

Interview with Sophie Koaciolowaki

by Elizabeth Butters

January 15, 1971

Time - 1 hour

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Oral History Project

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- I. Why don't we just start with your personal background?
- R. My father got here some time in 1909, I think, and my mother and I and my brother came here in 1912. My mother found it not to her liking, I think it would be relevant to tell you that my father had a very rough time when he came here. He couldn't find no jobs. He worked in the Pennsylvania coal mines for a while. He was in a cave in of some kind, and when he went into the hospital, somebody walked off with all of his clothing and money that he had. Consequently, when he was leaving the hospital, the nurses made a collection of odds and ends from other patients in order to clothe him. He left there without any money and couldn't find any jobs there. Some people told him he could find work in Chicago. That's how he came here. He worked

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at all kinds of dirty, lousy jobs. He worked for Darling & Co, for a while, if you know what that is. Finally in 1912, he sent for my mother and myself and my brother; two of my sisters were left in Poland. But after we got here, my mother didn't like it here. We lived on 44th and Ashland and in those days Darling stank and the creek stank so awful. She was losing weight and she was worried about the children, you know. So she decided she wanted to go back, so I went with her. My brother stayed there a year. One of my sisters had died in the meantime. We had left two over there. We came back here, my older sister, myself and my mother in 1914. I was 11 years old at the time. But my mother was already acquainted with the working laws in this country, so they added a year to me, so I could go to work earlier. My brother went to work at 12. I went to work at 13. When I came here I was 11 and a year was added to me so I

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was supposedly 12, and I went to school for 2 years here. Then I went to work and I've been working ever since. Not now, not since '62 because of my illness.

I. What was your first job?

R. My first job was in the stockyards, naturally, at Armour & Co., and old time chipped beef, what they called it. We worked 8 hours a day, and we got, I think it was 48 hours a week for children under 16.

I. That's a lot.

R. And I think we got about \$3.50 a week at that time. Well then, after a couple of years, I quit that job and I worked in different places. I worked as a waitress, and I worked in Western Electric for a while. Western Electric was considered a good place to work, but getting to the job end coming back was something else again.

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The streetcars - people used to hang on; all kinds of funny things happened. Anyway when I reached 19, I got married, and that was not a very happy one. I'd say it was a bust. After 9 years, I divorced my husband. That just happened to be during the depression, and there was no where to go. You couldn't get a job, you couldn't even buy one, so I worked part time for Goldblatts as an extra, paid the magnificent sum of \$2000 for ten hours work. It was terrible, Finally I found out that I could get a job back in the dried beef, mind you, where I first started. I thought that was preferable to the Goldblatts job, and so I went back in that.

R. That was Goldblatts on Ashland?

I. On Ashland, 47th. So I went back in there.

There was nowhere else to go. At that time I think they were paying 32½¢ an hour. I was sort of considered semi-skilled. I was packing

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call skeleton shifts. We didn't have a home department, but they could send us almost anywhere, you know in the plant. They didn't hire people, if they wanted people in another department, they'd send you there. And many is the time I got send into a place where it was very cold, and I didn't have the proper clothing. I'd have to work there, and if I didn't want to, well, "you can go", you know.

I. Yes, right.

R. So that's the way it stayed until we started to organize. That was later.

I. When did you start to organize in your plant?

R. Oh, I think '38 was the earliest that I got into it, but the organization started; the movement started with John L. Lewis's C.I.O., you know in 1935. Of course, I heard about it, but there was so much fear, and insecurity. I was more or

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less aware of it in '37, but not really until '38. Well, if money is the only important thing, but to me it wasn't really the money that was important.

I. Well you could say what else was important to you.

R. You hear so much about people being treated like slaves , you know. I think the only difference between an outright slave and us was that we could go home.

I. Right,

R. And as far as dignity, or feeling like a human being, that was another thing. They didn't actually crack whips at: you you know, but if you wanted to keep your job, well, the foreman had the ultimate say-so, whether you worked or didn't. Seniority - there was no such thing. Although you know, you hear a lot of people hollering today that seniority should be abolished, that

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you should be upgraded in order of your ability, but that didn't apply in those days. You didn't get upgraded because you were able or smart, or because you did your job better. You got upgraded because you knew somebody, or the foreman liked you, you know, or something like that. So, it doesn't hold water even today. I don't think that there's impartial upgrading in industry today, and I'm not an expert on all of it, couldn't be.

- I. What about the particular conditions that you faced as a woman?

