Greg McMaster, Bill MacDonald, Sandy MacDonald

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Q: What is your union?

GM: Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

Q: What's your current position there?

GM: I'm retired. I'm a lifetime member – it's an honorary status they have.

Q: Were you born in Toronto?

GM: I was born in Toronto, yes.

Q: And that's where you grew up?

GM: Yep, 1948, grew up there.

Q: How did your folks make a living? What was your home like?

GM: It was a pretty classic '50s family. They had both been workers, mind you. My dad worked on the Great Lakes boats, so I always wondered what he knew about some of the political battles there with Hal Banks and the Communist Party and all that. But he never talked about that. My mom worked in the garment industry in Toronto. Her mother was her supervisor.

Q: We're talking with Greg McMaster and Bill MacDonald. We were just talking about the women that came into the post office and when they came in. You were just talking about fighting to get women as carriers. When was that?

BM: I can't remember the year. It would be early '70s. It was approximately at the time when the contractors were brought into the post office after the contractors in Montreal had gone on strike. Trudeau was Prime Minister at the time and he rolled them all into the post office. I don't know whether he nationalized the companies or what he did, but he got all these staff into the post office and that's when the MSC [*Mail Service Courier*] started up.

GM: It was a big strike, the Lapalme strike.

BM: That's the one.

GM: Where Trudeau gave them the finger. Bryce Mackasey was postmaster general and the Lapalme drivers, it was a company, they ran buses, there were buses burning in the street and tires on fire and stuff, and it was a violent strike. It wasn't just postal contractors, but it was these postal contractors. So they basically hired all the drivers across the whole country to break this strike in Quebec. The biproduct was that what became the mail service couriers were brought in to what became the Letter Carriers Union. I think that process took a little while hiring, interviews and stuff. It was probably completed around '74. The original strike in Montreal was '72, I remember knowing about that. In Edmonton they had to have interviews with the post office. They hired the supervisors from two contractors – Edmonton Parcel Service and Elmwood Transfer. They hired the supervisors and the owner I think, Hutton, and made them management in what became transportation. The drivers had to get interviewed individually, and they wouldn't give the women interviews. So Marion Griffin, everybody knew about all this so she just showed up and demanded to be interviewed. They ended up hiring her, and Edna, as the first two women drivers in Edmonton. Marion Griffin and Edna Hrenirchuk. I knew a woman outside of the post office, Linda Little, who I think was the first woman mail service courier in Vancouver as well, so a few women came in then.

Q: How many women were letter carriers?

BM: None. We argued that women should be hired, because it just seemed a natural thing to do. They argued against it, but after they brought women in as couriers the argument kind of

became redundant, so they then started hiring. The first women I remember in the main, I can't remember he name now, but she was married to a bus driver. She was not a feminist. I don't know whether she stayed around very long. But then all of a sudden we started getting a lot of women in. Then we had fights, we had another fight over uniforms because they wanted the women to wear these funny hats and skirts. The women themselves wanted to wear the trousers and hats that we wore; it was more practical. We fought for that, we had to fight our own union for that, never mind Findlay [*Bill Findlay, LCUC V.P.*]. We fought Findlay for years.

GM: For a women's committee and for women on the national uniform committee.

BM: They asked us to select a person for the uniform committee. The best person in our local was a women who was a seamstress, who know all this material – perfect. So that's who we recommended. Then we had a meeting, nominated her, and she was elected unanimously. We submitted the name and they turned it down, because they already had a woman on the committee. We said, well she's the best person in the local for it. We don't care whether it's a man or women, we just want the best person in there. So they went to Calgary and Calgary sent them someone.

GM: Then she wanted maternity wear, some specific clothes for pregnant employees.

BM: I can't think of her name now, but she was great.

GM: This was like an outrageous demand at the time in the union as well, not just with the employer.

Q: Was Local 15 unique in that way?

BM: Yes, we were like Vancouver. I came out of Vancouver. First I was in the CPEA, the forerunner of CUPW in Vancouver. When I came here and the strike started in '65, I knew the guys from Vancouver were on strike and I figured we should be part of it. I'll tell you the story about that another time later on. But our local, we wanted to get women involved and we

wanted them involved in the union. Lynn Bue, I had her down for dinner one night at our place and I talked to her about running for the executive. So she got on the executive of the local and eventually she went to national. That was always my big thing, was that we talked her into it that night. She was a natural leader and a perfect person for that position I thought; I still think that.

Q: What was it about Lynn that identified her as someone who could do that?

BM: I could tell you the story in Depot 6. In Depot 6 one morning, we had two washrooms – we had a men's washroom and a women's washroom. Go to the men's washroom and there's two women standing at the door and they said, we're confiscating the washroom for the next 15 minutes because ours is broken. I'm stunned. I'm the steward and I didn't know. So I said, okay I can wait. Women were going in. So afterwards I got the women together and I said, look, it's obvious we need a woman steward in this place, where you guys are comfortable to go with a problem. They nominated Lynn Bue, that's when I first met Lynn Bue. That was Depot 6.

GM: I think before that a turning point for her was there was a sexual harassment incident at Station F at Southgate. It was for her, the way she talked about it afterwards, it was a test for her whether the union would take the issue seriously or not. Our president at that time, following Bill and that other fellow, was Brett Donaldson, who did take it seriously and took the thing on. I don't know the details or how it was dealt with, but Lynn felt that the union passed the test, so as a feminist she was going to get involved in the union, then went from there.

BM: I think we must have had close to a dozen women in that depot at the time of this washroom thing, and most of them had come out of Depot F.

Q: You didn't have women in every depot?

BM: Oh ya, but Station F was where they were having problems. They came over to 6 and they were just accepted right away at 6. Nobody questioned anything about them. But the problem was it took us a while to get this concept of a steward amongst them. Once we did that,

everything worked well after that. It never dawned on us that we had all these women in there and maybe they needed somebody themselves to talk to. Merv Swityk and I were the stewards, and I got Swityk and I said, we gotta get one of these women as a steward in here with us, because if they're going to do something like this we should at least be aware of it. That happened, and Lynn became the steward at that point. I guess the union became a lot more relevant to people after that, well after the situation in F and then coming over to 6. Of course in 6 there was no harassment of the women at all, or at least none that I was ever aware of anyway. Nobody ever complained; I never heard Lynn complain there.

Q: You mentioned the women's committee.

GM: The local 15, the letter carriers, had a local women's committee. This was unusual in the post office at the time for either union. Both unions generally were against it. They had this sort of old "we're all workers" idea. So we fought for it, and Lynn was in the forefront of that. But the thing about Local 15 was that the left-wing men, to be frank, and the feminist women, were the future evolution of the postal unions across the country. Where that really came together was in Edmonton in the letter carriers Local 15 fighting for the women's committee, and in a different way in the inside workers with all these women that were hired, like yourself, Sandy, and came forward and became leaders of the local. This combined in the inside workers with some left activists coming forward in the Vancouver local men and women and becoming a force nationally in the union at the same time. But in LCUC it wasn't so easy, because our Local 15 in Edmonton and the drivers in Toronto and some locals in Chicoutimi Quebec and Lac St. Jean area were the left wing in the union and faced this army of right-wing male hostility, including the leadership. I remember the national president, Bob McGarry, took a lot of flak for years. The fact is maybe he should've stood up to these guys more, but it really wasn't his doing so much as he was surrounded by misogynist right-wingers on the national executive. He was, in my opinion, kind of powerless to do much about it except when he had the chance as president. So we fought for a women's committee. We had a resolution at a convention in St. John, New Brunswick in 1984, and this was defeated soundly. Not that soundly, but it was decisively defeated let's say. I remember brother Jim Crowell from the local at the time as well, still today in the CUPW, getting up when the motion was defeated on a point of privilege and saying,

brother McGarry, you sit on the executive of the committee in the Labour Congress, and the Canadian Labour Congress policy is in favour of women's committees in unions. Is that not right? McGarry sort of smirks and says, we will have a women's committee. So the resolution to elect one was defeated, but shortly after that the national executive appointed a national women's committee. So that was one of the first ones in the country as far as I know.

Q: What was going on in the rest of the province? Edmonton was unique.

BM: Well Calgary was right-wing, let's put it that way.

GM: Calgary was right-wing. Calgary inside workers, I don't know, they weren't visible to me in the Alberta Federation of Labour. I'm not saying they were slouches as far as strikes and picket lines and stuff like that goes. Neither was the local executive either, for that matter, but they had some far right connections in that local actually – Aryan Nations and stuff like that. They didn't like us very much.

Q: Was the oil patch situation the main reason why women were getting hired into the post office?

GM: I think so.

BM: Probably, because a lot of guys went to work up in the oil patch. It was like the war – all these jobs were going vacant. They had to hire somebody, so they were forced to hire women, against their will.

GM: There were labour shortages in other parts of the country as well. I remember – this is just hearsay I guess – but I remember hearing that in Vancouver in those years, the late '70s, they couldn't hire people. They were out on the beaches trying to encourage people to show up and apply for jobs. For women, they had women clerks inside in the late '60s and early '70s, and they were not even in the inside workers association in the union, they were in the Public Service Alliance. They were subject to harassment by supervisors. I knew a woman who used to

work in the Ottawa post office in the '60s and she told me about her supervisors grabbing them from behind and all this stuff. Nobody did anything about it; it was a big joke. But then eventually there were changes in the inside workers and they became postal clerks, PO4s not CRs. This was before they started coming into the letter carriers in any kind of numbers. In '74 the automation began in the big processing plants. The optical character readers came in, which involved keying. So they created what was going to be a new classification, a lower-paid classification, who guaranteed were going to be pretty well all women. They were going to be PO1s not PO4s. I was in Toronto then, I wasn't in the post office, but I knew people that were. I knew a guy who went on to be local president in Toronto, Tom Heffernen. His brother Paul was the president after him. But anyway, so I knew a few things going on there, and I knew a driver there too. So the coders, they were hiring these coders, they were going to pay them less. Maybe they had started, I'm not sure. They walked out – there was a wildcat strike in at least Toronto and Edmonton, I don't know where else. I know Sandy here, Bill's partner, led that walkout. That was a victory, and that was not led by their national union, it was led by rank and file spontaneous action. And they won. The slogan was "coders to PO4", and coders are indeed PO4s to this day. I remember the big boss here, when they brought in a different kind of keying on a different machine way later, still had the same mentality. They were going to use casual employees to do this while they were training the coders on the new keying stations. He was always going, they're just typists, they're just typists. That was the mentality that I'm sure with this guy went back to the coders back when the machines first came in in 1974.

