Northern from Tintah to Evansville.

Q. I heard that was quite an up and coming town at one time.

Sure that was. But I can't remember the name of the guy that started the store there. I know a man, Ludke from Alexandria, Ludke Lukert, they used to sell us merchandise, you see I was in the store business here for 31 years.

Q. Oh you were? Did you have the hardware store then? (No grocery, general store.) Oh you had the general store.

Ya I knew he asked me, old Ludke he was an old man at that time, the grocery wholesaler at that time, Ludke Lukert I think you've heard of him. But he remembered the fellow that, Darling or something like that the name of the fellow that was the first store in Hereford.

Q. How long has it been since Hereford has been non existant then? Did it fold up during the Depression or didn't the Depression have anything to do with it?

Ya, well I think it had pretty well washed up before that time. I think so because the railroad has been out of there for quite some time now.

Q. And the railroad was probably what killed it when...

Well, I think the railroad would have stayed if the community would have, but they moved the elevators out which would have been the main thing for the railroad.

Q. Ya and would have been the main thing for business too.

And when the elevators, of course that knocked the, it was no use of having a railroad anymore. But now at west Elbow now, they tore up the track from West Elbow to Tintah, and then they kept it open from West Elbow to Evansville because that West Elbow elevator was doing the big business.

Q. It's still doing big business isn't it?

No it's closed now. It's just used for storage.

Q. Did they ever have any other businesses in West Elbow? (No.) Just the elevator. (A little depot there but.) And where was Hereford located, was that between Wendell and Elbow or where was it?

Well it's south and west of here. (Southwest, towards Tintah then) Ya towards Tintah.

Q. Do you have any other questions you would like to ask? No ¹ got most of mine in on the Farmer-Labor question.

I don't think I was too much help...

Q. Oh no you helped.

(65 min.--075)