

Western Oregon University

Digital Commons@WOU

Student Theses, Papers and Projects (History)

Department of History

5-29-2000

Radicals and Vigilantes: A Discussion and Comparison of Class Conflict in Everett and Centralia, Washington, 1916-1919.

Eben Pullman

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/his>



Part of the [Labor History Commons](#), [Social History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Western Oregon University

***Radicals and Vigilantes: A Discussion and Comparison of Class
Conflict in Everett and Centralia, Washington, 1916-1919.***

Thesis submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for History 499.

By
Eben Pullman

May 29, 2000

In the early 20th century, opposition to the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), and radical labor activism escalated into class violence in Everett and Centralia because of the polarization between the working class and business classes. Class polarization resulted from the anti-union fervor of local and state business and political leaders. In Everett this polarization heightened working class solidarity but in Centralia it revealed the extent to which the working class had splintered. The differences between the two communities were caused by numerous local and regional factors relating to unionism and political power. In both cases the persecution of the IWW and their members, led to an escalation of actions and the increased the militancy of the Wobblies, (the nickname given to and accepted by IWW members). This conflict also showed the inability of middle class progressives in both communities, to build stronger bridges both with the labor movement and with the industrial capitalists to avert the tragedies. The opposition of most industrialists to the labor movement's radicals and moderates, including the Washington State Federation of Labor, its affiliates, and the IWW, should be emphasized. The open-shop drives of employers and anti-radical hysteria, intensified after the World War I. These two hostile movements, were interrelated and held a commonality of purpose; to destroy the labor movement by persecuting its more radical elements. They identified radicalism with labor's cause in general, thus trying to divide the labor movement and decimate its public image.

The Setting.

In the late nineteenth century, industrial development in Western Washington accelerated. The introduction railroads during the 1880s, most notably the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern, stimulated the timber and other industries. Everett, Washington originated as an industrial town during the early 1890s. In 1892, James Hill, owner of the Great Northern Railroad chose the

location of this future city on the peninsula just north of Port Gardner Bay on the east coast of the Puget Sound as the sea port for the Great Northern Railroad.¹ Everett began with heavy land speculation and prospects of industrial greatness as investors learned that capitalist giants like James Hill, Weyerhaeuser Company, and John D. Rockefeller would be investing in this project. These capital interests made Everett a lumber mill town. It grew rapidly during the 1890s and early 1900s reaching 30,000 inhabitants. Industrial infrastructure such as rail yards that fed the some forty lumber mills likewise expanded by the turn of the century.² With the combination of national capital and local industrial capitalists such as Roland Hartley and David Clough, partners in the largest independent lumber mill in the town, as stake holders, Everett entered the 20th century a city dominated by a powerful capitalist class much more connected and formidable than in Centralia.

The Everett working class was composed of immigrants from Asia, the Midwest, and western Europe, including German and Scandinavian and Asian workers.³ Workers found employment in and around Everett in the lumber mills, building trades, logging and on the railroads. Middle class Everett citizens were somewhat squeezed between these two classes because of their small size in comparison to the working class and lack of power relative to the industrialists. Nevertheless they contributed substantially to the body politic and figured prominently in the progressive reform movement.

Towns that originated out of early land grant settlements from the 1850s, such as Centralia, began to grow more substantially after the introduction of rail service to the area. The Northern Pacific Railroad in the 1880s chose the what would be the town of Centralia as a division point where train crews changed.⁴ The area around Centralia was primarily agricultural well into the 20th century. Lewis County where Centralia was a location of early organizing for Grangers during the 1870s and 1880s and later in the early 1890s the Farmers' Alliance and Populist Party gained an "enthusiastic

following among Lewis County farmers.”⁵ By the turn of the century Centralia boasted a population of 1,600 people and was the fastest growing town in Washington between 1900 and 1910.⁶ Centralia also began to develop industrially by the early 1900s. Local industrial giants like Francis Hubbard operated coal mines, held large tracts of timberlands, controlled industrial infrastructure and operated the largest lumber mill in Centralia through the ownership of the Eastern Railway and Lumber Company. Centralia was also a central location for hiring and a recruitment point for men to work in the logging camps in southwestern Washington. With these characteristics, Centralia developed a rigid class structure of industrial capitalists, middle class professionals and small business owners, and a working class well before World War I.

Everett and Centralia entered the 20th century as class stratified communities. Everett had started in a more industrialized region and seemed to accept class and class conflict as a reality. Centralia still held elements of an agrarian communal heritage in some respects. While the timber industry certainly changed the ecological, economic, and socio-political landscape, agrarian virtues and farm organizing noted above and below still figured prominently in Lewis County, including the area surrounding Centralia and Chehalis. While the conflict that would erupt in Everett in 1916 and in Centralia in 1919 originated labor-industrial conflicts, in the Centralia case the farmer movement is significant not because of its role in the tragedies but for its similarities with the labor movement and the extent to which both movements were repressed by town elites.

A Region in Social and Economic Turmoil.

Between 1900 and World War I, several sometimes conflicting social movements rocked the Pacific Northwest. Western Washington was a focal point and dominant area of activity for organized labor, radicalism and progressive reform movements in the Pacific Northwest throughout

the early 20th century. All of these movements reached a flash point when labor upheaval and radicalism seemingly threatened the capitalist order.

While the majority of workers in the United States including the Pacific Northwest, did not belong to a union during the early 20th century, in a rapidly industrializing region like Western Washington, an incalculable number of workers were exposed to or affected by strikes, slowdowns, and other types of work-site actions. Many unions knew that they had to adapt to facilitate the tide of action chosen by workers, who could radicalize very quickly, depending on the conditions around them. The study of how labor organizations like the Washington State Federation of Labor and the Industrial Workers of the World adapted to changing conditions in order to succeed in organizing workers, offers historians greater insight into the world of the worker. The legacy of reformism within the labor movement in Washington state can be traced back to the early days of the Knights of Labor organizing. The labor movement, however, contained a radical element as well. At times the radical and reform blocks within the labor movement sometimes collided because of differences in terms of tactics and ideologies.

The organizations that dominated the state's labor movement in the early 1900s were the Washington State Federation of Labor (WSFL), the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), and the Socialist Party. The IWW and the WSFL were very distinct in terms of ideologies and tactics. The WSFL, which originally was the Washington State Labor Council, began its life unaffiliated with the American Federation of Labor (AFL).⁷ It wrestled with the question of affiliation for some time. Craft union conservatives favored affiliation, while industrial unionists balked at the proposal citing Samuel Gompers membership in the National Civic Federation as a negative.⁸ The Socialist Party at this time favored a strategy of "boring from within" the AFL at both the state and national level in

order to transform the Federation. The Socialists were also split between 'yellows' who favored reform strategies and 'reds' who preferred industrial unionism and independent political action. By 1912, the reds controlled the party and pushed for a more radical direction within the Seattle Central Labor Council and the WSFL. Socialists were strongest in the industrial unions, and by 1912, they had reached the height of their power within the AFL and the WSFL.⁹ When the WSFL finally affiliated with the AFL sometime between 1903 and 1905, this debate between conservative reformers and radicals continued.

The IWW claimed a departure, in many ways, from traditional craft unionism, and from the reform strategies of the AFL. On organizational grounds, WSFL radicals and Wobblies supported industrial unionism. However, the IWW favored revolutionary unionism that sought the immediate destruction of capitalism in contrast to the accommodation strategies for which they criticized the AFL and WSFL. The AFL and IWW's opposing views on political action frequently became hostile.

Because a high percentage of its members were migratory workers, the IWW had less faith in political action, however, in places like Butte, Montana, Wobbly voter turnout was a significant reason for Socialist success in local elections. For this reason the IWW could be characterized as not anti-political but non-political.¹⁰

The IWW had an exaggerated reputation for engaging in violent acts. Critics of the organization frequently pointed out that the IWW constitution advocated sabotage. However, most Wobblies argued that sabotage could mean many things including work actions like striking on the job (slow downs), or workers following rules and guidelines so literally that it hampered production or services.¹¹ Early on the IWW rejected the use of violence. In 1907, the official organ of the IWW, *The Industrial Worker*, stated that there was no place for violence within the organization. According

to the IWW, the new society it envisioned would come about through the use of the general strike. This would only happen through union organization, not organized revolutionary violence. The IWW tried its best to portray the industrial landscape of peaceful workers and violent employers. Through free speech fights like the one in Spokane in 1909, and large strikes like the one in Lawrence, Massachusetts, the IWW gained the reputation of using nonviolent civil disobedience.¹² The IWW struggled to define their public image but lost the battle to employers who portrayed the organization as violent and dangerous.