Q: Was there a local women's committee as well?

GM: Well Local 15 had one, and it's the only one I'm aware of anywhere. The inside workers didn't have one for a while, but later it did.

Q: Was there a Local 15 women's committee at the time you went with the resolution to the convention in 1984?

GM: Yes, I'm pretty sure it was already up and running.

Q: Was it open to just women, or was it for men too?

GM: I would guess it was just women.

BM: I would think it's just women, but they reported to the membership meeting.

GM: I'm sure you'd get from time to time, like you do in any organization, men saying, well let's have a men's committee, or stuff like that.

BM: It was transparent.

GM: But there was also informal meetings that people didn't necessarily know about. They weren't not up to no good or anything, they were just discussing common issues. There was a gay and lesbian caucus that I only heard about in recent years, way back then. It wasn't an official structure of the local or anything. There was regular Saturday brunches between women leaders of Local 15 and the inside workers as well, that I heard something about sometime. So there was lots of instances of self organization.

BM: The carriers used to have an open meeting on Saturday morning and stuff like that when we were on 109th Street up in the office up there for anybody who wanted to come in. There was always people up there every Saturday.

Q: Was that on 95th Street?

BM: No on 109th, before we went to 95th.

Q: It was like a drop-in?

BM: You were off work then; there were no carriers working on the weekends. The part time drivers were the only ones working weekends. You would see a bunch of post office trucks parked at the back of the building. They parked on the street one day and a supervisor stopped

them, so after that they parked at the back of the building. They would stop and come in and spent half an hour up there or something, then go back to work. But they got the vehicles out of sight.

GM: Ya we were good at that.

BM: It was just a jam session, I guess. Ideas were tossed around. You'd come up with a good idea, you'd take it to a meeting. It gave feedback coming from the membership. There'd be stewards show up there. It wasn't compulsory, it was a voluntary thing. The only people that were there on a regular basis were the president and secretary; they would both be up there. They had to open the office, for one thing, and it wouldn't look right inviting people if you didn't show up.

Q: When were you local president?

BM: 1968 to 1978, ten years. The guy I succeeded, after the 1968 strike they created the cell division in depots. Instead of having one supervisor, you'd have two or three – each one had a cell. We lost about ten people off the executive and steward body to supervisors. So I go into a meeting with the postmaster after I was elected, and at the end of the meeting I said, well I want to congratulate you on your choice of supervisors. Joe Watson, he had a big smile on his face. I said, ya you got all the dead wood out of our local.

GM: Ya, they were good at that.

BM: I was right on some of them. Frank, he worked at station D, he had horses. Don Wentzel phoned Henry Stamp up and he said, Frank's over at the racetrack running his horse. So Stamp went over to the racetrack and caught him, in uniform.

Q: And Greg, when were you president of the local?

GM: From 1990 shortly after the Labour Board merged the bargaining units into what became the newer and bigger CUPW. That was in '89, and in 1990 I became local president. I was there until 2003.

Q: What went on around the merger?

GM: Local 15 and some others I mentioned earlier who were sort of our allies, were in favour of one union for all postal workers. The inside workers were for that officially in their constitution. But the vast majority of the letter carriers leadership and membership were dead against it. We knew that and we would make a point about it every once in a while, but it wasn't going to go anywhere; in our internal discussions we'd raise it. But the CUPW had other plans and the post office also was sick of the chaos in the bargaining I guess. So they both applied to the Labour Board to reassess the bargaining units. We were against forced merger because of the problems it would create, and it certainly did. Looking back, it was definitely for the best anyway, but it certainly wasn't smooth. The Labour Board came out with a ruling, okay one bargaining unit, operations, which included part of the Public Service Alliance mechanics as well, maintenance workers. But the dominant players were CUPW and the Letter Carriers Union. There were merger discussions went on, there was tentative agreements, there was resistance on both sides. There was hardliners in the CUPW that didn't want anything to do with the Letter Carriers Union. Even the members were kind of freaked out that it was like dog catchers car – what are we going to do now, we've got all these people we're going to be in the same organization as? Certainly people on the letter carrier side resisted and sabotaged a tentative merger agreement by the business agents. McGarry and whoever on the national executive were okay with it. So it fell apart and the board ordered a vote and the inside workers won the vote. I remember a bunch of us from Local 15 gathered in the lounge at the Firefighters Club on 95th Street that night when the vote was being counted. It's sort of ironic, because most of the inside workers that were active in the local were at work then on afternoon shift. So John Bale, the president, was the only inside worker there; the rest of us were all letter carriers and drivers. At the right time they knew, the two presidents, John and Brett, phoned Ottawa where the votes were being counted, and the CUPW won. Narrowly, but they won. There were reports that drivers in Toronto voted for them. We voted pretty well I think for our own union. I remember asking

Brett, I said, I'll campaign for it but only if I can say whatever I want about both sides and their flaws. I had some ideas that weren't accurate about the inside workers. So we did that, we went along with our own union. But it was kind of like Cheshire cats once it was over. I remember Lynn Bue saying that night when we heard the news from John and Brett, who had won, and Lynn referring to the national leadership. She said, it serves them right. So we went out, we Local 15 people. We kept our own meetings going for a little while to do our best to ensure that our issues would get raised. There was plenty of resistance from some of the inside workers leadership to dealing with us. But we didn't oppose the new union, we embraced it and we signed up our own members as CUPW members. I don't think that happened elsewhere across the country too much. We fought off raids by the remnants of the letter carriers. Some of the inside workers leadership were almost more worried about us than they were about the ones that resorted to raiding, because they were an easy enemy to fight and we were loyal opposition in their face. It was like, oh my god, how do we deal with these people? So they were kind of nasty to us for a while. They would vote down our resolutions and they made us all resign as stewards in the old union, which was still alive. It was kind of in its death throes, and we wanted to maintain our activity to try and convince the old union to give up the ghost, dissolve, and turn the money over to the new union. But that didn't fly, so we were kind of in shit with everybody. But we came out of it okay. We had a good relationship in the local. Before the vote came out, so regardless of the outcome, we had a joint bylaws committee that prepared bylaws for the new local, whatever it was, whatever union it was called. There was some parity political arrangements, so there was inside workers and outside workers and maintenance workers on the local executive. That was kind of informal but it was a pretty firm arrangement. There was some leakage on both sides of the two former unions on that issue. There were hardliners that didn't like it, but generally people went along with it. We had a nicely balanced local leadership with lots of secondary leadership in the plant, in the wickets, in the depots and in transportation. Plenty of them were women, as well.

Q: Do you have anything to say about that, Bill?

BM: Well I proposed at one of those meetings before the vote that when the vote was done that all of us should resign and have a new election for a new executive, which we did

afterwards. It obviously worked, because we had a balance of seven carriers, seven CUPW and one maintenance worker on the executive when the voting was done. We didn't have a slate at all, it was just the best seven people, in my opinion, got elected. I think it was the dynamics of Local 15 more than anything that did it. There was a lot of opposition in CUPW to letter carriers. When you interview Sandy she can tell you about Wentzel and I not being able to go up to their office, staying down on the ground while she went up to the top of Avord Arms, because we were persona non grata with them. Philippa was the president. Wasn't he still around in that strike? I thought he was. . . We had a joint office in Rice Howard Way. About the 20th of the month or something I go to work that morning, go into the office that morning, or that afternoon after work or something, and there's a note on the door – we've moved out, you'll have to pay the whole rent yourself. That was just posted on the door. Then I find out afterwards they've got an office over in the labour centre on 6th Avenue and 3rd Street. We'd had a joint office for a couple of years and it'd been working good, and all of a sudden they were gone. Philippa accused us of searching through his files. I didn't even know where he kept them and could care less; it was none of my business.

GM: By the time of the merger, in Edmonton anyway, that had subsided quite a bit. But there were still, well on both sides like I said, there was some leakage from the nicely balanced executive idea on both sides. There was resistance to having a balanced executive, and that was mostly not a majority but a number of the inside workers. They were encouraged by their national leadership. I know when John Bail resigned as president so there'd be a new election, the first national vice president, Darryl Tingley, gave him shit for that, that he shouldn't do that. He did it anyway, and we elected a different person from the LCUC side, Brett Donaldson, as president. There wasn't a slate as such, but there were favoured candidates. It reflected the reality of some of the visions of the inside workers. The idea was the president was going to be from the LCUC side, but there were people that ran against him, which was fine. But he won. The other informal understanding was the grievance officer would be from the inside workers. But there were different elements in the inside workers, so two of them ran for that. Some of us supported one of them and I'm sure some letter carriers supported the other one, and the other guy won. But that was democracy in action, but there was an understanding of having some balance when it was over. The guy that won might not have been the one I voted for, but

it was an inside worker and that was important. When I was even a year later in the office there were concepts and work arrangements that I had no idea what they were talking about from the inside workers, like backfilling and section crossing. I would have to go ask the grievance officer, okay can you just tell me what this is before I look like an idiot when I go to a meeting with management? Similarly with them, the letter carriers Work Measurement System, it's a time valued system and they had no clue about that. Why would they? They'd never dealt with it before. So it took some years and some growing pains, but the union is well past all that now.

