

Mary Quinn Kambic 1969

I became involved after learning about migrant workers from Susan Walsh Sanderson, Ph.D., who worked with migrant workers in New Mexico through VISTA. Susan and I were among many idealistic young women from Mt. Mercy College, now Carlow, who became involved with the boycott and St. Joseph Parish in Manchester. Along with Anna Marie Egan (now Smucker), Maggie Whelan (Eaton), and Kathy Faybik and Fabienne Rothkrug, we were faithful Huelgistas for the duration of the boycotts. I remember Susan becoming incensed when a visiting priest showed slides of his liturgical experiments in New Mexico, with a blessing of geese featured. Susan loudly protested that the farmer was one of the worst owners in the state, and eventually she had to leave the lecture because she was so upset.

Being around 22 at the time, we were not particularly conscious of the schedules of our supporters, most of whom had families, but we were willing to do what single women can do: picket, do gate collections at 5 a.m., stay up late to make picket signs, etc. I have a sharp memory of Elena Rojas at a gate collection, in freezing weather, breaking out in hives because she wasn't used to the cold. She had layered donated clothes over her to keep warm, and she came to me with a sad face, and said a woman had told her "she looked like a clown." I am sure that hurt.

My other memory of the gate collections is meeting some steelworkers who wanted to know where I went to college. When I told them Mt. Mercy, they asked me if I knew the Communist who was a student there named "Mary Mulligan" who protested the war. Well, I was Mary Quinn, and I was an anti-war activist, so I told them her name was Mary Quinn and it was me. They took this in stride, and said "Mary Mulligan, do you believe in God?" I said yes, and there was cheering all around while the men brought others over to meet "Mary Mulligan. She's OK because she believes in God."

One of the interesting things I learned about America was how quickly people judge others as foreigners merely because they have accents. Many times people would talk to Albert Rojas and tell him to go back to Mexico. Once I asked him how long his family had been in the United States, and sure enough, they had been here a heck of a lot longer than my family! I am first-generation American on my mother's side and only second-generation on my dad's. But because I am Irish and fair, I never get told to go back.

To add to the stories about Father Jack O'Malley, I remember that after one arrest, we went back to the store to picket. Father Jack had a sign saying, "Don't eat grapes," which the police had ripped in half. At the market, he put on the ripped sign and walked around. We asked him why he was wearing half a sign. He said, "The police told me I had half a brain, so I'm wearing the sign to match." Later, when we were involved with the lettuce boycott, several of us were arrested for passing out leaflets and interfering with people's "constitutional right to Christmas shop." To this day, that remains my favorite civil right!

And when Cesar was in Pittsburgh, many of us got arrested with a wonderful woman from the steelworkers' office named Joan Smith. She was in the cell next to mine, and after hearing some women crying in the cells, I heard her voice say softly, "Mary, this isn't the way it is on Dragnet!" Joan was so good; she spent the rest of the time comforting and talking with some of the other women who were in jail. They were poor women who wouldn't have lawyers coming with bail, like us. I was ashamed.

It was a wonderful opportunity to attend the Midwest regional conferences. We got a chance to meet folks from other boycott cities and compare strategies. At the big conference held at the University of Notre Dame, some of the boycott staff came from California to talk about pesticides. This was the first most of us had heard about this scourge, and I will never forget the farmworkers in the audience jumping and yelling, "Yes, I remember getting sick after they sprayed" or "I saw my brother getting rashes and being sick after working in the fields!" I realized that I was watching a group of fellow human beings discovering that they had been systematically poisoned. It was a major event in my life, and I don't think I would have stayed long in other worker issues if that day were not emblazoned on my psyche all these years. Thank you, UFW, for giving me the conversion experience.

Thank God for youth! I remember that the day after I was married, eight members of the lettuce boycott arrived in Pittsburgh and stayed in a huge house where we lived with eight people. It was *déjà vu* as I would hear a knock on the door, and a voice would ask, "What's the contact for ...?" This went on and on. And people came, many more. The grape boycott had one family, but the lettuce boycott brought the Valencias with their children, plus Anglo organizers Bill Patterson and Kim Smucker. Then there were Angel and Maria Perez, then Gracie Cisneros and Lupe Gamboa. There were others whose faces I see, but the names are gone. The jurisdictional dispute with the Teamsters did not go well in a union town like Pittsburgh. I remember that at one of the first organizational meetings held in our big house, Father McIlvaine was incredulous. He couldn't believe he was asked to fight the Teamsters. In this union town, that won't work, he said, and left. The struggle was becoming more and more complicated.