Melvyn Dubofsky in his book, *We Shall Be All* and Joseph Conlin in his work, *Bread and Roses Too*, both published in 1969, disagree on the point of whether or not the IWW was a syndicalist organization.¹³ Dubofsky and many other historians of the IWW agree that it was an American version of European syndicalism. Conlin, however, notes important differences between IWW ideology and European syndicalism. The IWW for example, believed that dual unionism was a necessary evil in the United States because the AFL was too craft oriented, while syndicalism rejected dual membership favoring instead a strategy of boring from within existing craft unions. Organizational structure was another major difference between the two ideologies. The IWW was a more centralized structure relative to the decentralized structure of European syndicalist unions. Conlin's discussion of IWW ideology centers on his belief that the ideology of most IWW members was industrial unionism rather than the abstract syndicalism. In this context, the differences between industrial unionists in the WSFL/AFL and the IWW were probably less dramatic than some scholars such as Dubofsky have made them out to be. Because of the more thorough treatment Conlin gives to this subject, his interpretations are probably more accurate.

Perhaps most significantly, the IWW and the AFL differed in their conception of what a closed

shop was and how it would come about. Melvyn Dubofsky, in his classic, *We Shall be All*, stated that he thought the IWW believed that “collective action and voluntary cooperation by the exploited, not capitalist concessions would bring the closed shop.”¹⁴ This statement sums up perhaps the main difference between the IWW and the AFL. The IWW allusion to a working class organization where cooperation is voluntary points out the lack of job consciousness or attachment to the job in the IWW, something that was abundant in its competitor. This sense of job consciousness that the IWW rejected and the AFL accepted, traced its origins to the early attempts of American workers trying to organize into craft unions.¹⁵

In the Pacific Northwest lumber industry, mill workers were generally more job conscious than loggers. The boom and bust cycles of the industry and the migratory tendencies of workers proved early on that it would be extremely difficult to organize workers in the timber industry. There were also differences between mill workers and loggers. Their differences centered around the differences between mill and logging work. Mill workers tended to remain in one location for longer periods of time, allowing them to settle into communities. Loggers, by contrast, because of the changing harvest sites were forced to migrate with the logging camps. In 1903, lumber mill workers organized first meeting in Everett to form the International Shingle Weavers Union.¹⁶ Jonathan Dembo in his work *Unions and Politics in Washington State, 1885-1935*, characterized these workers as “conservative, married church-going, home-owning men with a stake in their communities.” Dembo’s book on the Washington state labor movement combines an analysis of the organizational history of the movement with some important insight into the social history of workers in the state. There are similarities with his work and that of Carlos Schwantes, *Radical Heritage*, which compared workers in British Columbia and Washington state. Both historians concede that

class consciousness and job-consciousness co-existed among workers.¹⁷

After the Shingle Weavers' Union received their AFL charter in 1903, the AFL made several unsuccessful attempts to organize an industrial union covering all workers in the mills and the logging camps. The Shingle Weavers Union essentially gained jurisdiction over all mill workers, and it remained perhaps the most successful and militant AFL union in the lumber industry for a number of years. In Everett, where the Shingle Weavers' were especially strong, the conflict between the union and the mill owners grew especially fierce during the recession of 1913-1915, and during the strike in 1916.

The IWW's entry into the Pacific Northwest after its founding in 1905, appeared as a threat early on to the WSFL and its affiliates.¹⁸ In the timber industry the IWW made several attempts to organize timber workers in general and loggers in particular. The IWW tactics were more successful than the WSFL in organizing migratory loggers who tended to be less job conscious than their counterparts in the mills. The low dues and interchangeable memberships in IWW unions were generally more attractive to loggers and other migratory workers. The Lumber Workers Industrial Union, an IWW affiliate, and the International Union of Timber Workers, a WSFL affiliate, competed with each other for membership in the logging camps of Western Washington from 1905 through the 1917 timber strike.

Labor and Politics: Coalition with the Progressives.

Aside from organizing the work site, the WSFL attempted to build political coalitions such as the Joint Legislative League with other reform organizations like the Grange and middle class, progressive-reform groups. By 1912 this alliance was strong enough in the state legislature to win the passage of a limited workers compensation system and eight-hour day legislation covering women

and minors.¹⁹ The success of this coalition, however, was questionable because it did not help labor gain nearly as much as it had hoped. and the alliances between the middle class progressives and reformers in the WSFL was stressed by the changes encountered by each group.

The progressive movement pre-dominantly represented professional, middle class interests. Its alliance with labor was fragile because of the diversity within its own ranks. The progressive mind-set was predominantly a managerial-professional mind-set and sought to reform the capitalist system but without critiquing the system. The progressive movement was an attempt to search for order and stability in a predatory capitalist system that in the so called Gilded age, fell short of bourgeois values of respectability and social cohesion. Instead of class struggle Progressives attempted to mediate or head off industrial class disputes by forming joint-interest labor-management-government organizations like the National Civic Federation, as well as organizations at the state and local level. In Everett for example, progressives organized the Commercial Club in 1912 as joint organization of mill owners, professionals, small businessmen, clergy and labor leaders.²⁰

Along with joint organizations, employers also began to organize as well. They formed organizations such as the Employers Association of Washington and an association of Lumber manufacturers. These employer organizations were simultaneously inside and outside the progressive movement. The West Coast Lumbermen's Association launched open shop drives within their industry to drive out unions. This contradiction between supporting an alliance with organized labor in progressive organizations while also attempting to break unions, doomed progressive efforts to unite labor and capital.

The formation of employer associations intent on crushing the labor movement and the suspension of the reform program within the Republican Party illustrated that Progressivism had

never completely won over capital interests and its Old Guard allies in the GOP. In Washington politics, progressivism remained a potent force especially at the local level but the recession and World War I “undermined the moral basis of progressiveness.” The perception that the reform of industrial capitalism could come through labor-management cooperation and the identification of shared interclass interest.

Despite failures in the legislature, progressives won some victories at the local level in 1912. In Everett, that year, voters elected three Socialist City Councilors and a progressive Republican, R. B. Hassell as mayor. Hassell favored a single tax system, municipal ownership of all utilities, a commission form of government, and a tax on all corporations. These progressive reforms were similar to those advocated by local reformers across the country.²¹ While Socialists on the council, including James Solie, had some things in common with Hassell, they opposed him on key issues such as changing the city charter to create a commission form of town government. The form of government was important to the Socialists because they were elected from city wards with working class constituencies. A commission form of government would create at-large elections giving middle class progressives the upper hand. To Hassell and the progressives, a commission government would eliminate the inefficiencies and easy corruptibility of ward politics, and realize the managerial ideal they desired.²² Some of the reforms proposed by the progressives and Socialists on the city council such as the tax on corporations, which failed by a one-vote margin, offended industrialists. Other popular progressive reforms such as municipal ownership of the water system, the commission government, single tax and direct legislation passed the council.²³ While progressive and labor-reform laws mostly bogged down in the legislature, Everett progressives achieved a high degree of success during a time when expectations were high for a solid economy. Unfortunately the economy took

a disastrous turn by 1913.

The lack of success in pushing labor-reform bills, direct legislation of the single tax proposed through the legislature in 1912-1913 disheartened reformers in the WSFL and drove many of its members in the more radical direction of the IWW and the Socialist Party.²⁴ An influx of new immigrants into the WSFL frightened conservatives in affiliated craft unions who viewed them as more susceptible to radicalism and IWW membership. Intervention by employer associations in strikes, open shop drives and other attacks on labor increased during the recession between 1912 and 1915.²⁵

Everett: Prelude to Tragedy, 1916.