BM: I think probably our local came to it easier than some of the others where the resistance was really strong, where they didn't even talk to each other.

GM: The leadership of the old letter carriers were out there raiding and spending our money that should've just been given to our new union, wasting it on campaigns. But they lost, we won.

Q: Could you talk about the loyalty oath?

BM: When we merged with CUPW they came out with a loyalty oath, and I refused to sign it. Jim Crowell came over to my place to argue with me about why I should sign it. I think he had supper with us. It took him a long time to convince me; I finally gave in. The only reason I gave in was it was important that we have one union. But I didn't like that oath. When I first joined the union it was a CBRT, which is the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Transport Employees, a Canadian union on the CN in 1953. It took me six months to find somebody to sign me up in 1953, because of the McCarthy shit in the States. My first experience with unionism was as a reaction to McCarthyism, and when they came out with that loyalty oath I saw the same damn thing. I told Jim my whole reasons for opposing it. I still think the thing was wrong.

GM: I think it was wrong but I do understand they were a little paranoid. I remember Lynn Bue at a meeting one time for a convention or something, remarking how J.C. Parrot, the national president, looked hunted, because there were all these enemies everywhere. And there were, from the old Letter Carriers Union. They were suspicious of us, because we didn't all quit and all

go out and start raiding right away. We were in there, we were shop stewards in both for a while until the Letter Carriers gave up the ghost in the early '90s. But we left after the first convention after the merger. We failed to get our weight on dissolving and all that, so we gave up then. But we were loyal CUPW members too, we were. It was like you had to resign as a shop steward in LCUC and you had to sign this thing. We resented it tremendously. I signed it too, and the reason was because if you didn't sign it they would charge you and expel you.

BM: Expel you out of the union.

GM: People that were raiding later, that's one thing. And there were people who stayed in and were moles; they pretended to be loyal members, a couple of them on the national executive. Then the day a raid started somewhere they'd all quit and say everybody should join LCUC again. So there were people that did do that, but we weren't doing it, and we resented it. But it was worth signing it to stay involved in the new union, even though you had to kind of hold your nose and sign the thing. So I signed it and I wrote an 8-1/2 x 14" open letter to Jean-Claude Parrot saying what I objected to about the whole thing. I figured, okay I'll sign it, but I'm going to say what I think about it. So even in a pretty healthy local it was still difficult.

Q: Did they drop it then?

GM: No, everybody had to sign it. It was probably worse for us actually because we were involved in the new union. At all these other places people would say, oh screw it, I'm not gonna sign that, I don't want to be in stinky old CUPW anyway. It didn't really hurt them, because they didn't care. But we did care and we were kind of kicked in the head for it.

Q: Was JC behind it?

GM: All of them.

BM: All of them, the full executive. But I wouldn't blame JC on it, because there was more than one person on the executive, and he might've got outvoted on the whole thing. We don't know.

GM: After the merger there was, we called it the black hole. The national executive board would be in Ottawa fulltime crisis managing, and they'd be in meetings for days and there would be complete silence. Nobody knew what they were going to do, what went on, and then maybe three or four days later there'd be some brief announcement about changes to the constitution or whatever to reflect the new membership, and rules like this loyalty oath.

Q: Did the other provinces have women in letter carrier positions?

GM: No.

BM: Vancouver, well B.C. and Edmonton for sure. I don't know how Saskatchewan was, Saskatchewan might not have been bad.

GM: Winnipeg, there was the odd one but it was completely male dominated everywhere east of I would say Alberta. It was just Alberta and B.C., maybe Saskatchewan, maybe Saskatoon, I'm not sure. But that was it.

BM: To me all those delegations always looked strange because there were no women in there. It just didn't seem right. To somebody like Lynn it would've been a heck of a lot more evident.

Q: So it would be the work that was divided up?

GM: It would be the hostility in the union as well, to be honest about it. But the starting point was the employment situation – the employer would not hire women. There's been other cases like this around racial issues in other countries, where the union would enforce it. In a shipyard in Belfast where my dad was born, the company would not hire a Catholic to work in that shipyard, or the union would walk out. Blacks in South Africa, same thing.

BM: Blacks in the States.

GM: There was a slogan "for a white socialist South Africa" back in the day. So the post office wasn't that bad, but it the union certainly didn't want women in, or resisted it or reluctantly went along with it and slowly came around over quite a long time. Management was really deaf on it. I remember in Edmonton the women, by the time I was involved they were established as clerks but they weren't driving heavy equipment around. A fellow named Les Taschuk, who was a manager and labour relations later on, he was known to have said there will never be a woman driving a forklift in here. Shortly after that, a sister named Linda Tubernuss bid into transfer section and got her training and her license. Her first day driving a forklift around on the loading dock she came in wearing a white wedding dress. It certainly got everyone's attention and I'm sure Les Taschuk wasn't too thrilled about it. On our side, there was the same thing about they were kind of almost tricked into hiring women for the drivers, then they needed women letter carriers. But there's the same thing about the big trucks, the five-ton trucks and the semi trailers that we used to have as well. I remember the same thing, the supervisor saying that women aren't going to be driving those five-tons. Next thing you know, they were. In fact Marion Griffin, one of the first women who did come in with Edna from the contractor, got her training on the semi trailer, heavy vehicles they were called, and drove those at a higher grade of pay. Women kind of clawed their way in but they got in there.

Q: Anything else you want to add?

GM: This is before my time, but I know people that were around, like Bill and Sandy and others. The '65 strike resulted in the associations becoming fully unionized. It took a little while after that through legal changes and so on. The associations before that were unions to a large extent but they didn't have the legal right to strike. The outside were the Federated Association of Letter Carriers, who'd been around since 1889, and the Canadian Postal Employees Association.

BM: 1911.

GM: Okay I was going to say shortly after; I didn't know that.

BM: They were founded in Vancouver in 1911. When we used to go in the lecture room at the Vancouver post office there was a thing up there on the wall and a picture of the first group of postal workers in Vancouver, and it was founded in Vancouver in 1911. That would've been the logical place, because that was the hot pit of unionism, especially at that time.

GM: So the '65 strike is commonly referred to as postal workers unions or whatever went on strike. What actually happened was the associations did not lead those strikes. The local leaderships in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver led those – more militant, in some cases Socialist, leaders on the local level led those strikes. Bob McGarry that I referred to before who ended up as national president, he was in the Scarborough local, which my understanding if this is accurate, is they didn't join the strike. McGarry was secretary treasurer of the Scarborough local I believe.

BM: No it wasn't Scarborough, it was another one. Scarborough stayed separate. It was one of the other communities around Toronto. McGarry turned over the treasury. He merged his local into Toronto local and donated the money to Toronto. The Toronto money was frozen, they couldn't get at it, so he brought the money over. But I can't remember what local it was. I know it wasn't Scarborough, but I can't think of the name of it now. It was one of the cities right around Toronto. Alec Powers became president in Toronto after the strike and Jimmy Brown became the secretary treasurer.
They were the leaders out of there. McGarry became the president of letter carriers in Montreal.

GM: Clement Morel for the inside workers. Willy Houle.

BM: Willy Houle, because Will Houle became the first president of the CUPW for one term. From Vancouver we had Ray Andres.
In '65 when the strike hit I go to a meeting, we force them to call a meeting. I move a motion that we join the strike, and they ruled me out of order. I said, what rules do we follow? They told me, Bourinot's. So I can't accomplish anything in that meeting, I go to Hurtig's. They were up on 4th Street and Jasper. I go up there and I buy a copy of Burinot's rules of order and we

force another meeting. So the next meeting I stand at the door and the leadership comes in and I've got the page open and I says, if you guys rule me out of order when I move a motion this time, I'll challenge the chair, because I know what the rules are. I got my motion and we lost by a couple of votes; it was a really close vote. It was a standing vote divided two ways and they counted, just like Britain, and we lost. You look at some of the people you worked with and they're on the other side and you're thinking, what's with these guys?

GM: Bill donated that copy of Bourinot's Rules of Order to the local, and I believe it's still with the local, it was when we were at our older office anyway.

BM: It's historic anyway, because at that time that's what we were governed by. I don't know whether we are anymore, I think we're Robert's rules of order now.

GM: Bourinot's.

BM: Still Bourinot's, okay.

GM: And the inside workers in Edmonton had a meeting, I guess it was demanded. It was at the old labour temple that Bill referred to earlier on 106th Avenue. I've seen the picture, a guy that some of us knew later, Eddy Robinson who worked in the post office, inside then. They had a big debate about the same thing, joining the strike or not. They had business agents too back then in the association. They might've had a slightly different title but they were hired, they weren't elected or anything. They said, you can't do that, basically the same thing, it's out of order. So a huge crowd of people in this meeting were not happy with this and got up, led by Ed Robinson, my friend later on, and stormed out of the meeting. They didn't walk out of work, because they didn't have the support I guess, but they showed their displeasure and walked out of the meeting, resulting in a picture of Eddy leading this angry crowd of workers out of the union meeting, being on the front page of the Edmonton Journal the next day. So there was some unrest in Edmonton but it didn't quite get to joining the strike. But he leadership from Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver certainly did, and that's what resulted in the full unionization.