Another topic about the Pittsburgh boycott, which needs more attention, is the considerable FBI surveillance around the boycott, especially in Pittsburgh. One conflict during the boycott happened when rumors started flowing that a member of the Communist Party was on picket lines around the time of Cesar's visit. Knowing that some of the unions had policies that prevented them from being on lines with members of the party (I hear this provision has since been voided), Albert asked the woman identified as a Communist to please leave the line. After that, many of the radical students left in protest. Bad feelings came out of that incident that lasted a long time. Well, when I reconnected with Albert after many years had elapsed, the first thing he told me was that several years after that incident, the woman was revealed to be an FBI informant. One of the former boycotters from Pittsburgh, Lou Bortz, brought a copy of a news article to Albert, and apologized for misjudging the original action. When we talked about it, Al said that there

was always something fishy about the woman, and he never trusted her. Was I mortified! Many righteous activists walked off in a huff, and our friend from California was the only one to see the truth. That was a great lesson for me. Unfortunately, that operation caused much harm to our boycott movement, and was a complete success from the agent provocateur's point of view.

When I started doing the tapes, I was impressed and touched by how good people felt about their involvement with the boycott. Everyone enjoyed the experience and was happy to share memories. I would get warm emails that sounded like the old days, messages like, "A blast from the past" and "Keep the spirit alive." This is amazing considering that many of the interviewees spent up to three years on picket lines at least every Saturday and volunteered huge amounts of time.

I have since moved to four different places, and worked on labor campaigns up to today. However, when we all were in Pittsburgh together for our reunion, we could sense that the camaraderie and friendship had not changed, not even when we realized that 30 years had passed. The spirit was summed up when we were meeting at the Thomas Merton Center, and a police officer that Fr. O'Malley knew peeked in the door. As a joke, Father Jack asked the officer to pull out handcuffs and walk toward Al Rojas. As we all chuckled, Father Jack swept his arm around the room with all of us in it, "Take them all, they are all troublemakers. Round up the usual suspects."

Pittsburgh Boycott Oral History Project 1967–1970
by Mary Kambic

Many years after the successful UFW grape and lettuce boycotts, several documentaries about the farmworkers appeared on PBS. In one, I was delighted to see Al Rojas, who had lived in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with his wife, Elena, and four children during the grape boycott years. I had lost contact with Al and Elena, and as I was their youngest daughter Shalom's nina, I was embarrassed about the long stretch without friendship. Through the UFW office in Delano, I got Al's number and we reconnected. How well I remember returning home and getting the wonderful message, "Comadre, how are you?" with Al's signature greeting! That began another story as many of us in our middle age are reconnecting with those in "the beloved community" of the 1960s and 1970s.

After seeing Al when he came East (I am in Baltimore) for his work in North Americans for Democracy in Mexico, some of us attended an informal "boycott reunion" held in Pittsburgh. Al and some friends were attending the national SEIU convention, and former boycott supporters Fr. Jack O'Malley and Molly Rush hosted many of the remaining (and surviving) members of the former boycott at a gathering at the Merton Center. We shared pizza while Al told us about the intervening years of the farmworkers' struggle. Later, fresh with the excitement and the great spirit of the SEIU convention, we gathered at Fr. Jack's rectory in Wilmerding, under the shadow of the

former Westinghouse mansion, where I got to be reunited with Shalom, now a beautiful woman with three children.

But I was still looking forward to seeing Elena again. She finally made her first trip back east to Pittsburgh too. When she arrived in Baltimore, my comadre asked me to work with her on reviewing old records of the Pittsburgh boycott that she still possessed. Recalling that old boycott files had been sent to the Walter Reuther Library at Wayne State, I was surprised that more historical documents still needed to be archived.

This was still on my mind when I began to prepare for my master's degree at Johns Hopkins University. Like many Huelgistas, I was too busy with social justice work and raising a family to think about school for many years. But finally, I lucked out and found a socially active history professor, Dr. Paul Kramer, who agreed to be my advisor on a project in which I would record some interviews from Pittsburgh boycotters.