During the recession years tensions between labor and the mill owners in Everett increased almost to a boil over point. The West Coast Lumbermen's Association defeated the AFL's International Union of Shingle Weavers, Sawmill Workers, and Woodsmen, (ancestor of the IUTW,) in 1913-1914, when union members struck for the eight-hour day.²⁶ The Lumbermen's Association instituted the ten-hour work day and the open shop. By 1915 in Everett, the mill owners, almost all of whom belonged to the Lumbermen's Association or backed the open shop, cut wages for the mill workers by 20 percent citing the fall in lumber prices as their rationale.²⁷ The Shingle Weavers' Union in Everett, and other locals in the Puget Sound region, launched an unsuccessful strike to protest the wage cut. The large mill owners in Everett, most notably Clough-Hartley and Weyerhaeuser, nonetheless, promised to restore the wage scales to the 1914 level when the economy recovered and lumber prices increased.

By early-to-mid 1916, the economy was beginning to recover, and lumber prices began to rise. Throughout much of the state, shingle mills adjusted their wage scale to the level requested by the

Shingle Weavers Union. The Everett mill owners, however, held out and forced a strike of mill workers in early May, 1916. Before the strike, the union, guided by Ernest Marsh, adopted a new constitution. This created a more industrial union by admitting mill workers of other trades into its ranks and encouraged greater working class solidarity. The union was renamed the International Shingle Weavers of America.²⁸

From its earlier days in the 1890s, when the Shingle Weavers' Union had embraced a more decentralized structure and conservative tone, it gradually moved in a more radical direction. This was likely due to the primitive organization and tactics of the lumber industry in Everett and Western Washington in general. Several lost strikes during this period radicalized mill workers rather than disheartening them. The International Shingle Weavers Union was radical and active enough at the state level to get one of its own, Ernest Marsh, elected to the presidency of the WSFL in 1913. A year earlier at the 1912, national AFL convention after forging ties with radical unions like the Western Federation of Miners, the Shingle Weavers' joined with other "dissidents" to back a Socialist, Max Hayes, over Samuel Gompers for the Federation Presidency.²⁹ The Shingle Weavers' Union, the Everett Labor Council, which the Union dominated, and the Socialist party had some successes in Everett. They helped elect a city council in 1912 that was likely more pro-labor than the previous councils and they had survived through employer attacks and a roller coaster economy. But the Shingle Weavers' and the Everett Labor Council were frustrated with the broken promises of the employers after the sacrifices they had made. Their decision to strike again in 1916, choosing the symbolic date of May 1st to begin the walkout, crowned the Shingle Weavers' militant transition which mirrored the same process that the WSFL was going through under Marsh's leadership.

On the other side, Everett mill owners, Roland Hartley, David Clough, and Fred Baker and

national giant Weyerhaeuser were still as stubborn as ever. Their return to the open shop drive during the recession was well marked by the comment of one lumberman, Edwin Ames, who stated in a correspondence with Talbot, "Everett has been classed as thoroughly unionized. It is about time. . .that conditions are changed."³⁰ The lumbermen and mill owners struggled to organize themselves throughout the early 20th century. They recognized early on that ruinous cutthroat competition could destroy all of them. Everett mill owners held considerable power in organizations like the Employers' Association of Washington and the West Coast Lumbermen's Association. The Shingle Weavers' Union was a thorn in their side for long enough, now in 1916, they wanted to remove that thorn permanently.

The Union initially was able to pull most of Everett's affected mill workers out on strike and the action seemed to be successful. In June another labor dispute joined with the Shingle Weavers' Everett. In conjunction with a strike extending length of the west coast, the Puget Sound locals of the Pacific District of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), an AFL affiliate, went out on strike on June 1st. In Everett, the Riggers and Stevedores Local 38-8 of the ILA joined the strike shutting down the port.³¹ Despite their early success and the solidarity shown between the Longshoremen and the mill workers, the Shingle Weavers' strike began to fail in the late summer months of 1916. The mill owners imported professional strikebreakers as a part of their anti-union approach to labor relations, and the mills again started to produce lumber.³² On August 19th, picketers were attacked by a group of strikebreakers, provoking retaliation from a reinforced group of union members who attacked the scabs as they left the mill after work, causing the police to intervene on the side of the strikebreakers.³³

The IWW greeted the striking workers in Everett in late July. Earlier, the IWW had planned

another major organizing drive of lumber workers in Western Washington. They saw Everett as a key point in the northern Puget Sound region for organizing in the logging camps.³⁴ As early as 1908, the IWW lobbied the Shingle Weavers' Union to affiliate with them instead of the AFL. The Shingle Weavers', however, remained in the AFL, and the IWW instead concentrated on organizing migratory workers. Historians seem to disagree why the IWW came to Everett in July 1916, and what their motivations were. Did they come in to support the Shingle Weavers' as Norman Clark indicated,³⁵ or was the IWW also interested in attracting the striking workers to the fold of revolutionary industrial unionism? Regardless of their original intentions, after arriving in Everett they saw the need to support the striking mill workers, undoubtedly the Wobblies' strong sense of class consciousness motivated them to do so regardless to which union they belonged to.

The free-speech fight in Everett began inadvertently with the arrival of an IWW organizer in late July. On July 31st IWW organizer James Rowan arrived in Everett to survey the town and open up shop. On his first night in town Rowan used a common tactic of wobblies when starting an organizing drive, he got up on a soap box on Wetmore Avenue and began to speak about the IWW in hope of attracting workers. He attracted quite a crowd including Jake Michel of the Everett Labor Council. When Rowan spoke in a derogatory manner criticizing the AFL, Michel spoke up against Rowan's claims. Not too far away the sheriff of Snohomish county, Donald McRae, who used to be a member of the Shingle Weavers' Union when he worked in the mills, listened in on the argument then came up and offered to arrest Rowan for Michel. Michel turned him down claiming that Rowan hadn't said anything that would warrant his arrest but McRae arrested him anyway. The next morning the judge offered Rowan the choice of a thirty day jail sentence or leave town. Rowan chose the later and left Everett to find a job in the logging camps to learn about the industry.³⁶

After the first debacle with the authorities, IWW organizer Levi Remick opened an IWW hall on Hewitt Ave. in Everett.³⁷ Remick made plans for James Thompson, the famous IWW organizer who had led the Spokane free-speech fight in 1909, to come to a street meeting in Everett on the 22nd of August. McRae who had left the hall alone since it had opened, stormed into the hall before the 22nd threatening Remick and declared that the street meeting was canceled. The meeting, however, went ahead as planned. Thompson arrived in Everett on the 22nd, and began the meeting, attracting a large number of people. Fifteen police officers interrupted the meeting by arresting Thompson. After he was pulled off the stand, James Rowan, who had come back into town the night before, took his place on the stand and then was arrested. Before the night was through, twenty-one people were arrested, some of whom weren't Wobblies, including three women (two were IWW members.) Jake Michel, also was arrested for protesting the other arrests.³⁸ That night over five hundred Everett citizens protested outside the jail. McRae pulled Rowan out from the group and vowed to teach him a lesson. He took him outside of town and dropped him off and told him to return to Seattle, Rowan was then beaten by a mob that was waiting for him. Later, the IWW received a resolution of support from the Everett Labor Council backing the free-speech fight and condemning McRae. As the events mentioned above illustrate, in its initial stages, the free-speech fight that the IWW did not originally intend to create began to escalate beyond their control.

Why McRae took such bold action and who empowered him to commit such acts is an important question. Behind the violence of law enforcement was a directive from the Commercial Club. Since early 1916, independent mill owners, Weyerhauser and Great Northern representatives completely dominated the Commercial Club. Middle class members resigned from the club after abstaining on a vote to back the open shop drive. David Clough of the Commercial Club argued that

the presence of the IWW would prolong the strike. The Commercial Club obviously saw the IWW as enough of a threat to warrant a campaign of intimidation and later a blockade of Everett from intruding Wobblies. Many of them remembered the Spokane free-speech fight in 1909 and did not want the same thing to happen in their backyard. The Commercial Club approached the city commissioners to help keep the IWW out of Everett, but they turned Clough down, citing that there weren't enough funds to conduct such a campaign. Clough and the Commercial Club next turned to McRae who pledged that he could blockade the IWW from the ports of entry into Everett with enough volunteer deputies.³⁹ This was all the Commercial Club needed to hear. They gave McRae virtually free reign over the community. How the Sheriff's Department funded this campaign warrants more research but it seems likely that McRae was funded by the Commercial Club. The local industrialists David Clough, Roland Hartley and William Butler, as well as James McChesney, the representative from the Great Northern, still had enough power and influence to override the City Commissioners and discourage any attempt to limit their gross abuse of power.