BM: Bill Shulha became president of the local here, and after he became president I became president. We had a working relationship that worked great until Pappernick got in as president, and then the whole thing went down the tube. Not Pappernick, Mike Pappernick was fine; we got along with him. No Philippa got in, that's when it fell apart. We worked together. We worked for the same employer, we had the same problems, some of the same problems anyway. Why not work together when you could, right? We joined the Labour Council after '65 and then I think about 1969 or '70 I got the local to join the Federation. Then we were in everything, and we've been in the Federation ever since.

GM: Although that was the letter carriers. Following the turbulent '70s and numerous strikes by both groups, the coders strike and the inside workers in '74, there were drivers in Calgary walked out over the conditions of the trucks and things like that. So it was a pretty rowdy bunch. But the 1978 strike just when I was about to get hired by the inside workers was kind of a turning point where the government legislated them back to work. They defied the legislation for a while and the leadership offices were raided by the RCMP. Jean-Claude Parrot, the national president, was charged with contempt of parliament and went to jail over that. The response at the time at the central labour movement, the Canadian Labour Congress led by Dennis McDermott at the time, he seemed to mellow out somewhat later on. But anyway at the time he just trashed the inside workers as a bunch of crazies and stuff like that, cut them loose. So as a result the other unions froze them out of everything. In Alberta the Alberta Federation of Labour was dominated by the building trades unions, the industrial unions, notably the packinghouse workers who had just merged with the retail clerks international to form the UFCW, and a small group of public sector workers who were kind of on the outs for many years. They had a rigid slate of who was going to be on the incoming leadership at conventions, and it was a monumental struggle to change this slate or to defeat somebody on the slate. The inside workers were not on any of these slates in the CLC or in the AFL. The letter carriers, because they were supposedly more moderate across the country – and they really weren't, they had a more conservative political leadership in most places – were allowed on. So Bill MacDonald was on the executive council of the Alberta Federation of Labour and then later on Brett Donaldson was as well. But the inside workers, no way. That didn't change until the early 1990s in the CLC, the federal body, when Jean-Claude Parrot ran against, and he didn't run against the letter

carriers McGarry, he ran against right-wing woodworker from B.C. Jack Munro, who was not loved by the more militant unions for meeting with Vanderzam and selling out the solidarity strike wave in the 1980s. He was the woodworkers' leader and on the CLC, and Parrot ran against him and lost to him actually. It was later that Parrot did break the slate and get on in the early 1990s. That lingered for quite a long time; they weren't allowed there. But we were.

Q: How many women were involved in the labour councils and the Federation of Labour?

BM: I don't think we had any.

GM: Well by the time I got involved, which was after Bill, there were some women on the executive council. They were from the public sector and the airline workers. There was the flight attendants association, CALFA, which became part of CUPE later on, and there was the ticket agents.

BM: When did the nurses come?

GM: Much later. And the ticket agents, who ended up in the auto workers union. They were women and they had their own seat on the executive council. So there were some women and from CUPE and the AUPE who were still in the Federation then. So there were women but they certainly weren't a majority. There was a lot of big UFCW guys in black suits that were fairly intimidating in meetings. There was me and two other guys that wore blue jeans and everybody else were male business agents in suits. That was kind of the divide. The women were not in positions of leadership until later in the '80s and '90s.

BM: I was just thinking about our delegates to the Labour Council. I don't remember when women became delegates to the Labour Council, but it was a result of a vote of them willing to stand. I can't remember when that happened. It wasn't a question of being frozen out, they just hadn't reached the point where they wanted to be involved at that level. It came alright, because I'm looking at the minutes now and there's a lot of women delegates from CUPW to the Labour Council. But it seems to me, I was trying to remember who was the delegates. I'm

thinking back in the ‘70s we were all males, but I don’t think we had any female carriers then, or we were just getting females in. It was later on after I went to Depot 6 that I met, I lost the election in ’78 and I went back to work and I bid out to Depot 6. It was six months after I was working out there when I met Lynn Bue I think. That’s when I started seeing women carriers that were potential people to be involved. Before that, I hadn’t met any. I guess I’d met some because we had that woman from, maybe she was a delegate to the Labour Council. Probably she was, and I can’t remember her name now. She must be retired by now.

Q: Would there be women at the Labour Council meetings?

BM: Primarily men until… Oh Anne Ozipko, she was there.

GM: But it was like the Federation, it was more building trades. The building trades split from the labour centrals in 1982 I think it was, over support for the NDP and the structure. They all had big province-wide locals. CUPE and the public sector unions had these little tiny locals and they all got one delegate to conventions, so they split over that. So then they weren’t a factor anymore, which was a loss, although some people were probably glad to see them go. Eugene Mitchell was the fulltime secretary treasurer, executive secretary they called him, of the Federation. Harry Kostiak from the packinghouse workers, UPWA-UFCW, was president but not fulltime; they would Buek him off for things. In the Labour Council I remember I went to some meeting just as an observer for something I was interested in, and there was a guy named Slim Powel, who was I think an old Communist. But he was from the rail unions, I believe, who was like an old-fashioned cowboy kind of guy with the cowboy shirt and hat and the Buets and everything. No women, though. Just a few from CUPE and AUPE and the airlines.

BM: There was three guys from the plumbers. There was, remember big Wally? I can’t think of his last name. And there was a guy that was a full-timer with the union. Then there was, oh shoot, he became president of the building trades in the ‘90s or something when they came back into the . . . But those three guys, if they were at a meeting, whether it was a Federation meeting or a Labour Council meeting, and I got up to speak, they would back me up. They

would support me; they were on my side of the fence. Wally was a Communist, I know that, a member of the CP. I don't know about the other two.

GM: Oh Walter Doskoch.

BM: Ya Walter Doskoch. Anyway, they were great guys from the plumbers. We ended up renting the plumbers hall for our meetings. It was across the street from our local on 9th Street, so that's where we used to hold our meetings. We had a great relationship with the plumbers for years. But the guys that came out to the Labour Council were leaning the same way we were and it was much easier to get along with them.

Q: How do you account for the fact that the postal workers have always been on the progressive side, the left? How were you able to continue that kind of orientation in the union?

BM: I think from my perspective, when somebody wanted to get involved we encouraged them. Usually the people who wanted to get involved were on the left-hand side of the fence. But we encouraged people to disagree with us, to get involved with us, to do stuff. It was never a question of top down, it was a question of we worked as a group. People came out of our local and went to other locals. You'd go to convention and run into delegates at the convention that had worked in our local before they went. We must've had 20 or 25 different places in Canada where we had members that came out of Edmonton.
They were leaders here and they became leaders where they went.

GM: That was sort of how we kept it going, that approach, and it was certainly the approach when I got involved. I think historically really underlying it was the postwar economic Buem and the explosion of the unionization of the public sector in the 1960s, which coincided with the worldwide youth radicalization that was going on then and the expansion of the public sector. So a lot of people on the left got hired and got involved in the unions, and the post office was one place that happened. There were people that specifically tried to get hired at the post office for that reason, like myself. I remember Carol Read from the inside workers telling me that in her hiring interview they asked her why she wanted to work at the post office. She told them,

because there's an interesting union there. They needed workers or they would never have hired her. So there was a lot of that. There were people from different groups on the left involved in different locals and in different ways in the post office in Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver. There's images of left-wingers being wild radicals or whatever, and there might've been a few like that. But they were smart trade unionists and they knew how to take the union forward and bring people in. They did bring people, like Bill said, or it certainly was the approach when I got involved. The first meeting I went to, I was brand new, I think I knew one or two people from before I was hired at the post office. But basically no one knew who I was. I asked a couple of kind of smart-Alecy questions and we had elections to the district LCUC regional meeting coming up in Medicine Hat. The secretary treasurer, Collette Forest – see, the women had already started taking over – nominated me and I couldn't believe it. My first meeting and I got elected, so I went to my first meeting in Medicine Hat, Alberta. So I think there were underlying historical factors. Our public sector unions, not totally, it was combined and uneven, the postal workers in particular, played that kind of role. We were conscious of it and kept it going as well through bringing people in, with some ups and downs, but trying to be inclusive and maintain that. The inside workers wrote stuff right in their constitution to that effect, the opposing interests of employers and employees and stuff like that. A lot of that came from the radicalization in Quebec in the '60s and early '70s as well in the Montreal local, although it certainly had its regime problems later on. But it had a proud militant tradition symbolized by Clement Morel and later on Jean-Claude Parrot, a lot of which found its way into the constitution as well. They would quote that constitution like Mao's little red Buek. If they didn't like something you were putting forward, when we got involved from the letter carriers, they would, oh that goes against the orientation. There were all these unwritten rules. For years I didn't know what the orientation was, but it's a thing in the preamble about opposing interests of employers and workers, which I agree with myself. But it was conveniently used to, anything could be labeled as against the orientation if it's something you didn't like.

Q: We just achieved a major orientation, the C5 and C6.

GM: There was that too: legalize marijuana, make May Day a national stat holiday.

BM: Well we got one of them.

GM: That's right. But they didn't want women's committees, not for a while. Later on they did.

Q: Was pay equity an ongoing issue the way it was with PSAC? Or was that different at the post office?

BM: We didn't have a pay equity issue fulltime, we had a pay equity issue part time. It seems to me the part time coders and the part time women before them, because part of this problem was the CUPW was opposed to, or not the CUPW, the original, was opposed to part timers period. They wouldn't take part timers in the union, at least that was my understanding. I worked with fulltime women in Vancouver who'd started in the '50s. They'd put them down in the dirty sections and the women loved it. They didn't like being up in the carrier section or sorting letters, they preferred sorting parcels. I got stuck down there when I first came in and started working with these women and I thought, these are great people. So that was my introduction, and that was back in the beginning of '58 I worked down there. I worked in '57 on a train at Christmas time and in '58 I worked in the post office until they called me out on the trains again. In the FALC we had part time letter carriers – not many, but a few walks were part time. You divide up the walks and there was half a walk left over, and they needed a part timer on that. So part timers were not an issue in the letter carriers, but they were in CUPW at the beginning.