- R. Oh God! It is so hard to describe. I don't think I could tell you, that I could make anybody believe how bad conditions were -- I mean, environment wise over there. I can remember we had a 10 minute break in the morning, we used to start at 7 o'clock. And we had to walk 5 flights down. We had a dressing room on

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the 1st floor. We had to walk 5 flights down, have our cup of coffee or whatever, and be back up on the 5th floor (across about a half a block almost and up 5 flights and back at work in 10 minutes. And then the same went for lunch.

At lunch we had a ½ hour and we'd have to make it down, have our lunch, and be back up in half an hour. Of course, I worked piece work all this time, because that was so called skilled.

I. Do you remember any particular things that affected women in this early period as compared to men?

R. Such as what?

I. Did they have different concerns, as far as children, say?

R. No.

I. Do you remember anything?

- R. There was no provision, as such, for women.
The only provisions that I know of was that the women were paid less for whatever they were doing.
- I. Yes, that's important. You probably don't remember any of the pay scales, like how much a man would make as compared to a woman?
- R. Well, usually in the stockyards, it ranged about 10¢ or 12¢ on the base pay and there were gradations after that -- you know, so called brackets, They still have them in the industry. As for any, shall I say, consideration given to women, at that time, as opposed to men, there was none that I know of. Of course they didn't push trucks and lift very overly heavy weights, but other than that, there was nothing.
- I. Mostly it was discrimination in terms of money.
The women weren't paid as much.
- R. Well, yes I would say so, because women in general, even in the office and in other jobs were paid less than men.

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I. Maybe you could say...

R. I would like to tell you about conditions as far as accommodations, dressing rooms, for women. The one we had down there back in the '30's was an abomination. We were situated there under what they used to call the soup room where they used to pack pigs feet and some other stuff, and at times the sewer would back up over there and the effluent would run down into our dressing room. And boy, roaches were big as half of your thumb. If you got hit in your head, you thought a bomber hit you. We couldn't get nothing done until after we started with the union. And the funny thing about the whole thing is that we had the government inspection, you know, the agriculture department, and they were there. And not until after we organized and brought that up as a grievance (the abominable conditions in the dressing room) did the department of Agriculture inspection start to consider the fact that the

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women worked with food and had to dress. Then clothing sometimes, you know, got filthy with the stuff. And the roaches! That was so horrible! Sometimes I used to say "We need a rowboat to get to our lockers." But then, finally between the grievances of our union, and after we got after the Bureau of Inspection, they finally used to send an exterminator every so often and got rid of most of the roaches, before they finally closed the place. They never got rid of them completely, you know, but in comparison with what it was before it was clean. And they even had men come in once in a while and wash the floor. The matrons used to have to do it before that. They did a better job than the men. They worked harder, too.

Well, we stayed in that dressing room until they closed the place in 1959. But the conditions were much better then.

- I. Maybe you could say something about how the union came and about how you got involved in the union,

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and your first activities in the union?

- R. My first activities? I signed up with the union, but I was afraid to be active for quite a while. We had a succession of foremen and each one seemed to be worse than the one before. We finally got one who was a real stinker. He never called anyone anything but "hey you". And there were a lot of women working there. They'd call you, 'hey you" and when we started to organize, they got real snotty. If you had a button on, how shall I say it, you were marked. Everybody was a Communist, and the boss says they were rats, and so forth. Anyway, I don't remember exactly what triggered off the whole thing. Most of the women were married. They all had to work and I don't know what triggered it off. Oh, there were several women in there including myself, that already belonged to the union and paid dues but were not active because we were all afraid. My memory isn't as good as it used to be. I know something happened that got them all mad.

- I. All the women in your....
- R. In the department. Most of them, never all, people never do. But most of the women decided that they'd walk over to the union hall and sign up, because they just thought they'd had enough. That's when they found out that myself and a couple of other women in the department were already in the union, when they went over there to sign up. The next day, all of the women, they used to call them girls, I'll say girls, anyway, (you were a girl if you were 90 or 50) all the same. They all came out with their union buttons on and brother, you should have seen it. The foreman, the superintendent, the superintendent's superintendent came to look what had happened. It was horrible, you know, unthinkable.
- I. Were the women somewhat slower than the men in joining the union?
- R. Oh yes, oh yes.