So began the enjoyable odyssey of reacquainting myself with people, many of whom I hadn't seen in years. The result was an "Oral History Project of Local Supporters of the United Farm Workers Grape Boycott in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1967–1970." By May of 2002, I had completed six tapes, with plans to add on more as time permitted.

What would be an appropriate introduction to this historic human rights effort? As an activist, I am aware that younger people are not always familiar with the icons of the not-so-distant past. I remember the principal of my children's school telling me that my son was the only member of his class who knew who Cesar Chavez was. Now, I check textbooks to see who is included and who is not. Surely, we of past struggles have something to offer! And I also knew similar efforts are going on in other movements: for instance, my Baltimore friend, Betty Garman Robinson, has been meeting with women who were members of SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) to also record their memories.

Here is how I presented the Pittsburgh experience:

In 1965, California farmworkers, members of the United Farmworkers Organizing Committee, who were primarily Mexican-American and minority Filipino and Anglo workers, initiated a strike against table grape growers in California. In what would become known as *La Causa*, the farmworker leadership decided on a unique strategy that involved sending farmworker families and staff all over the United States and Canada to serve as the locus of support for the table grape boycott. Over the next several years, these families lived in a different cultural milieu, becoming friends with representatives of the religious, academic, progressive, labor, and political communities that made up the community.

In many communities, the families were most likely the first Mexican-Americans that people met. Because of the subsistence wage that the United Farm Workers paid their staff, the families were not only living in different communities, but also were completely dependent on local supporters for assistance and living costs. In this way, a unique situation arose whereby Mexican-American

families became close to and members of the communities where they lived. In a decade known for dramatic struggles in civil rights, worker rights, and the rise in women's rights consciousness, the families were caught up in the societal changes around them, many times in communities where they might be living in areas better known for housing other ethnic groups. Around them developed "boycotters," people who for a time gave their time, money, and effort to support a struggle for justice in states such as California, Arizona, and New Mexico—places many people had never visited. They frequently spent Saturday afternoons in front of supermarket chains, asking people to refrain from buying table grapes, considered a luxury item by most retailers.

I will focus on people who still live in Pittsburgh, and who are representative of the different communities of support for the boycott. These would be the academic community, students and faculty; the religious community, primarily Catholic and Jewish and Quaker; the labor community, the United Steelworkers in particular; the radical community, namely the members of socialist and Communist groups in Pittsburgh at the time; and the civil rights community, in particular the Black Construction Coalition, which brought attention to the lack of minority hiring in the union construction trades. Members of the Pittsburgh boycott were active in the coalition's effort, which resulted in a four-day campaign that escalated to thousands of persons on demonstrations, hundreds arrested, and the halt to construction of the Three Rivers Stadium.

I am interested in the relationships among and between these groups, with attention to the following threads: How people became interested in the grape boycott, their relationship with the Rojas family, whether the boycott enabled them to meet new people, the effect of the Mexican-American culture and religiosity upon the AFL-CIO and others in Pittsburgh, and favorite personal stories the interviewees remembered.

In Pittsburgh, these supporters came from the activist university community, the religious congregations, the radical socialist groups, and last, from the large industrial labor unions that were omnipresent in Pittsburgh. This was the time before the fall of the steel industry, and thousands of Pittsburghers were members of the United Steelworkers, United Auto Workers, United Electrical Union, and Amalgamated Clothing Workers. These supporters worked together, influencing each other and bringing a consciousness to each group of the strengths of the others. The students were influenced by the union workers; the religious communities forged working relationships with each other; and union members learned they were being supported by students, who were already suspect because of their opposition to the escalating war in Vietnam, which the AFL-CIO supported.

In addition, the rising women's movement brought attention to the female "*chavistas*," the women who accompanied their husbands from the West Coast to the boycott cities. For the most part, these women had several children who then attended the local schools, becoming the only Latino children in communities such as Pittsburgh. Women such as Elena Rojas, who arrived in Pittsburgh with her husband, Albert, and children, Albert, Debbie, and Desiree, and pregnant with her fourth baby, were thrust into a role for which they were completely unprepared. From a culture that had few women in leadership positions, the women invented a role for themselves in boycott cities, often encouraged by supportive local women. The relationships, which blossomed

around these personal encounters and the influence of the boycott supporters on each other, are our story.