GM: I don't know the history of how this happened in the '60s, but they were converted to postal clerks, as I mentioned before. They were PO4s so there really was not a pay equity issue the way the Public Service Alliance, they had to fight it for 18 years until we did have a group of workers who are now the rural and suburban mail carriers who were contracted. They were regarded as private contractors. The fact is, they were dependent contractors who, there was an argument they should be employees, and we were attempting to organize them, we being the letter carriers and inside workers as well at various points in time. With the letter carriers it was more in Ontario, southwest Ontario. These people were the vast majority women and they

were low paid, so that issue was out there but it wasn't involved directly with our unions. We were trying to organize them, we were trying to fight legal battles to get them declared employees. Dependent contractors were employees, effectively. Before that came to fruition we were able to negotiate with the corporation, with Canada Post, in 2003 to hire them all, the same way they did with the drivers back in the '70s. They did, so they became union members by virtue of a negotiated collective agreement. They were a different bargaining unit but the same union, so we negotiated a contract for them. From that point on, they were our members, 2003 to this day, and there was a pay equity issue. They were lower paid, they were paid on a different system by mileage and piece rate for parcels, things like that. They had to do slightly different jobs in the rural areas. That was 15 years ago and we've slowly improved their contracts. But the time has come now, and as we speak we're right in the middle of a job action, a work disruption at the post office. One of the main issues is wage parity for these workers. That issue wasn't really involved since the '60s inside the unions, but it became involved, well I guess there was issues too – the attitude of unions to part timers was echoed later on with the attitude to casual employers. There was great hostility there, and most of them were women as well. The pay was the same though, pretty well I think; maybe not initially. But the RSMCs, ya that issue came back and it's back right now in everyone's face. After 15 years enough is enough and it's time to settle it. Where I live, for example, in north Edmonton, there's large areas of urban centres that were not in delivery in the early '80s when they froze letter carrier delivery and went to these contractors and suburban services, they called them. Like the rural routers, same thing. There's an arbitrary line and the line goes down 91st Street near where I live. It's all community mailboxes there, even the letter carrier areas, because they froze door to door delivery first. So on the west side of 91st Street you'll see a letter carrier with a corporate vehicle and a nice uniform sorting mail into a CMB making $25 an hour, and on the other side of the same street you'll see somebody with their own vehicle with a little blue and red sign on the roof, maybe a flashing light. Now they have red shirts and some of them will scrounge some old uniforms from us, from the urban workers. But they're making $12 an hour. I'm not sure exactly what they're making, but they're certainly not making $25 an hour. They're making barely more than they were $15 years ago, and they're doing exactly the same thing right at the same time. It would be a good TV show. You can watch the two of them doing exactly the same thing and getting paid differently.

Q: Sandy, where were you born?

SM: I was born here in Edmonton. I grew up here. My father was in the services. Our letter carrier was Larry Jones. As a teenager, I would see Larry coming through delivering the mail, and by 1 o'clock in the afternoon he was at the Rosalyn Hotel with a whole bunch of letter carriers out of Station M. I didn't want to be in the army; that just wasn't for me. But I liked Larry's job. If you could be done that early I thought, okay the post office is where I have to go.

Q: Was that your first job?

SM: No, I worked for the provincial government in social services department, child welfare, transferring what the social worker would say into a line so they could make cards for the computers. That's why I started at, and I hated it. So I quit there. I'd already applied at the post office and I was just waiting for the exam. When I quit there I went to work at Army & Navy across the street from the post office, and I worked there until they called me for the exam. So I went, wrote the exam, and I couldn't believe it. I'm looking around the room, I'm done, I've gone over it twice, and everybody's got their heads down. I'm going, did I miss something here? They guy that was supervising us looked at me and said, are you done? I said, yes I'm done. He says, well you can go now then. I said, good, thanks a lot. I don't think I waited two weeks and they called me for the interview. I went for the interview and then I was in there working. I started on the afternoon shift, I hated it. I was there about a week and I said, can I go on the nightshift? So they transferred me to the nightshift, which was great; I loved it. I was sorting mail for the letter carriers, I was in the city section sorting mail for the letter carriers. I didn't like sorting mail so much, at least on the primary, so I asked to do other jobs like throw lumpies or work special delivery or go work sorting flats and stuff. I did all those things, so I was the supervisor's hero around there because they were always looking for people to do those jobs. So I had a good time doing that and in the morning the letter carriers would come in and I would just have a party with them. I was sorting their mail and just yacking it up with all of them. I had met Bill before, I'd met him six months before. We'd gone to see a movie, Billy Jack, together, well a whole crowd. I didn't go with Bill but I went with Wally Payne. Wally introduced

me to Bill and we started talking and we never stopped talking. So that's how Bill and I got tagged together.

Q: In 1972?

SM: 1972. I started in the post office in August, and by October Bill and I were living together with Wally with us of course, as we needed him to help pay the rent I thought. Anyway, that's how we started out. I started in the post office, I think September was my first union meeting. I went to the meeting and they wanted people for Labour Council delegates. I shot up a hand, I'll go, because I already knew that Bill was on Labour Council and I just thought, well okay I can go with him, that's great. So off I went as the Labour Council delegate, and that was September '72. The females there were from the garment workers, that was it; there was four of them. But Anne Ozipko was the president and she was their leader. So I met her and I met the fellows from Local 488, plumbers and pipefitters. They were the left leaners in Edmonton. And I met all the other people that came out of Edmonton that were on the Alberta Federation of Labour as well as Labour Council. The next meeting I went to they were looking for delegates for the Alberta Federation of Labour. Up shot the hand again, I'll go. So off I went to my first convention in Calgary as a postal worker. I was only a month in there. But I got to meet the labour leaders of Alberta early on. Well 1974, you said it was April that the coders' strike was. I can't remember the dates. But I was working nightshift and Marion Brown was working nightshift. She was sort of the leader over in the coding section. Marion was married to a letter carrier, Dave Brown. So there we have another postal worker letter carrier connection there. Well I asked Marion, what do you want to do? . . . Where was I? Alberta Federation of Labour. Within two months I was going to the Alberta Federation of Labour convention, I was a delegate to Labour Council, and I was meeting all of the leaders for labour in Alberta. So '74 April comes along and there's this big deal over the coders; they're making a lot less money than we are. They're starting at a PO1 level, and they didn't like it. I went and talked with Marion Brown because she was sort of the leader over there in coding on the nightshift. The nightshift was where all the action has always been. So I went over and talked with Marion and said, what do you want to do? I said, they're going tonight. Not tonight the shift we were on, but the following night. I said, what do you want to do? I said, Toronto's going to go, and beyond that I don't know. But I think it's about

time that Edmonton got off their butt and got involved in this, and it makes a big pay raise for everybody in your section. I says, can you talk it up and can you talk it up with dayshift and the afternoon shift? She says, ya I can do that. So I came in the following night and Jean-Claude Parrot had sort of said, we need to fight this fight. He was my hero right from the beginning, I just loved this man. To this day I love that man. Anyway, I went to Marion and said, are you ready? She says, ya. I said, okay. I had been to a Labour Council meeting that night and Bill was there and Don Wentzel and half a dozen letter carriers were there. I said, I'm going to go pull the plant tonight. They all looked at me and went, I don't believe it. I said, well I'm gonna do it. I said, there's a stewards meeting tonight. I'm gonna leave here early, you guys, and I'm gonna go over there and I'm gonna tell them that I'm gonna pull the plant. I knew that I wasn't going to get a good reaction. I walked in there and no, they weren't into doing that at all. I said, well it doesn't really matter what you think. I said, the coders are ready to go, the nightshift is ready to go. I said, so I'm gonna go over and pull it and then I'm gonna send half a dozen guys over here to get picket signs. Get them ready. So I went over and I went to coding. I said, you guys are ready? Yep. It's all women over there. I went downstairs to the news and parcels crew and there was a guy down there and I can't remember his name for the life of me. But he was sort of the leader down in the basement. I said, I'm pulling upstairs. I said, can you clear the basement? He said, yep I can. I said, good. So the coders led everybody out of the building. The nightshift followed them out, starting with the ones that were on the second floor, and the news and parcels crew from downstairs come up the elevator and followed us right out. We cleaned that plant right now. I said, you go over to the union office. It was on 97th Street at that time and 5th or 6th Avenue, somewhere there. I said, you go over there and you tell them we've cleaned the plant out and we need a whole bunch of picket signs. So they went and got them and brought them, and we had a lovely picket line set up. The guys stayed all night and they met the morning shift and told the morning shift we're out and we're staying out. Well we had heard that Toronto had gone out and Winnipeg had gone out and Edmonton had gone out. Everybody's going, Edmonton went out? Ya. Bill and Don came over to see what was going on and they couldn't believe everybody on the street. That was the first time I had a job action. It was a biggie. The nightshift met the dayshift coming in and said, you're not going in there, I says, because we're on strike over this coder issue – these guys gotta make as much money as we do. So they either went home or they picked up picket signs, depending on where they stood. Well that day –

Peter Philippa was president of the postal workers at the time – he threw me out of the union right then and there. You're no longer a member of this union. Well Jully Birchel working out at Station E, she was a wicket clerk out there, she heard about this. She said, uh uh, that ain't gonna happen. She started a petition that went all around the city and to all the shifts in the plant, and everybody was signing it. They took it to Peter and he took a look at that and realized it was time he resigned. So he was gone. The others that were on the executive of CUPW took their leave, except for Harold Bergie. He was the secretary treasurer and he hung on for years doing stuff. He was great. He was basically on our side, so he was the continuation of the old thing. We elected a whole brand new executive, and it was great. Most of them were to the left. Most of them got jobs working in the district office, working in the national office later on in their careers. Except for me, I didn't want to go anywhere because I was married to a letter carrier. Well Jully, I gotta say this, was also married to a letter carrier. Benny Birchel was a letter carrier at Station E. So Sandy's connection was a wife-husband connection that were postal workers and letter carriers. So I think that's why this thing went so well for me, as well as being involved right away in Labour Council and the Alberta Federation of Labour.