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- I. So this was quite a surprise when the women all joined?
- R. That's what blew the lid, because they really were surprised. Everybody, the superintendent, the foremen from other floors, everybody came to look at what happened, you know, women with union buttons on. That's when the campaign really started there. They tried to scare us. We had one election which the company contested. That was before this happened in my department. And so there was some more organizing, and we had another election after that. In between time is when the girls in my department joined the union. And when we had the second election, there was no question about it.
- I. Do you remember what year that was?
- R. I think it was '38, I could be wrong. I think it was '38 or '39. Well anyway, what happened was that you could very seldom get a woman in those days. Very few women would take the res-

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possibility of being a steward in a department. They didn't want the responsibility of collecting dues. They weren't checked off. So I got roped into it and that was the start of it.

I. How did that happen?

R. Well, nobody else wanted it, you know,

I. You mean no other woman wanted in?

R. Right, in the department. It wasn't that I was very anxious to do it. I was not too much bolder than everybody else. I had a living to make, too, like everybody else. But then I thought to myself, "Well, it can't get a hell of a lot worse, because it's pretty bad as it is." So that's how I got into it. When I became a steward, then I got active. But it was tough days because you had to collect the dues and a lot of people signed up and didn't want to pay dues, you know. They thought if they signed up that was enough. So

every month you had the same thing, you had to go around and collect the dollar. At that time the dues were a dollar. Then, after that came the grievance committee. I was supposed to be a so called "steward". If the women had any beefs, I was the one to beef to. So that's how I got into the grievance committee.

- I. What were some of the main grievances at this time?
- R. Oh all kinds. Some of them were petty, where I worked. And I'll tell you frankly, I'm not sorry the place is gone. I got stuck there during the depression. I had no special education, and at that time, I thought that was some sort of security, especially after we got the union and we got seniority rights. Well, I had 8 years in there already, so I thought of job security, but the conditions that we worked under were horrible. I don't know how they're working in the other plants since they moved out, but certainly the human comfort in this place, in Armour's plant here, was not of any concern to the company. In this dry

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beef area where I worked they put in drying ovens in there, where they used to make beef bullion. In the back of the room they had drying ovens and they would grind the stuff, and spread it out on trays. They would dry it and then they would grind it and then form it into cubes again. The dried beef was at one end and there were slicing machines there. In the middle was a long jar sterilizer where they used to run the jars through. In the back, behind me almost directly, was a vacuum drying oven - hotter than Hades. I don't know, but many times I thought that I couldn't stand it another minute. And the machines and the clatter! I think that's why my hearing is going, you know. There were so many of us, at one time. There were 200 women working the department, and very few of them complained. And I used to get so that I wanted to scream! You know, I used to feel that sound because the ceiling was concrete, the floor was concrete,

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the walls were concrete, there were these machines running like crazy, and stainless steel trays running down metal belts. It wasn't only light mesh, it was heavy. They used to come down there and clatter and the machines would clatter. And oh! I think that every summer until the day they closed, I had been putting in grievances on the extreme heat in the department. They would bring in a fan or two, and all it did was move the hot air around, that's all. I don't know how we survived, but you see, you're in the job so long and you think about trying to get another one. Comparatively, they made pretty good money in their work, you know, because they were all on piece-work, especially in the dry beef. I don't complain about the money, but the conditions were sometimes so bad! I guess I just wasn't tough enough, I don't know, physically, because otherwise I think I was. I got tougher as I grew older.

I. What were some of the! main problems you encounter-

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in '29 and '30. And then the veterans who went to the world war and had bonuses waiting, well they had to go out and sell apples in order to survive. So that was the whole purpose a little education, you know. One demonstration and one picture can sometimes do better than a thousand words.

Yes, that's right.

R. Anyway, we had some very interesting experiences with that thing. A Presbyterian church worked with us. We had a few of these community organisations, they didn't participate in the demonstration. They thought it was a little too far out, you know. I got a kick out of it. In fact, I think we need more of it, but I think it ought to be organized. I was teasing the guys. You see, I believe in organization. In other words, I don't believe, in going out with ten cops standing in front of me with two guns. Maybe sometimes you have to, but that ain't the way you do it. We always believed in real organization, avoid any bad publicity. Because we know like during strikes, the companies used' to plant guys in the picket lines and give' them a few bucks to buy booze. here a guy is kind of depressed and they'll get him boozed up too and he'll start taking it out on the cops. Our guys would get steamed up and they'd throw them in the jug. We had a lot of that. We even had them infiltrate the union hall, but took care of most of that now. We didn't hurt anybody, but we got them out of there. So really there's quite a history behind this union and I still think there's more to be made.