The Story: The Interviews Begin

The people who agreed to be interviewed all live in the Pittsburgh area today, and most are still politically active. They include **Father Jack O'Malley**, a Roman Catholic priest who presently serves as a chaplain to the AFL-CIO; **Molly Rush**, a lay Catholic activist who founded the Thomas Merton Center, a peace and justice advocacy group; **Jim Scardina**, a former seminarian who had already spent time with Latinos in Arizona; and two women, **Florence Black** and **Carrie Lund**, who became part of the original core of women who participated in the National Organization of Women. A retired writer and academician, **Russell Gibbons**, who served both with the United Steelworkers of America and chaired the Allegheny County Community College's Labor Studies program; **Dr. Bruce Laurie**, a professor of history at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and a grape boycott participant; and **Dr. Frank Couvares**, the E. Dwight Salmon Professor of History and American Studies at Amherst College, also agreed to be interviewed.

Each narrator was asked a series of questions that were standardized for all. Clearly, everyone could have talked at length about his or her involvement, but following oral history protocol, I developed a series of questions that would lead the interview.

Finally, I will include comments on the effect the grape boycott had on activists from the University of Pittsburgh's history department, where one of the faculty, **Dr. David Montgomery**, Varnam Professor of History emeritus at Yale University, was a voice for the "new" labor history of the 1960s and 1970s. Montgomery was not only a master teacher in this discipline, but with his wife, Marty, an active participant in the Pittsburgh boycott, frequently lending his advice and support to participants. The question is: with this culture at Pitt, would future historians be inspired by the boycotts? Would they share reflections with us today?

The first question I had for people was "How did you get involved with the boycott?" Was there anything in their past or their lives at that point in time to move them into farmworker activism?

Molly Rush: I initially got involved in the civil rights movement in 1963 and as a result joined the Catholic Interracial Council in Pittsburgh, and it was through the CIC that I became acquainted with the farmworker situation. I'm currently, and have for 30 years now, been on staff of the Thomas Merton Center. I was co-founder and then joined the staff in 1974. So we were a ministry for justice and peace.

I'm sure what happened was that something came up at a meeting of the CIC that there was this boycott and the story of the farmworkers of which I knew very little at the time, but I'm sure I got involved before the Rojases came to Pittsburgh. Then there was the fact that they came to Pittsburgh and were living in the rectory with Jack O'Malley while he was my pastor at that time at

St. Joseph's in Manchester, and that was a sort of a hotbed of social activism around Pittsburgh; there were nuns in the convent and people living in the rectory.

Jim Scardina: At the time of the late 60s I had just come out of the major seminary and was in town for my first full-time job, which was with a social service agency. It was part of the poverty program at the time and it was a short time after that, newly married, I had the opportunity to meet some wonderful people who also were interested in some of these politically active issues. I had spent a summer in 1965 outside of Phoenix in a little Mexican-American town that was mostly families of farmworkers, so when the Rojas family came to town, I didn't need a lot of coaxing to understand the circumstances that they were talking about, so I got involved.

Someone had contacted me to introduce me to Al Rojas. He came to me one day—I guess it was at lunchtime—while I was still at my office and started to talk to me about why he was sent from California. His family was there and he was wondering if I could participate in some way and somehow through that, I introduced him to my wife as well. We went to some meetings about it; I think some initial meetings were at their house over at the North Side, and that's how I got started.

Father Jack O'Malley: The 60s happened to be a busy time in our world and in our lives—the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement. Locally, in the late 60s and early 70s, Cesar Chavez sent people like the Rojas family to the parish where I worked in the North Side of Pittsburgh. They involved me very deeply and taught me much about the food that I eat and the reason that we as church people should be involved.

Well, when we were asked, and I don't know exactly how it happened, to house some of the farmworkers, we did that. And we did that because we felt it was the right thing to do and when we heard what budget that they were on, we knew they needed economic and moral support. And so many of these cases that you get involved in, you realize that the people coming and living with you and sharing their story do more for you than you have done for them. So it was a wonderful education for us; it was a challenge, especially when we were asked to get up at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning to go to downtown Pittsburgh where the fruits and vegetables were delivered. That was one of the most difficult times, but I was always grateful for Cesar Chavez and the farmworkers for giving me a graduate degree in social justice and Catholic teaching.