McRae's offensive was only stalled by the presence of mediator sent in by the federal government to help resolve the strike. After the mediator left on September 9th, McRae campaign of terror resumed. On September 11th days later one of the Wobblies who had arrived in Everett before McRae's blockade, Harry Feinberg, convened another street meeting in Everett. McRae's deputies attacked the street meeting, and in the confusion beat wobblies and town citizens alike. Throughout the months of September and October, armed deputies patrolled the countryside around Everett, deporting some three-to-four hundred Wobblies many of whom were migrant workers just passing through.

The abuse of power by McRae and the Commercial Club caused Everett's middle class even

greater disillusionment.⁴⁰ Some Everett merchants posted signs in their businesses stating that they were not members of the Commercial Club. Middle class fear of Wobbly radicalism and over reaction from the Commercial Club did not go unwarranted concerning the course of events. Many of them feared a repeat of the Spokane free-speech fight, unfortunately this free-speech fight would end in much bloodier fashion.

Tensions escalated on October 30th, when about forty-one Wobblies trying to enter Everett were met at the dock by McRae and his deputies, who were drunk, yet hustled the Wobblies into waiting automobiles. The IWW's were driven to a location several miles out of town on the route to Seattle, known as Beverly Park. The deputies made two lines on either sides of a rail road track, where they made the prisoners run a gauntlet of swinging fists, rifle butts and kicks to the groin before running across the sharp blades of a cattle guard at the end of the gauntlet. The next day, many of the beaten Wobblies stumbled back into Seattle, some walking the entire distance before arriving at the IWW hall where they reported their story.

In Everett news of the beatings at Beverly park was met with scorn from the townspeople. McRae had announced at a mass town meeting in September, attended by some ten thousand people, that he would let the Wobblies return.⁴¹ Why McRae went back on his word is uncertain but may very well have been the result of urging from David Clough and other Commercial Club members. A committee of concerned citizens clergy and labor leaders decided to hold a mass meeting on November 5th where the facts of the event could be disclosed to the public. On notification of this public meeting, the IWW in Seattle planned to attend the event. It notified the Seattle press of its intentions and sent a circular through all of the regional and local branches of the IWW. The night before the IWW secured passage for about two hundred and fifty passengers aboard the steamer

Verona, and another fifty aboard the *Calista*.⁴²

On the eve of the massacre Everett was a polarized town. The striking mill workers and other working class people joined with middle class citizens in their disgust at the Commercial Club and McRae. The strategy brutality backfired on the industrialists but they continued on the same course. On the evening of November 4th, three hundred deputies composed of lumber mill managers, and vigilantes met at the Commercial Club to receive a last minute briefing from McRae and patriotic speeches from mill owners like Clough.⁴³

The events of the last six months finally erupted in full scale violence that know one probably predicted. On November 5th, the *Verona* steamed into Everett and landed at the city dock while spectators watched from the cliffs surrounding the port. McRae had placed deputies in a warehouse over looking the dock in tug boats and wharf offices, as well as a detachment next to him on the dock itself.⁴⁴ When the men aboard the *Verona* tried to get off the boat, McRae with a deputy on one side of him and a representative of the Commercial Club on the other side, asked the Wobblies who their leader was, one of them responded “We’re all leaders.” When McRae told the men that they could not land in Everett another Wobbly shouted, “The hell we can’t.” Shooting then broke out, killing the two men standing by McRae and injuring twenty some deputies including McRae.⁴⁵ Five Wobblies were killed and another thirty-one were injured; however, once the shooting broke out the men aboard ran to the opposite side of the boat causing it to tilt severely. Many of the passengers believed that several other wobblies drown after slipping off the blood-covered deck. The captain, under the direction of an IWW passenger, immediately pulled away from the dock and headed out into the Puget Sound.⁴⁶

After the shooting subsided and the *Verona* steamed back to Seattle, the atmosphere in

Everett remained very tense. Many of the townspeople blamed McRae and the Commercial Club for the violence and others stated openly to that they hoped the IWW would come back to Everett and “clean up the town.”⁴⁷ Everett’s mayor tried to shift blame to the Commercial Club and Donald McRae in attempt to disassociate himself with the violence and the abuse of power. Washington’s Governor Lister responded by sending the National Guard to Everett. One of the companies composing the force in Everett was a company composed partly of Centralia Guardsmen that had just arrived back from patrolling the Mexican border.⁴⁸ Some of these Centralia Guardsmen carried a grudge and a disdain for the IWW after their duty in Everett. Lister also authorized the Adjutant General Maurice Thompson to implement powers amounting to marshal law in Everett.⁴⁹ Town clergy pleaded with the officials from the Shingle Weavers’ Union to call off the strike, which they did, temporarily. When the *Verona* and the *Calista*, which had turned around before ever reaching Everett, arrived back in Seattle, the authorities were waiting at the dock to arrest the Wobblies, charging seventy-four of them with first degree murder.

Regionally and in Seattle the labor movement reacted to events in Everett by supporting the IWW. The Seattle Central Labor Council set aside funds and worked with the IWW to support the General Defense Committee. Even Seattle’s Mayor Gill sharply criticized the local authorities in Everett and showed open sympathy for the IWW by sending blankets and tobacco to the wobblies in jail. The General Defense Committee hired Fred H. Moore, a famous labor attorney and George Vanderveer as defense counsels. Moore was successful in getting a change in venue for the trial to King County. When the trial finally began in March 1917, the prosecution decided to try each of the prisoners separately, and chose to bring forward Thomas Tracy first because they thought they had the greatest chance of convicting him.⁵⁰

The states case hinged on showing the criminal intent and the violent reputation of the IWW, as well as demonstrating Tracy's guilt. Moore and Vanderveer successfully refuted the prosecutions claims that the IWW advocated violence demonstrating instead that throughout the free-speech fight the IWW advocated moderation and nonviolence. Conversely, the testimony of the defense witnesses on the role of the Commercial Club during the whole affair held up to the prosecution's rigorous cross examinations. The jury found Tracy not guilty, and the state subsequently, dropped charges against the rest of the prisoners.⁵¹ As David Botting noted, "The unique aspect of the entire chain of odd circumstances was that those [IWW], accused got a change of venue and a just trial."⁵²

The 1917 Lumber Strike the Seattle General Strike of 1919: Conditioning for the Centralia Armistice Day Tragedy.

The notoriety of the Everett Massacre bolstered the reputation of the IWW in the minds of many lumber workers, something the union desperately needed for its organizing campaign of loggers in 1917. Encouraged by their earlier success in organizing agricultural workers, the IWW now launched a drive to organize lumber workers in the Pacific Northwest. In early March, 1917, a group of IWW leaders met in Spokane to form the Lumber Workers Industrial Union no. 500.⁵³ By early 1917, the IWW had built membership in the Lumber Workers Industrial Union to 3,000 outnumbering the WSFL unions, who had organized 2,500 members.⁵⁴ The IWW found most of its membership in the lumber industry in the logging camps, while the WSFL was much more successful in organizing mill workers. The International Union of Timber Workers didn't appeal to the workers in the camps like the IWW did. The reasons for this are complicated, but a discussion of the related, much broader question of class and job consciousness will explain these discrepancies. At this level, loggers tended to be low wage workers, sometimes foreign born and migratory in their work patterns.