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to go. But that was it's main problem: fear. And then of course, money wasn't that plentiful then. You had to squeeze it out.

I. Were there ethnic conflicts within your department at all?

R. What?

I. Were there conflicts between different ethnic groups or races?

R. Well, there was no problem in those days really. The stuff that you hear about these days now - what do they call it? How one group was sticking together, this, that, and the other one. No there wasn't. We had all kinds of nationalities. We had, today I don't know which one is right Negro or Black. I'm confused. I had so many friends and now I'm afraid to get in touch with them.

I. Really?

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- R. Because there seems to be so much of that, you know. I still have a few friends that I keep in touch with, but where before I could go and visit, and I worked so many years on 49th and Wabash, but now I wouldn't know. How can they tell who you are, you know?
- I. There's more fear on both sides?
- R. There is, There is. I regret it so much, because I knew so many good people. I don't know what's happening. You can't tell in those day, as far as I'm concerned, I couldn't see any difference. They got along. There wasn't that friction, you know. I would say the colored girls were better, easier to organize than the white women. The white women were more stubborn. They were either more fearful or tighter with the dollar, I can't say which. But eventually they all did join.
- I. What did you, as a steward, and what did your

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union do about some of the conditions?

R. Well, the only thing that I could do, and the only thing that anybody could do today is write grievances. And I wrote plenty of them. Some of them I won and some of them I didn't win. And some were just from one step to the next. But the biggest grievances over there were the working conditions. Heat and noise, and of course seniority was always a grievance.

I. Do you remember any early activities and strikes?

R. Oh yes. I was out on strikes. The longest one we had, in which we had problems, was in 1948.

I. Which was your first strike?

R. '46. I think we had a strike. I think that was when they brought in carloads of people and parked them in sleeping cars in the stockyards. We had a strike in '48. We didn't have to. We had it pretty well shut down. When we came back to work after that, we really didn't get what we wanted.

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When we came back to work, we had to organize all over again. In '48, we went out in March, and people went back in June. But we didn't have any clear cut victory at that time. I think they wanted to lay off a couple of girls, or fire them, for something, and the whole department walked out, all of us, whoever was working there. Most of the girls went back. I don't remember how it was managed. They went back to work some time in July I think, but myself and some of the others who were out - we didn't go back there till November of that year. So I had a long strike, and they didn't want to pay us our unemployment compensation, but eventually we got back. We started back again from there. We bot everybody organized and then they shut it down in 1959.

- I. Tell me about the neighborhood in Back-of-the-Yards Council.

- R. Well, as far as the neighborhood and Back-of-the-Yards Council. I think they helped them in that they encouraged people to organize. They did not knock the union and, of course, expressed some support for it, but I don't think that families were involved in it at that time.
- I. You said that the union helped the council somewhat?
- R. Well, we had delegates to the council, and sometimes we made some contributions, but they weren't large as I recall them. So it was a mutual sort of thing, you know.
- I. But it didn't really help a whole lot in terms of building the union? It was just sort of extra?
- R. Well, I couldn't say that. They had an awful lot to do with it, but the thing that helped was that they didn't actually knock it, you know. They sort of gave moral support, you might call it.

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For a time, I think, there was an effort made but I don't recall who was the instigator, whether it was the union or the Back-of-the-Yards Council. There was an effort made to work together.

- I. What influences or effect did the churches have on the organizing effort?
- R. Well, the churches were more in favor of the union, at that time than probably later on. The churches were helpful in some ways, not by direct action, but at least by giving it approval sort of.
- I. What about any of the politicians? Did they get involved in any way for their own benefit?
- R. Well, politicians, they always get involved to the extent when the election is coming, they want to come and talk at a meeting. Of course, we had some that would appear, and I guess they did in a way help, because it was a question of

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getting the vote. But I wouldn't know too much about it.