Q: How many years did you work there?

SM: I worked there just about 36 years. I was 19 when I started, and I came in fulltime. The reason I got to come in fulltime was because all the men were vacating their jobs in the post office to go work in the oil patch. They were going to make all this great big money, and they did, they made great money. I was happy to see them go, until the '80s when everything went bust and most of them lost the shirts off their back, most of them and their wives, over that stuff. But anyway, that's how women got in fulltime off the street, and I was one of the first.

Q: Were you involved in the formation of any of the women's committees?

SM: No I worked nightshift and I didn't involve myself in that stuff. It was too hard doing that, going to union meetings, and just the regular stuff. So no, I didn't. I did my agitating on the floor whenever something was coming up.

Q: Were you on the local executive as well?

SM: No, well I suppose. I was a divisional steward, so I was the steward for all the nightshift. But that wasn't an executive position.

Q: I remember a photo of gold jackets that we had.

SM: Gold and blue, with our names on the side and the big postal worker dealie. I was one of the first ones to get a jacket. All the stewards had a jacket.

BM: All our stewards had jackets.

SM: And you I met in '74 when you came in and were working nightshift. We met down in news and parcels with your mother-in-law.

Q: Soon to be, or seven years later to be.

SM: Ya later on. She was a little bit to the left too. I would talk to her, I talked to Mina Kennedy and just run things by her, and I'd run things by Bill and Bill would run stuff by me. Boy I'm telling you, we just had a fun time creating Edmonton. We did, we had a great time creating it. I remember Bill when he had to sign that loyalty oath. I was so mad. I'm going, I'm not signing it, that's crap. I'm not signing it, not for anything. But Bill talked me into signing it, because we all needed to be together on this thing. If that's what it took, that's what it took. So we did. I was a steward for a long time on nightshift and I had a ball. I partied every night with the clerks, with the carriers when they came in in the morning. I had a ball. I can tell you it's the best career I ever had, it's the only career I ever had. But I turned it into a fun thing to do. I went in there with the attitude that I had to do a good job so that the boss couldn't come after me. You gotta be on top of everything so the boss can't get you. So that's what I did. We went through the era when we could smoke in the post office. You'd go up to the washroom and you could get a contact high. All kinds of fun things in the '70s, all kinds of fun things. I tell you, I've been retired eight years now and I miss all the people, I really do. Bill, I don't know what you're going to add.

Oh when the carriers met on Saturday morning up in the letter carrier union office and then would go down for breakfast, well the guy would always keep it open, always open up Saturday because he knew they'd have all these letter carriers and all these drivers and he'd have these women who were married to letter carriers. We'd all be there and fill this darned restaurant, so he made a good living off of us too.

Q: Could you explain the difference between the sorting job you were doing and the coding job?

SM: Well coding was totally different from our job. We were sorting mail and sorting flats and throwing parcels, working special delivery, working in registration. These guys were stuck all night having letters go by them and keying them in and sending them off. Then when they got that done, some of them would be clearing the mail that had already been keyed and sorting to areas and pulling that off, and I don't what they did with it. I think it went to the finals cases and would be busted down by the clerks in the city section or the forward section, depending on what kind of mail they were running through. But they didn't have enough work to keep the coding all night and moving that mail around. So what are they going to do with them for the last hour? What they did is they would bring them over to work in our section. Well there's the case in point. They're not any different from us, except they can key and we can't. So they were actually at a level maybe a little higher. But anyway, they would spend their time sorting parcels or whatever, so they were no different than us. The post office had a hard time saying that this was a special category. Wrong, you were making it the same category. So the PO4s understood that and the PO1s, the coders, knew that they were getting screwed around, so they were happy to be out on that strike. We weren't out there very long and the post office capitulated.

Q: It was only a few days, wasn't it?

SM: Yes, very short.

BM: I just want to say one thing. What they were keying in was the postal code. I'm saying that because most people reading this wouldn't realize that. What they were doing was those six

characters at the bottom of the thing; they were keying that in and printing it on the letter. Now it's all done, they have optical readers that do it now I think. But that's what coders did.

SM: They still gotta kick a bunch out for the coders to do. There's still that job left, because you can't read everything. I remember the automation process. They had to bring in these computers, so they had to change things in the post office. They had to clean up the air so they said, you can no longer smoke here at your desk, you gotta go outside. Well let me tell you, it's the best thing that ever happened to me. I used to be sick with bronchitis through the winter, and I never knew why. Well when they cleaned up that deal and brought in all these fans and threw all the smokers outside to have their cigarette, well all of a sudden I was breathing fresh air, which was something we didn't have in the post office; we had sick air in there. I never had bronchitis after that. If somebody asked me why I'm going out I would tell them, I need to have that fresh air so I can be at work all the time.

Q: Do you remember Boycott the Postal Code?

SM: That campaign, ya, little stickers we'd put on the mail, our own mail, and have other people put it on. We never put it on somebody's mail who didn't want it. We'd hand out the stickers, and we would see all kinds of these little red Boycott the Postal Code stickers come through. A lot of people didn't believe in this automation. They knew if it hit us it was going into their jobs too, so we had a lot of support for that strike.

Q: What was the actual pay differential?

BM: I thought it was about $4 but I might be wrong.

SM: That's probably about right, about $4 at that point in time.

BM: It was substantial.

SM: Four bucks is four bucks.

BM: You're talking about $15 an hour to $11, or $12 an hour. . .

SM: No I don't think we were making that much money in '72. In '72 we were making not very much. What were you making when you first came in?

Q: I started in 1974 and I was making $4.24. I quit a job for $3.85 in Halifax.

SM: I'll tell you, after '74 the next strike, '76? Well '75 was the. . .

Q: Six weeks, 42 days.

SM: Okay that was a good one, and that's when the pay started to go up bigtime. Bigtime the pay went up. So I guess the coders must've been making a buck less than us at that time in '74.

BM: But that would be a lot of money.

SM: It was a lot of money at that time. If it stayed, if they kept their differential at a percentage, well they would just get farther and farther behind. If they paid it dollar for dollar, they'd still be a dollar behind us or $2 behind us. I don't know, I just know that from the time I came in the post office there was big, big changes. We were sliding to the left bigtime, Labour Council was sliding to the left. The Federation was being forced to slide to the left because of what the other unions were doing. I can't remember when we had the strike over the packinghouse workers.

BM: That was '86, wasn't it?

SM: Gainers. They had a lot of pull, the executive had a lot of pull in the provincial, so that brought them along certainly. And Greg and everybody who was out of the letter carriers was there, postal workers were there in full force, with the women. The garment workers were there, who had been around for a long time. We would put ourselves around the convention floor, different mikes, and we'd just keep pushing the left, pushing the left, trying to get them

doing whatever, passing resolutions and stuff. So we really moved it in the '70s and in the '80s, and after that it got a little boring. But I went to national convention in Quebec City, and that was good. I met Jean-Claude Parrot out in B.C. at a regional conference. He came looking for me to thank me for what I did over the coding thing. I told him at that point in time that he'd been my hero right from the beginning, because he wasn't afraid to say what he had to say. So that was great. So I had 35 years in the post office and I retired happy. I wasn't involved in a lot of stuff after the '80s.

Q: Did you always stay with inside workers, or did you move over to letter carriers?

SM: No, I tried and they would not let me come. They did not want me over there. I was doing enough damage inside, they didn't want me over in the letter carriers stirring up the women over there. They just did everything, they made all these rules so I couldn't go. So I said, okay fine, I'll stay where I am. The next time they had a competition they threw all those rules out and all these women went in. I went, okay I'm meant to be inside doing what I'm doing. So I stayed there.

Q: What position were you in when you retired?

SM: In 2008 I was a depot clerk for Depot 11.

Q: What does that mean?

SM: That means I was sorting the mis-sorts from the letter carriers, sorting their special deliveries, doing directory service for them. I made a deal with the manager at the time for the letter carriers. I said, I'll come over to your section but you have to treat me like a letter carrier. When my work is done, I want to be able to leave, not hang around for eight hours just killing time. He agreed to that until somebody higher up a few years later learned about it and put an end to it. But it really didn't matter to me. I enjoyed what I was doing. If I wanted to smoke, I could go out every hour and have my smoke. Somebody would go, where's Sandy, and they'd go, out the front door having a cigarette. Okay, that's cool. I think it was the coolest job you

could've had in that period of time. I know it's not the same now, it's much tougher now. But if everybody pulls together they can turn it back into that, a place where you can be happy and work.

Q: You mentioned going to an AFL convention. Do you remember who the leaders were then? What was your sense of the leadership at that time?