Mill workers, on the other hand, contained some workers with a higher level of skill, and the mill workforce tended to include fewer recent immigrants than the logging camps. They were consequently, generally more centered on a particular community. In other words, the Wobblies tended to be less job conscious than the WSFL, (and the AFL at the national level.) The WSFL, for example, used strikes and collective bargaining to improve conditions on the job, but the IWW viewed this style of organizing as backward. They favored instead, what a long time IWW organizer James Rowan, described; “This organization represented by the Industrial Workers of the World, which is patterned after the structure of modern industry and the organization of the capitalists who control industry.”⁵⁵

The WSFL/AFL and the IWW frequently exchanged generalized insults and criticisms that didn't always measure up. The IWW's claims that the WSFL/AFL was craft oriented and lacked class consciousness omits the several facts. At the state and national level WSFL/AFL championed class legislation like the eight-hour day and a workers compensation system. There was also a substantial effort made by certain factions within the AFL to permit and organize industrial unions like the UMWA, which stood out as the great AFL industrial union. Albeit many of their other attempts at organizing industrial unions weren't as successful. Conversely, the WSFL/AFL generalizations that the IWW was a destructive and thoroughly revolutionary organization, unconcerned and unable to meet the immediate concerns of workers leaves out instances where the IWW was successful in improving conditions at the work site. Often, the IWW organized workers who were difficult to organize; itinerant and unskilled workers. The WSFL/AFL and the IWW held important ideological differences, but both attempted to modify their structure and organizing style to cope with the changes made at the work site by industrialization.

In the Spring of 1917, conditions in the logging camps of the Pacific Northwest were ripe for organizing. Terrible unsanitary living conditions in the camps where loggers were cramped into small shacks and weren't given enough living supplies like blankets, the high rate of injuries on the job that were becoming more frequent because of the productions speed up to meet war demand, and low wages that weren't keeping up with inflation all contributed to discontent among loggers in the camps.⁵⁶ Class consciousness like that that had developed in Everett in 1916, was at a fever pitch in the Pacific Northwest. IWW plans for a lumber strike for the inland region of the Pacific Northwest later in the summer of 1917 were moved up when a wildcat strike erupted in Northern Idaho in the early summer. The IWW took its chances and decided it would be better to go along with the wildcat strike and move up their strike date for the inland region to June 20th. Their strike demands included an eight hour day, a minimum wage of \$60 per month, better food and dining conditions, sanitary living conditions, and that all hiring be done through the union.⁵⁷ How many workers walked out is difficult to determine. A low estimate is 600, but the IWW estimated far more workers were involved, regardless, they shut down inland lumber operations.⁵⁸ WSFL affiliated locals of the Shingle Weavers' and the International Union of Timber Workers saw the need to support the strike if they were to retain credibility. On July 15th they joined the inland lumber strike with the IWW, using demands that basically echoed the IWW, with the exception of union recognition.⁵⁹

By early fall, however, the strike had failed for a number of reasons. Employers organized immediately to break the strike. They organized the Lumbermen's Protective Association in which members agreed to fine any member \$500.00 per day that they operated less than ten hours per shift.⁶⁰ The employers and the media began to spread rumors that the strike was organized by the German's to thwart that Allied/American war effort. Compounding the IWW's problems, by late July, they

were faced with having to support the Shingle Weavers' and the Timber Workers strike in the west, which extended the original strike beyond their capabilities. As public opinion due to newspaper editorials and other sources further deteriorated the image of the IWW, the IWW struggled to maintain the strike even though they cut production to 40 percent in July. By September, strike leader James Rowan was in jail and the IWW sent its members back to work but to 'strike on the job,' miscalculating that a slow down and poor quality of work would hinder production. The public's perception of IWW suffered a serious injury because of the strike and the image that employers and the government painted for them.

In Seattle the war, the influx of foreign born members, and wage rates that lagged behind inflation rates helped radicalize the Central Labor Council. At the state level, the WSFL was largely under the control of the more cautious and conservative craft unionists after Ernest Marsh's resignation in 1918. The Metal Trades Council that represented shipyard construction workers in the Seattle Central Labor Council (SCLC) were among the more radical and militant, partly because of the high injury rate and low wages during the war. The decision of the National War Labor Board not to grant a wage adjustment to the shipyard workers in October of 1918, hit especially hard. The Metal Trades Council voted to strike on January 21st 1919. On the 22nd the Metal Trades sent a referendum asking for a sympathy strike vote to the SCLC which approved it and sent it on to all affiliated locals. On the 29th, almost all of the local unions in the SCLC voted to strike.⁶¹ This event marked a long process of radicalization in the SCLC and the Metal Trades Council that began in the mid 1910s. The SCLC had shown open sympathy with the Wobblies in Everett in 1916 and in 1917 the shipyard workers struck in sympathy the lumber workers. Now under the backdrop of the Bolshevik Revolution and Bolshevik hysteria created by the government and business, the SCLC

made a bold move. The strike was short and peaceful. Only planned for a short duration, the strike began on February 6th and ended with a temporary truce by the SCLC on February 9th. The SCLC probably thought they could not maintain a long strike as well as the intent was support and sympathy for the Metal Trades Council. The AFL was embarrassed by this strike that ended in none of the concessions demanded by the Metal Trades Council being granted. The Navy retaliated by abandoning ship construction in the Pacific Northwest, and employers reacted harshly with a new anti-radical platform from which to launch an open shop drive. The president of the WSFL, William Short, blamed the radical faction in the Metal Trades and the SCLC, which was composed of Socialists, militant industrial unionists and dual card carrying IWW members, for the strike. This move gave support to the conservatives in the trade unions who had lost power earlier. In the short term, opened a wedge between the SCLC and the WSFL, hindering the development and execution of a strategy to combat the open shop drive. It also created an even greater rift between radicals and the IWW which had supported the general strike, and conservatives trade unionists who were hoping to regain lost power.

Seattle Mayor Ole Hanson cleverly stole middle class sympathy from the SCLC during the strike by equating it with radicalism and bolshevism playing on the fears of the middle class created by the Bolshevik Revolution. In 1920 Ole Hanson produced a book called *Americanism Versus Bolshevism*, and in it Hanson crudely and inaccurately described bolshevism and "IWWism". He claimed that the only solution to this problem was "Americanism and Americanization, selective immigration, education and educators, private rights, social legislation, deportation of aliens, punishment of citizens and universal service."⁶²

Hanson's reign as Seattle mayor coincided with a reign of terror by the state and federal

government against the IWW. During the war, the federal government used the Sedition Act and the Immigration Act of 1917 to raid IWW halls and arrest and detain wobblies throughout the country. After the war ended the campaign did not end. Several states, including Washington, Oregon, and Idaho passed criminal syndicalism laws that made certain IWW activities illegal.⁶³ The state and federal government used these new laws as well as the Espionage Act and Immigration Act of 1918 to intimidate and harass wobblies throughout Washington with hearty support relatively few objections from the middle class. These raids had the effect of demobilizing the IWW. Union leaders were diverted from organizing so they could attend to the legal defense of prisoners.⁶⁴ In the midst of this national campaign against the IWW, Wobblies in Washington state opened another branch hall in Centralia, Washington the Summer of 1917.

The Centralia Disaster and the end of the IWW.

Centralia, like many small communities, was highly influenced by the crescendo of anti-radical hysteria during the 1917 lumber strike and the Seattle general strike. Containing about 10,000 people, Centralia was a well ordered community, containing many elements that illustrated its class stratification such as fraternal organizations, business clubs and a Trades Council. Many of Centralia's young men and women were involved in one branch of the service or the Red Cross during the First World War creating an ideal location for an American Legion Post. Fraternal middle class organizations like the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks fostered bitterness over perceptions of labor radicalism. Status differences between the middle class lawyers, doctors, and small business owners and the industrial capitalists were shaded by marriage ties and other relations between families as well as the closeness a small town brings. Centralia went through some progressive reforms in early years, such as the adoption of the commissioner form of government, but the atmosphere of class

cooperation did not exist. Two of the town's largest capitalists, Francis Hubbard of the Eastern Railway and Lumber Company and H.H. Martin were related through marriage.⁶⁵ This interlocking of business interests through marriage is one example of the formation of a tight nit local capitalist class in Centralia.