You know, I think the unions were much stronger in the 60s and so they had the wherewithal to help a union that was just beginning. So that was to their advantage, and I think economic times were better for people in many ways than they are now. So I think that helped the farmworkers too because many people were working then and would hear the plight of the farmworkers and would chip in many, many different ways. And then once again it was the time that I always consider the time of wonderful education and inspiration. You had Vatican Council II that really challenged us as clergy people to get involved, and the age of the laity; for lay people to act on their faith. You had the Vietnam War going, and you had a wonderful peace movement, and then you had Dr. King and the

civil rights movement. Then you had a person like Cesar Chavez and then you start looking internationally at Gandhi and people like that. So we had a real rich resource of people and wonderful leadership and so could we pull it off again today? I mean Cesar Chavez was a charismatic leader, but I mean we also learned over those years you just can't depend on one person because if you get rid of the leader then the whole movement could be hurt. But there's no doubt about it, Cesar was a key figure and he was very instrumental. He was so influential that when he visited the Philippines and Marcos took him on a tour, to a lot of progressive people this hurt the movement because a lot of people were against Marcos in the Philippines. But Cesar did it for the right reason, for his Filipino workers and migrants, but a lot of people kind of took a little walk from the movement so that's how influential Cesar was that he would do something in the plus side to get more support. But there's no doubt about it, he was key and he knew how to push the right buttons and he had the key people nationally and locally; he sent out wonderful, beautiful people and they built relationships and that was what trust was about. And that's how you build a movement.

The campuses were alive with young people who were much more involved; we see a resurgence of that now, which really gives us hope. Campuses are coming alive, but at that time it was all coming together because people were coming together for a lot of reasons, whether it was about the war, whether it was about the environment, whether it was about struggling for rights for people who work, and civil rights of course and women's rights, so it was all coming together and it was a wonderful time to be alive and a wonderful time to learn and be involved.

Florence Black: I actually don't remember my first introduction. I remember some of the things that we did and I have a feeling that some of the people that I knew in the civil rights movement also moved along to the farmworker cause because there was an affinity there on the part of many of those people. And so I think I just heard about it and started doing things like picketing at the Giant Eagle and things like that.

Carrie Lund: Well, when I lived in New York, which I did for a while, a close friend of mine was involved with the *Catholic Worker* on some level and I started subscribing to it [paper] so I wasn't around it at all. And those were the days when Dorothy Day would go off to jail, and I think my friend Ann went off to jail with her; she was an artist. And you know once you subscribe to the *Catholic Worker*—I mean I still have it coming to the house now—you can't get away from it, so it's followed me everywhere! In Pittsburgh, I was living in the suburbs, the South Hills, at the time and I thought, where did all the Freedom Riders go? You know, I felt very removed from what had been interests and some of the things I had done, though I hadn't been on the Freedom Rides. I was living with my intensely Southern grandmother and I think I was too chicken to go, frankly. But I'd read everything in the *Catholic Worker* and that totally prepared me for stuff about the grape boycott because it was written about in there. I remember being at the Friends Meeting House after Martin Luther King died in 1968 and somebody came in and, with a lot of excitement, talked about the boycotters being here. And so I didn't waste much time contacting them and seeing what I could do to help.

Russell Gibbons: [Steelworkers] did have a referendum vote for an international president and the international officers, so in that sense the steelworkers were democratic. But, structurally, decisions were made at the top, and so then they would send down and say, hey, we have to have somebody work with this organization that's going to be part of our commitment in this area and social justice. And that was my recollection and that request came down from I. W. Abel through his executive assistant, who was Harry Gunther at the time, and that's how I got involved.

The first thing that one discovers listening to the tapes is the very important and essential impact it had on the boycott that a Mexican-American family was living in Pittsburgh. The Rojas family clearly inspired loyalty, and more importantly, affection on the part of the supporters. The women especially talked about the welcoming spirit present in the Rojas' North Side house:

Molly Rush: It was unusual in my experience to have a farmworker family living in the rectory. They were there for a time until they found more space to live and so I not only became acquainted with the farmworkers and their struggle, but got to know a little bit of Mexican-American culture through getting a chance to eat Elena's good cooking in the rectory, having the kids come up to my house and play with my kids. So actually my daughter Linda and Debbie got to be good friends at that time and visited back and forth and so on, so it was both getting involved politically but also I think a real learning experience.