- I. How well could you say that you were satisfied with the work of the union? You said that you had a lot of expectations when you were young and that in some ways you were disillusioned,
- R. What do you mean by that? I don't know if you want that on the tape.
- I. Up until 1959 you were on the grievance committee?
- R. I was on the grievance committee. I was the vice president for a couple of years, but it's mostly honorary - nothing else. Then I got elected as Secretary Treasurer of local 347, and that's the year that the company decided they were going to close down the Chicago plant. So I worked in the union office until they decided that there were too few people in the local for a full time secretary. I decided to go back into what was left of the Armour plant. I worked there until I

might eventually end up in jail but you don't have to make a martyr out of yourself. That's what I think. There's certain things you can do. Some of them will tell you it ain't revolution. My son just come back from Viet Nam. That's the reason I can kind of put it together. I can see that's the way he talked. You see they're for the revolution now. They're tired of this business. He told me, for example, since going on over there, I chawed him out for volunteering, but I was afraid he was going to get involved in this gang bit, too. I finally concurred for him. They had a big campaign and got him back. He told me, "Who's fooling who? Every time they have a hockey match, baseball, he pin points some of the things that people in the old days lived with and accepted. These kids are not accepting this baloney. I get into it even around here on a friendly basis. "What do you thing about the hippies and the yippies?" I talk about them with. some of the guys in the plant We talk about all of this. We talk about all kinds of crazy things. I tell them I was noticing television. I don't know who this kid was, he was all decked out and they were asking him all these questions. "Do you take a bath?" So he said, When I'm in town, I'm as clean as anybody else, but I dress different . I don't believe in the status quo. I don't believe that any time someone brings something over here from Paris; that I got to wear it. Everything we do here isn't right. I

of existence. Of course, I wasn't well then but I used to go in one or two days to do the books and that was all.

- I. I was going to ask you another question about your position as a woman in the union. Did you find it was difficult to be active in the union as a woman?
- R. No. Not for me. But I was vexed many times by the attitude of most men. And I don't mean in here. I thought I was taken mostly as just another member in the local. I didn't feel that anybody was thinking I was funny whenever I spoke, but I was sometimes very annoyed when we had our conventions. I'd be a delegate to the conventions: sometimes when the question of women's problems would come up, some of the delegates to these conventions always had a sort of a snicker or a smile. It was always sort of funny, you know, as if women couldn't possibly have a serious or important contribution to make. It was always

amusing and I think it still is in some places. But I couldn't say that about my local. I didn't feel that way. I was given the respect that any other member got. I was on the executive board of the local for quite a few years and I never felt that anybody thought that I didn't have a brain in my head.

I. What year was this that you were on the executive board?

R. Oh God, it was so many years. I was for a while, then I quit for a while and I went back you know, like an old war horse or an old time fire horse. When they heard the bell they ran. I wasn't active for a while and then we got into that strike and I got back in again, you know.

I. Were there other women on the board?

R. Oh yes, there were other women, too. We had quite a few women.

I. What were some of the special problems of women that the delegates would bring up at these con-

ventions?

- R. There were some discussions about the single seniority. I didn't know if I agreed with that, but I didn't think that just because a woman raised a question that it was amusing. I thought it was a very serious question then and I still do. And I don't know whether it is the best thing for a woman, the single seniority, because you see, when automation hit, it hit women the hardest. In the years, specifically here, you know, before they even moved out, you could see the jobs being eliminated were mostly women's jobs, and I believe it's still the case. The funny thing about this whole business is that when I went back to that margarine there, after a major portion of the plant closed, we had this situation which I think is funny, because we had a situation with a man operating the margarine machines, you know the wrapping machines. He would put the cartons and the paper in the machine and sit there

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and watch it. And we had women backing off and lugging big bundles of these paper cases, 25 in a bundle. They had to hoist them, stamp them, pack the box, back it up. And the guy would sit there pushing papers and he was getting a lot more money than the women.

- I. Right.

- R. And of course they called that skilled, but he could never fix that machine by himself. Anyway, if it was anything serious, he had to call the mechanic. And every woman could have sat there and did the same thing. She had to do the bad jobs and the guy was sitting there. I think that's what killed me finally, because I went in there I started lugging - and I've never been any bigger than I am right now. I had to wrestle those cases, and I conked out. That wasn't it really. It was the beef that got me.

- I. Do you remember any other things that stand out

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in your mind about women and their experiences in labor organizing?

R. Well you see, physically I don't think women can fit into a single seniority. There would have to be some exceptions made. It's true women are getting bigger now, but still I think there's somethings that physically a woman can't handle. That was my opinion. And I can be wrong. I wouldn't argue about that. But I know, myself, I couldn't fit into a so called single seniority where the job didn't make a difference. To me, it would make a difference, because I would be unable to do it. I imagine there are some women still who couldn't handle everything, not mentally, necessarily but physically. I know I can't.

I. What about the position of racial groups, especially Black people in the plant? Do you think they played an important part in the union?