The working class community of Centralia was divided into two sections: indignant workers, including saw mill workers, coal miners, trades workers and railroad workers including the skilled workers; and migratory workers, mostly including loggers, agricultural workers and other workers perceived as external to the community. Middle and upper class citizens especially disliked migratory workers because of their tendency to loiter in town when they were between jobs. The upper crust disdainfully called the loggers "timber beasts."⁶⁶

The IWW had a relatively insignificant, but troubled history in Centralia that dates back to 1914, when a Wobbly who was trying to organize electrical workers was kicked out of town by the county sheriff.⁶⁷ In early February of 1915, during a strike at the Eastern Railway and Lumber Company, the sheriff with a posse of deputized citizens, confronted a group of Wobblies from out of town and expelled them from the community, claiming that they were enforcing a no-vagrancy ordinance. Many of the middle-class townspeople regarded the IWW with contempt. Labor organizations, like the Central Trades Council, fearing persecution themselves, tried to separate themselves from early IWW actions, like the 1912 Grays Harbor Strike.⁶⁸ Editorials from local newspapers like the *Centralia Chronicle* spread rumors about the IWW. Sources like these encouraged townspeople to view the IWW and radicalism as an external force that had caused problems outside Centralia. Relatively recent events like the Everett massacre, the 1917 lumber strike, and the Seattle general strike during the winter of 1919, created a sense of labor upheaval that

feverently anti-union capitalists like Hubbard certainly did not want, and that alarmed middle class citizens and angered returning veterans.

Rampant patriotism during the war fueled incidents in and around Centralia. Lewis County had long been a county of farm organizing as far back as the 1880s. During World War I town residents in Winlock, a small town eighteen miles to the south of Centralia, expelled two farm organizers of the Non-Partisan League, A. Knutson and R. W. Edwards.⁶⁹ In Centralia itself, the town newspapers bolstered the war effort with ads for liberty bonds and appeals to conserve resources. Centralia teachers also required asked to sign loyalty oaths. One teacher, a young lawyer named Elmer Smith, refused to take the oath during the war because of his convictions against this style of enforced patriotism.⁷⁰

Violence in the name of patriotism was revived in Centralia on May, 18, 1918, during a Red Cross parade, when the IWW was forcibly evicted and their hall raided. The Wobblies were herded into a truck and driven out of town while a mob of people including James Churchill, owner of a local glove factory, and Francis Hubbard burned some of the hall's belongings in the street and auctioned off more valuable items such as a desk and a phonograph.⁷¹ A few weeks later a handicapped man named Tom Lassiter was selling copies of the *Industrial Worker*, and the *Seattle Union Record* along with other newspapers, when he was threatened, kidnaped then dumped in a ditch out of town. When Elmer Smith, who practiced labor law and defended workers in civil cases against their employers, came to Lassiter's defense, he was outraged that the District Attorney refused to press charges on the perpetrators.

Divisions in the town were visible with the occurrence of two separate events on Labor Day of 1919. At the first event, Centralia citizens heard Warren O. Grimm, a young corporate lawyer and

friend of Elmer Smith, had just returned from the war in Europe and a tour of duty in Siberia as part of the American Expeditionary Force sent in to try and help the Whites overthrow the Bolsheviks, speak on the dangers of bolshevism. At another event hosted by the Triple Alliance, a political coalition of the WSFL, the Non-Partisan League, the Grange and the Railroad Brotherhoods, five thousand people showed up to hear labor and political speeches. Elmer Smith parents were farmers and Populist activists back in his child hood home in North Dakota. His background of agrarian radicalism and working class credentials helped him in his election to president of the Lewis County Chapter of the Triple Alliance.⁷² Across town on Tower St. a Wobbly named Britt Smith made arrangements with the owners of the Roderick Hotel to rent part of the downstairs of the hotel for a hall.⁷³

The presence of the IWW hall spawned a deep hatred among many of the Centralians who had formed the Centralia Citizens Protective Association (CCPA) back in June of the same year. Sheriff John Berry attempted to get permission from prosecuting attorney H. Allen to evict the IWW, but Allen declined, stating that the Wobblies had done nothing illegal, yet. Angered by this development, Hubbard and other angry businessmen called for a meeting of the CCPA on October 20th at the Elks hall to discuss how to get the IWW out of Centralia. At the meeting, Berry, Allen, and Chief of Police A.C. Hughes explained that they could not remove the IWW on legal grounds. Hubbard objected stating that “if he were the police chief, the Wobblies would be gotten rid of soon enough.”⁷⁴ After the meeting plans were made by the CCPA to investigate drafting a town ordinance that would allow for the removal of the Wobblies as well as exploration of extralegal methods of removal. It’s not clear if there was any follow up of the ordinance, but CCPA and the American Legion made plans almost immediately to attack the IWW hall during the Veteran’s Day parade.

Why the county and municipal authorities declined to evict the IWW especially considering the campaign being waged against the union throughout the state is unclear. Perhaps they wanted to see a vigilante solution to the problem. Whatever the case, the city government and the police chief did little to head off the vigilante justice already formulating. When rumors of the impending attack on the hall began to circulate around town the IWW and the owners of the Roderick Hotel McAllisters, pleaded the police for protection but they were turned down. Britt Smith and the Wobblies attempted another tactic, they printed and circulated a leaflet appealing to Centralians to come to their aid, but the leaflet turned up no encouraging responses. In early November, Britt Smith went to see Elmer Smith to seek legal advice. Elmer assured Britt that if the hall was attacked that the Wobblies were legally entitled to defend the hall if they were attacked first, but Elmer apparently didn't go beyond the basic explanation of self defense and didn't counsel Britt on any other options.⁷⁵

On November 7th the Bureau of Investigation and the Immigration Service of the Labor Department stepped up raids in twelve US cities and arresting hundreds of so-called radical immigrants nationwide. In Centralia two days later, a meeting was held at the IWW hall to discuss what to do if the hall was raided. Most of the Wobblies in the hall were just passing by and had little knowledge or background of the situation in Centralia. One of the Wobblies by the name Wesley Everest, an army veteran who served in the Spruce Production Division, argued that the IWW's should defend the hall with force. Britt Smith was his closest supporter but he was not able the rest of the Wobblies to reach a consensus on a course of action. Some of them were opposed to using guns to defend the hall while others were adamant on this point. The only thing they agreed on was that no one would open fire unless the hall was attacked.⁷⁶

On the morning of November 11th, Elmer Smith visited the hall and confirmed with Britt

Smith that the IWW would defend the hall if they were attacked, Britt who busy making final plans and making sure that everyone who wanted a firearm had one. Tom Copeland in his book *The Centralia Tragedy of 1919*, criticized Smith for not advising Britt not to use violence and for not being clear with him on the use of guns to defend the hall.⁷⁷ Whatever his reasoning, it seems that Smith made an error in judgement by not being explicitly clear on the matter of what constitutes self defense. Britt Smith stationed two Wobblies, O.C. Bland and John Lamb in the Arnold Hotel just north of the hall on Tower Ave., placed three Wobblies, Loren Roberts, Ole Hanson, and Bert Bland on Seminary hill which was approximately fifteen hundred feet due east of the hall and finally Wesley Everest, Bert Faulkner, Mike Sheehan, James McInerney, Ray Becker, Tom Morgan and himself inside the hall to await the raid.⁷⁸ Apparently another Wobbly whose name is not known set up in Bert Bland's room of the Avalon Hotel on Tower Ave. just to the south.

The IWW's belief that the American Legion and the CCPA was conspiring against them were proven by a bloody disaster on Armistice Day. On the afternoon of the 11th, the Veteran's Day parade made it down Tower Ave., with the American Legion contingent in the rear of the procession. First the Legionnaires marched passed then formed a line directly in front of hall before beginning their charge. When the Legionnaires reached the hall, they busted out the window and broke down the door after they entered gun shots were fired. It has never been exactly determined if the Wobblies stationed outside the hall fired on the Legionnaires as well. When the firing subsided, Arthur McElfresh, Warren Grimm and Ben Cassagranda were all mortally wounded and died later that day. Most of the Wobblies tried to escape, the Legionnaires caught Britt Smith, Ray Becker, Mike Sheehan, James McInerney, Tom Morgan and Bert Faulkner. Wesley Everest made it out of the hall but was pursued by Legionnaires. One of them, Dale Hubbard had almost caught up to him when

Everest started to wade across the river, he then turned and told Hubbard that he would only surrender to the police, Hubbard made one last move forward to get him when Everest shot and killed him. Several other Legionnaires behind Hubbard caught Everest, beat him, then threw him in jail with the other Wobblies.