SM: Alberta Federation of Labour, 1972 or '73, the first time I went, they were all suits. They were all wearing business suits, and most of them were business agents out of the big unions. But I didn't see any difference from them. I think Reg Baskin was the president at the time and Jean Mitchell was the secretary. I got to know those guys from Labour Council in Edmonton, so I had no fear of the leadership there. Neither did the letter carriers out of Edmonton or the plumbers out of Edmonton, because we just knew these guys and were tight with them. I think that's why the letter carriers could get a lot of their resolutions through, is because they would go work on the resolutions committee and stuff, and they were dealing with the President or the Secretary-Treasurer, and we knew them well. So we dragged them kicking and screaming into the new generation where we're gonna stand up and fight the boss. If you've got girls in there and they get themselves pregnant, they're gonna get improved leave. Things like that. I think that's another reason why I just loved Jean-Claude Parrot – he fought hard for that. We did. Another tough strike. We went in looking for some other things and we threw that on the table at the last minute in negotiations. I remember talking to Lynn Bue. She was on the negotiating committee at that time. Some boss came downstairs to show me something about what was going on at national with negotiations, telling me something that they shouldn't have told me. Well I got off my shift and went home and phoned Lynn's personal number that I had. I said, this is what they did and this is what they said. She says, oh Sandy, thank you so much. She says, I'm taking that in to them now. So she took it in to them and I think they agreed to it then. I can't even remember what it was. But I just know that the boss came down the next day and I said, I think you made a mistake, eh? He looked at me and said, ya I really caught it. I said, well that's okay, you'll learn; someone else will come and tell me something next time. I was friends with all the bosses too. I tried my best not to make any enemies amongst anybody. The only one I was ever enemies with was Peter Philippa, the president initially, that tried to toss me and in

the end he was tossed bigtime. He used to work in directory, first class directory. Anyway, good times.

Q: The story you were telling earlier, where you were persona non grata. . .

BM: She just had the location mixed up – they were in Avord Arms.

SM: I don't even remember. . .

BM: You took the elevator up to the 19th floor, cuz that's where they were.

SM: But I still think when they had the coders strike they were over on 5th Street.

BM: You walked to Avord Arms and across the street, and you went in and they came out two ways – they came out the way the carriers came in and they came out the other door on the main floor at the north end. They came out that side and they came out the other side. Don and I were standing there watching this crowd of people come out.

SM: I was really proud of myself. I was really proud of myself, especially when these guys said, we didn't think you'd pull it off. I said, well I didn't pull it off by myself. I had the backing of all of those coders. It was organized ahead of time; it was premeditated. I'd heard what was going to happen – there was going to be a big local that went out in the east. Damned if I was going to let us sit inside. We were gonna go. I said to everybody, we've sat back year after year after year, let's go and show them something. They just agreed with me and thought, hell that's a great idea. So you can see that our schooling brought us a different direction than their schooling did.

BM: This is probably irrelevant to this, but when I was 19 I wrote a letter to my uncle. He was a rail and mail clerk out of Vancouver. I'd been working in construction down east. I hitchhiked across the country and worked at jobs along the way. I met all these guys in their 50s and I'm thinking, I don't wanna do this the rest of my life; I want a pension. None of them had a pension. So I wrote him a letter and I said, how does a guy apply to get in the post office? Well I

headed west and I guess his letter headed east and we passed somewhere on the way. It finally caught up to me, but by the time it caught up to me I'd already gone down to the post office in Vancouver and filled in the application. There was 1,200 people wrote the exam the day I wrote it. We had a whole school, King Edward School in Vancouver on 12th Avenue. We had 1,200 people in there writing exams. That was in January of '58 I think, and it was November of '58 before I got called in to work. I was 79 on the list out of 1,200, so I didn't think I did bad, because veterans got preference ahead of me. Anyway, I got in the post office because there was a pension. That was in 1958 I got in, and in 1994 I retired. I figured out when Jim was talking about 36 years and five months or something, I worked 35 years and 10 months. I was two months short of 36 years. The reason I worked beyond the 35 years, I had to make up strike time and I also had to make up part time service when I first went in that wasn't pensionable when I went there. So I've been retired 24 years now, 24 years this year since I retired.

SM: I think in about three years I've already earned my pension back.

BM: Well I know I have.

SM: Bill certainly has.

BM: I started at $2800 a year when I started in the post office in 1958. I don't even know what I get now, I know what I get after taxes. I had $40,000 taxable income last year from Canada Pension and old age pension and the post office pension, or the superannuation.

Q: What work did you do at Canada Post?

BM: I was a postal clerk in Vancouver and then I went on the rail mail service and worked Vancouver to Kamloops for nine months. I was covering for somebody, and the guy came back so I went back in the post office in Vancouver. Then they sent me to Calgary and I was there for a year working Calgary to Revelstoke.

Q: What did you do when you worked that route?

BM: I sorted mail on the train. We had bags of mail on the train for all these towns along the way going west. You'd sort the mail, pull the bags down, hang new bags up for the clerks getting on at Revelstoke. They'd dump mail off at Sicamous going down the Okanagan, and then at Kamloops going up towards Jasper and at Ashcroft going up to the Caribou. At Litton we dumped off mail that went on to Lillooet and the coalmines up that way. You'd tear all the bags off the racks, put them in piles at the end of the car, and when you'd get there you'd unload them to the wagons outside or it could be couriers there that took them down. When I worked at Kamloops I'd go down to Vernon. I had a cousin down in Vernon, so I'd go down and visit them about once a month, get a ride down with the guy and help unload mail on the way down, just volunteer to do it. Then I'd meet him at the post office that night and come back to Kamloops to get on the train.

Q: Would you go from Vancouver?

BM: Vancouver to Kamloops.

Q: Then you'd sleep on the train?

BM: We slept a couple hours. We had mattresses up in the overhead. You'd put a mattress down over empty bags and you'd sleep from Agassi to Litton. One guy would wake up at North Bend and unload the mail, the clerk in charge would sleep right through to Litton, and then that was it. The clerk in charge slept a couple of times when he had a long section where no mail would get dumped off; he'd go to sleep and you'd take care of everything for him. Then from Calgary to Revelstoke you didn't sleep, it was a daylight run. You got on the train, went down to the station at 6 in the morning and caught the train and left about 7 and you were in Revelstoke about 5 at night, then stayed overnight. We had a room that we stayed at. We stayed at the same house, both sets of clerks – the guys from Vancouver and the two guys from Calgary would stay there. Same thing in Kamloops, we had a place in Kamloops we stayed at.

SM: He used to tell me at the little towns, they'd have a bag for the little towns, they'd kick that off and catch the catch post. The joke was that the airplanes came in and we had airmail, and they couldn't come down and hook the catch post. That's where they lost the railway mail service. I used to just laugh my head off.

BM: You'd put the bag on your toe and you'd hold the catch post down with this hand. You'd hold the top of the bag on your hand this way, and just before you got to the catch post you'd kick off the bag, like lift your bag out like that and let it go. You used your foot to keep it clear of the tracks, and in the meantime your hand was in free and you grabbed the bag as it hit the catch post and pulled it in. There was two arms, one like this and one like this. They'd flip up like this when it came off. There was a rig on the bottom and the top, and the postmaster would set it on this thing and it would be hanging there. It would be tied in the middle, and your catch arm would catch it in the middle so it folded over. You made sure you grabbed it, because if you didn't grab one end of it, the bottom preferably, if you didn't grab that the thing would flip right off and you'd lose it. I was on a train when a guy lost the thing. You wrote this thing and we called it a press hard. You had to make six copies of this thing, so there's five pages of carbons. You had to do it hard because they couldn't read the botton copy. It would take them an hour to fill all the answers out on that sucker.

SM: Basically the bottom answer was, I missed the catch post. Simple as that.

BM: I never lost one. I came close at Donald. I'm sitting down there having a coffee and all of a sudden I see the sawmill go by. Sawmills may be 100 metres from the catch post. I ran for the door, the bag was at the door. I grabbed the bag and the catch iron with both hands. I came that close to missing that one. In the middle of daytime you'd really have to explain how you missed one.

Q: What about in the wintertime?

BM: Same thing. There was a metal thing with a glass on it that was on the door. The reason for that was when they had the steam engines you had the cinders coming back, and it's to protect

your eyes from the cinders. But it also protected your eyes from the wind blasts I guess. You'd have the door open long enough to take the bag, and then close the door again. It was the best job I ever had, because they paid me for traveling on that job. But the next best job I had was carrying mail, and I did that for 32 years.

SM: You went into Vancouver post office after that and worked for a while.

BM: Ya I worked in Vancouver in '59 and I came here Thanksgiving weekend of '59. I traded with a guy from here because the rail mail service was coming off. My mother lived in Edmonton and I thought I may as well come back to Edmonton. So I came back and everybody said, what did you come to Edmonton for? I said, I don't know. But I'm here and I stayed. I guess there was a reason I came back, because I ended up running a union, a local here. So it wasn't a total waste; it was a great experience. But the mail train was a fun job. You didn't have a supervisor; you had a clerk in charge, but he wasn't assigning work to anybody. Everybody had a job on there to do, and we did them. When I worked in Calgary, every other trip you had to collect the labels and prepare them all and put them on the bags and the racks before we left Calgary.

SM: The clerk in charge did the registers.

BM: The clerk in charge did the registered mail.

SM: And special delivery stuff that was different. Then he would sort for these guys that were sorting.

BM: Some clerks in charge would want to sort, so you'd let them sort. I'm the youngest guy, so I'll move bags, no problem. We had other clerks in charge, they would just go to the end of the table and move the bags and let you two sort. It didn't matter to me, whatever they wanted was fine with me. I was 19 or 20 at the time, so it was no problem for me to move bags. You had to move the bags through the car past where the clerk in charge worked in the centre to the other end to pile them in the areas we had to pile them in.

SM: And they'd be sorting mail, the train would hit things, and the rocking train.

BM: The fun time was coming out of Banff. You could be 40 minutes late leaving Banff and on time getting to Calgary. You know how far it is, it's 80 miles, and you're making up 40 minutes in those 80 miles. You're sorting mail and you learn to sway with the car, because we were hitting those corners pretty fast.