I think it was clear that Albert was the organizer and Elena had family duties and, of course, care of the children and family. But I felt that it was a team kind of an effort myself, and I always felt that Elena brought a great personableness and personality and friendliness that made it easy to get to know the family and to be more than just simply political activists and it was that plus. I think it was clear that Albert was the leader of the farmworker boycott and really helped to set the agenda and worked with people. It wasn't like he was a top-down type of guy, so it wasn't like a male domination thing, I didn't feel, but he certainly, simply because of his experience and his background and his skills, was. I think Elena was somewhat more in the background, having children to raise and all of that, but I thought it was a tremendously difficult thing. I tried to imagine myself picking up the whole family and moving into a strange new culture and a place that has winter! And being separated from your own community the way they were, and I thought the thing that remained with me was how much they taught far beyond anything to do with grapes and lettuce. Taught us about living and about joy and a lot of things, but obviously their lives have gone in various directions since that time, but certainly we learned from them.

Carrie Lund: And it was a very kitchen-table sort of revolution as it were. You'd show up there for dinner, you'd take some food—one of my kids was really little at that point, I just had two—and we became close friends with the Rojas family then, and Debbie, the eldest daughter there and my eldest daughter Barbara would play together, and Debbie would come overnight and Barbara would go over there and that's the kind of family relationship it really was.

Florence Black: They were nice to be with. They very much appreciated what people were doing here. We had them to dinner, we went to their house, we went to their child's christening. I made the bridesmaids' dresses that we had to wear and I was not that great of a seamstress! You were made to feel a part of their family, and you wanted to be. You wanted to be part of it.

Elena was there to support Albert and she was also there to provide a place for people to come to, to meet them. Again, because of the family environment, people felt welcome there and so it wasn't just a political action, it wasn't just a cause, it was a family. And her being there and the children being there, welcoming people into that family unit, made you want to help more.

Jim Scardina: I thought it was great the whole family came, the kids and all. It was really nice. It made the issues very human to me. It was not just a theoretical thing or just somebody's job or anything. It really felt good to be part of this family's effort to marshal interest and support for them and the people they were advocating for. I saw Albert certainly as the primary leader, but Elena was very strong-minded herself, and she was part of not only the planning, but also some of the activities themselves. If we ever get to the story about the time when a few of us got arrested, I'll tell you how she can fistfight!

Russell Gibbons: I think, yeah, I was there [Rojas House] a couple of times, and as I recall we had Al out to dinner or somebody from his family on a couple of occasions. I think that wasn't something you would say, you'll do this, you just did it—you know, after all, you tried to have people feel at ease but I'm sure it was a cultural clash for them too, because I did not really know Al's background in terms of being from California to here, but essentially it would have been a very foreign culture for him, the suburban milieu that we all operated out of, at least most of us did.

Another question I asked was what about the new connections that boycotters made? Did they get to know people through the grape boycott that they had not met before? Most said yes.

Molly Rush: Oh sure. I mean beyond members of the CIC, there was a whole group of people that regularly got on the picket line that we got to know. I remember particularly an optometrist from McKees Rocks, a Jewish doctor who was very supportive of the boycott and very supportive of Albert and his whole family and were very close. I think there were other people—rabbis and various other people that I was partly meeting through the CIC. I'm trying to remember, I think perhaps the Allegheny County Council of Civil Rights may have endorsed the boycott. I'd have to check my memory on that, but I was a regular part of that group that was both interfaith, and NAACP, and all the civil rights folks. McIlvaine will remember, but I think perhaps at least information was shared at the meetings and things like that.

I did get to know people in the labor unions at the time. Again it was fairly informal, chatting with people on the picket line, or trying to hold a meeting with somebody, or have a presentation, an

event, so it would be a way of both doing the work, but also, I think, building friendships and relationships, and that was important. I think probably it was very helpful later when we were trying to start the Merton Center to have a base of people beyond the Catholic groups whom I had been involved with; it was much more of an interfaith effort.