The Police did very little to restore order. Instead the Legionnaires took control of the streets, patrolling and raiding pool halls looking for other suspects. They arrested anyone belonging to the IWW or suspected of belonging to the IWW. In addition, they arrested Elmer Smith and his brothers.

Altogether, the Legionnaires threw twenty-two people in jail. One of these twenty-two was Eugene Barnett, a coal miner and United Mine Workers (UMWA) member and IWW sympathizer, who had been out on strike for the 1919 UMWA nationwide strike. Barnett had been in town that day visiting the McAllisters at the Roderick Hotel. Barnett claimed in an interview in 1941 that when he was arrested the prosecuting attorney told him that he knew that Barnett only witnessed the tragedy and had nothing to do with it, but if he spoke up about the incident they would throw him in with the rest of the Wobblies, Barnett declined their offer because of his higher ideals that opposed vigilantism.⁷⁹ At 7:30 on the same night as the affair, the street lamps were turned off, and legionnaires told motorists to turn off their headlights. A group of Legionnaires and Elks then marched over to the jail where the prisoners were being held. They took Wesley Everest, who apparently they had mistaken for Britt Smith, to the Chehalis bridge where he was hung. Afterwards, the lynch mob took pot shots at Everest's dangling body. The body remained there until the next day when it was taken down, and when no undertaker would accept the body, they threw Everest's body back into the cell with the prisoners. A coroner examined the body on November 13th and the

findings concurred that Everest had been lynched.

Governor Hart responded to the Veteran's Day events in Centralia by sending out the National Guard to restore order and prevent any more lynchings. Hart also appealed to President Wilson to deport alien IWW leaders. Regionally, authorities all over the Pacific Northwest escalated their crackdown on the IWW with raids on halls in Seattle, Aberdeen, Yakima, Tacoma, Spokane and Portland. State Attorney General L.L. Thompson advised prosecutors in thirty-nine of Washington's counties to rush the IWW cases through in mass trials, not giving Wobblies ample time to get legal defense.⁸⁰

The American Legion closed ranks quickly over the Centralia affair. One of the few legionnaires that didn't conform was Edward Basset, commander of the Butte, Montana Legion Post. He condemned the mob attack on the hall and stated, "The fact that there were some American Legion men among the paraders who everlastingly disgraced themselves by taking part in the raid, does not effect my judgement in the least."⁸¹ The *Oregonian* reported on November 13th, that the Centralia American Legion Post received sympathetic letters from all over the country but especially from Legion Posts in the Pacific Northwest including Portland. The *Oregonian* also reported a few other things of interest on the 11th. Illinois Governor Lowden, praised the Centralia Legionnaires at a reunion picnic of the Second Army Division. Pacific Northwest Congressmen criticized and blamed the federal government for being too lenient on radicalism arguing that the government that was to blame. Representative Branton of Texas argued that the Centralia tragedy was an example of why the rail road bill under debate on the House floor should have a no strike clause.⁸²

The labor movement was divided over the Centralia affair. The Portland Central Labor Council on the 21st resolved to condemn the shootings in Centralia, characterizing the raiders as law

abiding citizens and blaming the IWW for the whole tragic event.⁸³ The Seattle Central Labor Council also condemned the action but later would take another approach by sending delegates to the trial to decide whether the Wobblies were guilty or innocent. In Centralia, Local 694 of the International Typographical Union adopted a resolution on December 15th opposing the publication of the Seattle *Union Record*, perhaps because they thought it was too sympathetic with the IWW, and calling for the expulsion of the radical elements from the ranks of union labor.⁸⁴ The local's action was endorsed by its international union. The decision by the local not to publish the *Union Record* was important and symbolic, because the labor paper was really the only method where the Wobblies side of the story might have reached out to a broader audience. In fact, the *Union Record's* printing machinery, records, unopened mail including personal mail of the staff at its Seattle headquarters, was confiscated by the U.S. District Attorney's Office. The District Attorney claimed that an editorial written by the *Union Record*, somehow violated the sedition provision of the wartime act.⁸⁵ With no voice to give their side of the story, public opinion of the IWW and the prisoners deteriorated even more.

The IWW's General Defense Committee secured a well known defense attorney, George Vanderveer, for the defense of the twelve Wobblies including Barnett, (two of the Wobblies charged were never found) who were charged with first degree murder of Warren Grimm and Elmer Smith with accessory to murder. The prosecution decided to concentrate on Grimm, because they felt that they had the best chance to prove that he was not in the hall when he was shot. Vanderveer sent his law partner, Ralph Pierce from Seattle to Centralia, while he finished up some work. Pierce was successful in winning a change in venue to Montesano. After Vanderveer arrived to take over the case, however, he realized that Montesano was not much better than Centralia, and tried

unsuccessfully to win another change of venue.

The trial opened on January 26, 1920 with a heavy turnout of legionnaires recruited and paid to attend the trial. The Seattle Central Labor Council also sent a labor jury. The prosecution attempted to illustrate, through forensics and witnesses that Grimms wound had to have been inflicted by a gunmen while he was outside the hall. Despite testimony from witnesses that placed Grimm inside the hall when he was shot and where he then stumbled out into the street, along with the admission of Frank Bickford, who had marched with the Legionnaires, that the doors of the hall were forced open before a shot was ever fired, the jury reluctantly ruled that Grimm had was killed by fire from the Avalon Hotel, (the location of the unknown Wobbly.)⁸⁶ While Smith, Sheehan and Roberts was acquitted, seven of the defendants, Barnett, Bert and O.C. Bland, Britt Smith, Becker and McNerney, were found guilty of second degree murder. The likelihood that the jury felt pressure to convict the Wobblies was high considering the strong Legionnaire presence and the hardline instructions from the judge. In later years, twelve members off the jury renounced the guilty verdict.⁸⁷ Incidentally the labor jury found the defendants not guilty.

Communities in Comparison: Everett 1916, and Centralia 1919.

One historian, Donald MacPhee accurately stated, "The local and regional setting of the Centralia dispute gave it much of its distinctive neofrontier flavor; but the rhetoric and passion, especially of the legionnaires and their supporters, were drawn from the nationwide crusade against radicalism."⁸⁸ The Centralia tragedy effectively finished the IWW in the Pacific Northwest. Never, since then, has the union been able to launch a strike in the region like it did in 1917. However, it is important that we note the differences between the Everett and the Centralia tragedy one last time. While class conflict was present in both communities, antagonisms played out differently. In Everett

the middle class, which was never quite hegemonized by the industrial capitalists, came out against the violence of the McRae and the Commercial Club. In Centralia, the middle class legionnaires and businessmen were the main contributors of the violence, albeit they were probably working with the direction of capitalists like Francis Hubbard.

The working class also reacted differently to the plight of the IWW in both towns. The Everett labor movement quickly rallied with the Wobblies, who had supported their struggle to oppose McRae and the Commercial Club. In Centralia the situation was the opposite, the Central Trades Council and much of the regional labor movement condemned the tragedy and distanced themselves from the IWW. The choice of tactics by the IWW in Centralia in 1919 were also dramatically different from the non-violent civil disobedience the IWW practiced in Everett in 1916. Perhaps the experience of the Everett tragedy and the 1917 lumber strike dulled the IWW's willingness to engage in a non-violent free-speech fight. The IWW's expulsion from Centralia on previous occasions and Elmer Smith's advice, may have been the major reasons why vigilante violence broke out in Centralia on this scale rather than some other Pacific Northwest town. All of these differences were related to the effect of the war and the anti-radicalism that gripped the region and the nation.