SM: It sounds like a fun job.

BM: It was.

Q: The museum in Winnipeg has the railway car.

BM: Oh probably the kind that I worked in. There's one out here in north Edmonton but it's a smaller one, it's only a 30 foot one. We had 60 foot cars.

Q: Is there one on display here somewhere?

BM: Ya, you know the North Edmonton Railway Museum out by Coleman's?

SM: Not Coleman's, the other one.

BM: Well it's north of there. You go out Highway 15 and you'll see a sign there. It's open in the summertime. They have a bunch of stuff on the NAR and the CN. They have trains running on the weekends so kids can go for rides. You can climb on the cars. It's a nice place to visit.

Q: There's a sorting car?

BM: Ya, there's a mail car there.

SM: Bill is going to donate all of his, he's a railway nut, and he's going to donate everything to them, which is about a third of the apartment.

BM: I went to Sacramento; they've got a rail car there from the Great Northern, used to run to northern U.S. I'd been on that car. It was really interesting. You know you're talking to a real live mail clerk, right?

SM: He carried a gun.

BM: Same thing, the cars worked the same way.

SM: So when they talk about going postal, they're not talking about Canadian.

Q: Why would they carry a gun on the railway?

SM: Because they wanna get there and rob it. There's gold bars in there sometimes, depending on where they're coming from.

BM: The American clerks all carried a pistol issued by the post office.

SM: So when they talk about going postal, they're not talking about Canadian postal workers, they're talking about American postal workers. I get a big kick out of that.

BM: My uncle used to run, at one point he ran from Vancouver down to Baine, Washington. The American clerks would take over in Blaine, because it was a Great Northern railcar. He said when the American clerks came on, every one's got a hip holster with a pistol on it, and the Canadian clerk's got nothing. To get on the train you gotta arrive before it leaves Blaine, because once it comes into Canada the clerks don't have a gun to shoot you with.

SM: When Bill was in Vancouver he used to work the Glacis, taking out the bags and dumping them, putting the tags in his pocket. He had one, he heard it hit and he knew. Tell the story.

BM: You got your foot inside the Glacis, at least that's how I did it lifting the bags. There's a chute there and you dumped the chute for the stuff going downstairs, and there's another chute for the stuff going out to the ford. You just put it down the proper chute. Depending on what the tag said, you ripped the tag off and dumped it.

Q: Explain what a Glacis is.

BM: It's a chute that comes down like this and there's a file that goes across. The mail was coming from the train station through a tunnel up to here, and it would drop off on the belt and it would hit the Glacis. When it hit the Glacis it would come down at that point. You didn't watch the Glacis, you were just lifting bags. But when you heard it hit the Glacis, the first thing you did was lift your foot, because when it hit the Glacis there was a gold bar in that bag. It had to be heavy to make that sound. If it ever hit you, it'd crush your ankle. It never hit me, I got my foot up fast. But that's what the Glacis was. Anyway, I'm working one night and this manager from down in the city section comes upstairs and demands, what are you doing sending forward mail downstairs? When she said this about the tags, I got the tags in my pocket. I pull all the tags out and I said, would you like to show me which one of these bags went downstairs that didn't belong there? Every one of them was a Vancouver city tag. He turned around and walked away. Some bag was mislabeled – it's not my fault. I don't open then to check them, I pull the tags and send them. But he come up and I had to do it deliberately. So then he had to bring the bag back up, well maybe he brought it up when he came up, I don't know. But he had to go back with his tail between his legs anyhow. You do the job properly and you make sure you're covering yourself. I never even thought about it. I just put the tags in my pocket, that's what I was told to do, and you turn them in afterwards. But every tag was a city tag, there wasn't a forward tag in the bunch. I lived Vancouver, I liked Edmonton. A little cool in the winter, but that was fine. I had one day when I first started carrying mail, it was a cold day in 1961 or '62. I'm gonna phone in sick. I thought, don't do it. If you do that, you'll never be able to work in the cold winter. I went to work, never took a day off after that; not for that reason, anyway. It didn't matter how cold it was.

Q: You could transfer. You said you traded with somebody.

BM: We used to have to trade. Somebody from here applied for a trade in Vancouver, no I guess I'd applied for a trade back then, which was unusual. Of course this guy jumped at it. He had a chance to get to Vancouver, so he agreed to trade with me. He had lots of seniority, so when I first came to Edmonton I got his job in the city on days. The only problem I had was every letter I looked at said Edmonton. I used to forward mail. It took me all day to get used to looking at the street address rather than looking at the city. You're used to looking at the city, because I'd worked forward all the time. Then I went carrying and had to learn to look at the name. So by the time I got done, I could look at anything on there and figure it out.

Q: Where were you actually born, Bill?

BM: Jasper.

Q: What was your family?

BM: My dad had come out from Nova Scotia. The story he tells, he was at a wake and the body got up. You know how the body tends to raise sometimes? He ran out of the room and didn't stop running until he got to Alberta. But anyway, he worked on the Grand Trunk when they were building it. He was a Teamster, because he could drive a team of horses. After that he worked for Brewster. He worked at the Jasper Park Lodge when they were building it, and later during the depression he worked for Fred Brewster on his ranch in Bruel as a foreman down there. That's where I lived the first year of my life, then they moved back to Jasper. But I was born in Jasper. After that he went to work for the federal government, and worked the rest of his life at the federal government in Jasper.

SM: Parks department.

BM: He died when I was 13. I went to work on the CN and worked a couple of years there, but I was young and probably too young to be working a job like that, and quit. Then I decided I'm

going to see Canada, so I hitchhiked across Canada all the way to Halifax. I'm lucky I made it alive and nothing ever happened to me. I saw Montreal, saw Quebec City, saw Toronto, saw Niagara Falls, worked down there. Then after a couple of years that's when I said I wanted to come back west and get a job where I could get a pension. I had some arguments with management about wrecking the post office and I said, I have no intention of wrecking the post office, I'm going to retire from this place. And I did.

Q: Is there anything else either of you want to say?

SM: No, that's everything. We both had a good time in the post office, we did. I just hope that other postal workers can do that now. Just change some of the attitude inside, because I hear it's just not fun anymore.

BM: It was fun when I worked there. The first day I was here, the postmaster called me in the next morning. He says, well you took it easy yesterday but I expect you to keep the average up today. I'm explaining to him, when I picked up the letter the first thing I saw was Edmonton. I'd always worked in forward, I'd never worked in the city. I said, it took me a while to get used to looking at the address first, because everything should be city. Anyway.

SM: Another one was Henry Stamp when you won the election for president.

BM: Ya I won the election and Henry Stamp was a guy that I admired. He was a good supervisor. I worked with him in the city sorting mail in the afternoon, and I had no problems with him. When I got elected president, that morning he came in and he's walking towards his office, which was in the front. I'm over by registration and he comes up and says, congratulations Bill, and he shakes my hand and says, I'm sure we can work together. And we did. I never won all the arguments with him, but we had a good relationship.

SM: If you could sell the argument, he would back it up.

BM: An example was somebody was having problems with the letter boxes, couldn't get one. So I go into a meeting with Henry and I said, this guy needs another green box. Henry says, well they gotta carry 35 pounds. I says, no Henry, it says the maximum you have to carry is 35 pounds. He said, just a minute. He had this guide, so he reaches in his drawer and pulls the guide out and takes a look. You're right. Okay, he's got his box.

SM: That's right, Bill never carried 35 pounds his whole career.

BM: I told Sandy her purse is heavier than my satchel ever was. I never carried more than, I think the heaviest load I ever had in my bag was 15 pounds. That's what the green boxes are for, and I used them. When I first started they had me picking up three times off this first green box I had. So I figured, that's a good idea. So when I got a walk if the guy only picked up once and there was a way to pick up two or three times, I'd tie them out to pick up three times. Some of them would carry a huge load on their back. Now they've got the double bag, and I think that's probably a much better idea.

SM: Except they load both sides. You gotta load it up so that you can just keep walking so you can get done your day. That makes your career hard.

BM: A carrier comes in and she's got one bundle in her hand, that's the whole mail for the apartment. Unless she's got householders, then she's got a couple of bundles, one on top of the other. Comes in, dumps it.

SM: But she drives.

BM: Ya she's got a vehicle.

SM: She's got a mobile relay box now, that's what those are.

BM: She seems happy enough with her job. I talked to her. If they're there when I get there down for the mail and they've got householders, I always go in and sort householders on one

side while they do the other side. They got signs on some of them, no householders. I'm saying, I don't understand this. We got a garbage box right beside the mailbox, you just dump the householders in there. I'm not putting a sign on my thing, I'll pull them out of my thing and go through it. All the householders go down there and I'll take the mail upstairs. Some stick a sign in there, don't put householders in my box.

SM: Yesterday was fun. This is the first day of the rotating strike. The government had written off this huge Chrysler loan for, I'm still not sure, I've seen $1.2 billion, I've seen the total is $2 billion and something. That was on the TV first thing in the morning. I took a look at that and I says, you know the word, I'm gonna go walk the picket line, because that's bullshit. So I went, except I have a stroller because they did my back in. Well I can't blame them, I did my back in. But I took that out there on the line. Lo and behold I'm walking and who do I see? Greg McMaster and Jim Crowell out there walking as well. Well I was just excited to see them. The other guys on the line are going, who's that? Sandy MacDonald. They all know the name, they know the MacDonald name, either from Bill or from me. Good fun.

BM: Ya the carriers come to my apartment and I'll say, my name's Bill MacDonald. Their reaction either right now or the next day I see them, and then know who I am. Somebody tells them in the depot who that person is.

SM: You can see by that how much fun we had. We had a great time.

[END]