R. Oh yes, very much so. Oh yes.

I. Could you tell me about it?

R. I think in the very beginning, especially in the yards, that the colored people (I don't know what word is right) built the union. Because they were more determined. At that time, at least the people working there didn't worry about color or nationality. It was the fact that we were all being taken advantage of and we were all being exploited. And somehow, maybe because they felt they didn't have too much to lose, they seemed to have more courage. Anyway I thought so. They were more willing, although there were exceptions also. But as a rule I think if it weren't for the willingness or the enthusiasm of the Negroes, to join the union at that time, I don't think we could have done it. It's been tried before here, and the upshot of it was that men were killed and nothing happened. The union was back in '21, I can remember my father was on strike and after the strike was over the wage went down. They worked for practically nothing, you know, 25% an hour or something like that. And in those days already inflation

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was rising and they went back to work on any condition. They were really licked that time. When we first started organizing, a lot of the members of the union would volunteer to organize the other plants. People would take their own time. Wilson at that time, I think it was either in the late '30's or the early '40's was about the hardest plant in the Chicago area to organize. We used to get together after work and visit people working for Wilson, and hand out hand bills to try to convince the people to join the union. We lost the first election there. By golly, you'd be surprised how many men cried that time because we lost it. The second time we tried, we made it. But you know, eventually Wilson was the first of the packers to close down here. I was on the staff for a while in 1950, or '51 going to Camden, New Jersey to help organize the Campbell Soup Company. That election we won. Then I was sent on to Kansas City to try to organize a plant of Swifts over there. That one we lost. So you win a little

and you lose a little. I tried to organize a plant, I don't know whether it's pertinent or not, because that one was organized under the Amalgamated, a plant in Peoria, an Armour plant, We tried to organize that and we lost that one too. So it's just like everything else, you know, nothing comes your way. Once you lose, once you win.

- I. Do you remember anything in particular about the McCarthy period and how it affected your work?
- R. Oh the thing that I remember about McCarthy mostly is that for some reason or other, whether it was my working hours or what, I was able to see him on television at the time he held those so called hearings. He seemed the most obnoxious person, arrogant anyway. He was narrow minded and dictatorial. That's the only impression I got. I didn't pay much attention to what he was trying to convey, but the things that impressed me most was how arrogant he was. He never did make any other impression on me.

- I. The atmosphere of repression didn't really affect you in your work?
- R. No. Where I worked people didn't seem to notice him. There was no discussion, politically I think, people don't pay too much attention to what's going on really, and I think that perhaps the press overrated him. I did work with people, the so called common people, ordinary working people. It didn't seem to impress them or promote any kind of rabid feelings, not among the people that I worked with anyway.
- I. I just wondered if it caused any, since he did crack down on a lot of union leaders, if it did cause any jar?
- R. Not with the people that I worked with. We talked about it in our union meetings, because, you know, the people in the union were more aware of political things like that. But the people that I

worked with, they very seldom even brought that up or had a discussion. Nobody cared about McCarthy - he wasn't in Illinois for one thing - he was bothering somebody else.

- I. You were going to mention how you see your whole union experience in terms of your own life and background.

- R. I think if I had to do it all over again, if it was possible to do it: over again, I would do it perhaps a little better. But I don't regret any of it, because I think it was a very liberal education. It opened up a lot of things to me that I probably wouldn't have found without it. Some things, I found better than I expected and others that I found not quite so good. But all and all I think it was a regarding experience - all of it, even the bad parts.

- I. We were going to add something about the conditions in the stockyards.

- R. Oh, when I used to work there, for years there was

no transportation of any kind into the yards.

It wasn't until the past few years that the plant was open that the buses came in. Other than that we had to wade through all kinds of slush and muck, cobble stones, no side walks, You had to walk in either from Ashland or from Racine. Sometimes you'd wade in that slush almost up to your knees. And nobody cared. And now that the people are gone - I understand that they've got sidewalks and paved roads and what have you. So that just shows you how much people are worth.

- I. You stated that your mother had worked in the same plant you did and even up till 72 years old she had to walk in.

- R. Yes. She had to walk from here. I've been living here ever since, well I didn't actually live here all these years, because when I got married I lived somewhere else for a while, but then I came back. But she lived here from 1917. She didn't work in 1917. She worked after that sometime. And she used to walk in. She worked till she was 72 years old.

Kosciolowski -39-

And those cobble stones, believe me, were not
easy - you'd slip and slide.