Endnotes

1. Norman Clark, *Mill Town*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1970), 6.
2. Norman Clark, "Everett, 1916, and After," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, (April, 1966), 57.
3. Clark, *Mill Town*, 77.
4. John McClelland, Jr. *Wobbly War: The Centralia Story*. (Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society, 1987), 3.
5. Marilyn P. Watkins, "Contesting the Terms of Prosperity and Patriotism: The Politics of Rural Development in Western Washington, 1900-1925," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, (Summer of 1996), 132.
6. Tom Copeland, *The Centralia Tragedy of 1919*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), 7.
7. Jonathan Dembo, *Unions and Politics in Washington State, 1885-1935*, (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1985), 44.
8. *Ibid.*, 44.
9. *Ibid.*, 86.
10. Joseph Conlin, *Bread and Roses Too*, (Westport, Ct: Greenwood Publishing Corp., 1969), 30-32.
11. *Ibid.*, 104.
12. *Ibid.*, 96-97.
13. Conlin, *Bread and Roses Too*; Dubofsky, *We Shall be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World*, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969)
14. Dubofsky, 164.
15. David Brody, "On the Failure of U.S. Radical Politics: A Farmer-Labor Analysis," *Industrial Relations*, 22 (Spring 1983) 145.
16. Dembo, 63
17. Carlos A. Schwantes, *Radical Heritage: Labor, Socialism and Reform in Washington and British Columbia, 1885-1917*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979); Jonathan Dembo *Unions and Politics in Washington State: 1885-1935*.

18. Schwantes, 184.
19. Dembo, 95.
20. Clark, "Everett, 1916, and After," 61.
21. Clark, *Mill Town*. 120.
22. Ibid., 123
23. Ibid.,
24. Ibid., 101.
25. Schwantes, 201.
26. Dembo, 142
27. Robert Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods: The IWW in the Pacific Northwest*, (Eugene, OR: University of Oregon Press, 1967), 65.
28. Clark, *Mill Town*, 173.
29. Schwantes, 207.
30. Ames to Talbot, February 25, March 6, 1914 and March 4, 1915, Puget Mill Company Papers. and, Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), 338.
31. Walker C. Smith
32. Norman Clark, "Everett, 1916, and After," 57.
33. Ibid., 58.
34. Philip Foner, eds., *Fellow Workers and Friends: The IWW Free Speech Fights as Told by Participants*, (Westport, Ct: Greenwood Press, 1981), 183-84.
35. Clark, "Everett, 1916, and After." 58.
36. Tyler, 66.
37. Ibid., 67
38. Foner, 185.
39. Clark, *Mill Town*, 212.
40. Tyler, 70-71.

41. Ibid., 71
42. William J. Williams, "Bloody Sunday Revisited," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 71 (April, 1980), 52.
43. Tyler, 73
44. Clark, *Mill Town*, 204.
45. Tyler, 75-76
46. Williams, 51.
47. Ibid., 77
48. Tom Copeland, 23-25.
49. *Portland Oregonian*, 11 November 1916, p. 1.
50. Tyler, 79.
51. Ibid., 79.
52. David C. Botting, Jr., "Bloody Sunday," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, (October 1958), 170.
53. Tim Hanson, "Wobblies in the Woods: The 1917 Lumber Strike in the Inland Empire," *Pacific Northwest Forum* 4(2) (1991), 70.
54. Dembo, 142.
55. James Rowan, *The IWW in the Lumber Industry*, (Seattle: Lumber Workers Industrial Union no. 500, 1921?), 17-18.
56. Tim Hanson, 70.
57. McClelland, 29.
58. *Spokane Spokesman Review*, 2 September 1917, 7; Tim Hanson, 72.
59. Dembo, 143.
60. Ibid., 143.
61. Dembo, 185-190.
62. Ole Hanson, *Americanism Versus Bolshevism*, (New York: Double Day, Page and Company, 1920), X.

63. Tyler, 149.
64. Ibid., 153.
65. McClelland, 25.
66. Copeland, 21.
67. Ibid., 23.
68. McClelland, 7-8.
69. Copeland, 93-94.
70. Ibid., 35.
71. McClelland, 52.
72. Copeland, 44.
73. Ibid., 45.
74. McClelland, 60.
75. Copeland, 46.
76. Ibid., 46-49.
77. Ibid., 46-51.
78. Robert R. Weyeneth, "Perspectives on a Pardon, Centralia Confronts its Past," *Labor's Heritage* 10, (Fall 1999/Winter 2000), 29.
79. Esther Barnett Goffinet, "My Father Eugene Barnett Deserves a Long Overdue Pardon," *Labor's Heritage* 10, (Fall 1999/Winter 2000), 38.
80. Copeland, 57-58.
81. *Butte Daily Bulletin*, 15 November, 1919, quoted in, *The Issues in the Centralia Murder Trial*, (New York: American Civil Liberties Union, 1920), 2.
82. *Portland Oregonian*, 12-13 November, 1919, p. 2.
83. *Oregonian*, 21 November, 1919, p. 1.
84. *Oregonian*, 6 December, 1919, p. 7.
85. Dembo, 227-228.

86. Copeland, 58-59.

87. Goffinet, 37.

88. Donald MacPhee, "The Centralia Incident and the Pamphleteers," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 62, (Summer, 1971), 110.

Bibliography

Secondary Sources

Botting, David C. Jr. "Bloody Sunday," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, October 1958, 162-172.

Brody, David. "On the Failure of U.S. Radical Politics: A Farmer-Labor Analysis," *Industrial Relations*, 22, Spring 1983, 141-163.

Clark, Norman. *Mill Town*. Seattle: University of Washington Press (1967).

_____. "Everett, 1916, and After," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, April, 1966, 57-64.

Copeland, Tom. *The Centralia Tragedy of 1919*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, (1993).

Conlin, Joseph. *Bread and Roses Too*. Westport, Ct: Greenwood Publishing Corp., (1969).

Dembo, Jonathan. *Unions and Politics in Washington State*. New York: Garland Publishing (1983).

Dubofsky, Melvyn. *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books (1969).

Foner, Philip, Ed., *Fellow Workers and Friends: The IWW Free Speech Fights as Told by Participants*, Westport, Ct: Greenwood Press, (1981).

Goffinet, Esther Barnett. "My Father Eugene Barnett Deserves a Long Overdue Pardon," *Labor's Heritage* 10, Fall 1999/Winter 2000, 34-40.

Hanson, Tim. "Wobblies in the Woods: The 1917 Lumber Strike in the Inland Empire," *Pacific Northwest Forum* 4(2), 1991, 69-80.

MacPhee, Donald. "The Centralia Incident and the Pamphleteers," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*

62, Summer, 1971, 110-116.

McClelland, John M. *Wobbly War: The Centralia Story*. Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society (1987).

McCormack, A.R. *Reformers, Rebels and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement, 1899-1919*. Toronto: University of Toronto (1977).

Schwantes, Carlos A. *Radical Heritage: Labor, Socialism and Reform in Washington and British Columbia, 1885-1917*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, (1979).

_____. "Perceptions of Violence on the Wageworkers' Frontier: An American-Canadian Comparison," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, April, 1986, 52-57.

Tyler, Robert L. *Rebels of the Woods: The IWW in the Pacific Northwest*. Eugene: University of Oregon Books (1967).

Watkins, Marilyn P. "Contesting the Terms of Prosperity and Patriotism: The Politics of Rural Development in Western Washington, 1900-1925," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Summer 1996, 130-139.

Weyeneth, Robert R. "Perspectives on a Pardon, Centralia Confronts its Past," *Labor's Heritage* 10, Fall 1999/Winter 2000, 26-33.

Williams, William J. "Bloody Sunday Revisited," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, April, 1980, 50-62.

Primary Sources

Hanson, Ole. *Americanism Versus Bolshevism*, New York: Double Day, Page and Company, (1920).

Rowan, James. *The IWW in the Lumber Industry*, Seattle: Lumber Workers Industrial Union no. 500, (1921?).

Walkin, Frank. *A Fair Trial? A Record of the Prejudice and Passion that Dominated the Legal Profession and the Press in the Famous Centralia Labor Case, Tried Montesano, Washington, Jan. 26-March 15, 1920*. Seattle Union Record?, (1920?).

Smith, Elmer. *Speeches by Elmer Smith and Capt. Edward P. Coll: Centralia Wash., March 31, 1929, on the Centralia Case*. Centralia, WA: Centralia Publicity Committee, (1929?).

Portland Oregonian, 1916-1919.

The Centralia Case: Three Views of the Armistice Day Tragedy at Centralia Washington, The Centralia Conspiracy by Ralph Chaplin and Centralia Tragedy and Trial by Ben Hur Lampman. New York: Da Capo Press (1977).

The Issues in the Centralia Murder Trial, New York: American Civil Liberties Union, (1920).