Florence Black: David Horwitz. There are other people whose names I can't remember. Carrie Lund, the Trachtenberg family, you know, the various people that were involved, Phyllis Wetherby.

Russell Gibbons: Well, of course, I knew all of the so-called labor priests beforehand; Monsignor Rice and Jack O'Malley and Don McIlvaine, and Garrett Dorsey were active at that time and certainly was later in terms of the steel shutdowns, but I think that Garrett was in a different timeframe. He might have been in the seminary at that time period. But, yes, certainly I knew of them and then got involved possibly with them at that level and I'm trying to remember whether there were any Protestant groups or Quakers. Possibly the peace churches you might say came forth and were part of this coalition, but you know we're talking a good 30-plus years now and it is difficult to reconstruct that.

Jack O'Malley: I'm thinking of a fellow by the name of Jim McCoy, who was a black man and who was a leader of the NAACP at that time. He got very involved in it and perhaps I did meet him in the civil rights struggle also, but I think I got to know him better in the grape boycott along with other leaders from the African-American community. I think there were a lot of lay and religious folk that I probably wouldn't have come into contact with if it wasn't for the Rojas family and the grape boycott. So it was about building relationships and was about the continuation of acting on your faith and Vatican II, and about another civil rights struggle, and so it all came together. So there were many, many people, Dr. Horwitz, a Jewish doctor from McKees Rocks, and his family, and all sorts of people. Al Rojas—and Elena—had this wonderful way of teaching and bonding and building relationships. And people would come over to St. Joseph's Church who maybe I would have never met if it hadn't been for the Rojas family.

The fact that some of the same names come up shows the lasting impressions some of the boycotters had on each other. Dr. David Horwitz and his wife, Paula, were long-time supporters of the Rojas family, both in boycott activities and personally. Dr. Horwitz has since died, but his wife and daughter attended the reunion in Pittsburgh. The Trachtenbergs, too, were there for the Rojas family. Along with their five children, including triplets, they also opened their home and hospitality to the family. Mindy and Al Trachtenberg ended up moving to California at the same time the Rojas family moved back. They are still friends.

The interviewees were asked about the things they did, including picketing, plant gate collections, and visiting store managers, and in the case of the steelworkers, giving financial support. They share their experiences.

Molly Rush: I think most of the time I would be on the picket line or going out to a grocery store trying to talk to the manager of the store, holding up banners at various places, handing out

information, putting articles into the CIC newsletter, taking information to meetings, that kind of thing.

Florence Black: I certainly picketed and made phone calls, and I know I attended meetings. I don't know that I went out to communities by myself but I went as part of teams of people.

Russell Gibbons: Harry (Gunther) passed away in March, last month, yes, and certainly made me remember all this a little better and a little more focused because Harry was very instrumental, I think, in supporting the grape boycott structure and organization in Pittsburgh. And his nature was to do it again behind the scenes, and he was very effective at that. Harry was not a grandstander; he didn't get out and make speeches or have his name dropped or anything, but he did things and he had the power and the follow-through to effectively do the support thing. In other words, if Al Rojas and his extended family came into town and after you know, the extended family seemed to continue extending! There were a lot of people! And after a while, a cynical type of a person or a bureaucrat, let's say, and any other organization or union could say, "Hey, this is too much! We didn't bargain for this and we're going to chop it off here, and it's only Al and so and so that's going to get supported and we're not doing this." It was never that kind of a thing to my understanding. They always were generous in their support and they never put restrictions on it, but certainly did ask sometimes if the protocol would, you know, many times as we know, this involved the law and in coming into conflict with both the city administration, the county administration, and the respective police forces because the boycotters—many times the picketing didn't get violent, but they got in a situation where the tactics were to get busted and get arrested and do jail time, etc., etc., and gain attention through that. And so there were a lot of sticky issues which they also utilized their lawyers, if not directly, through their contacts with other lawyers, would make sure there would be somebody there for bail or if they had a legal counsel for whatever other circumstance.

Father Jack O'Malley: Well, certainly the United Steelworkers as a union was very financially supportive of the Rojas family and the farmworkers after the Rojas family. So I mean that was a really good introduction to me to the unions—I'm now a union labor chaplain—and I don't know how much influence that had on me, but it certainly exerted positive influence on me because I can remember going to the steelworkers' office regularly with Albert and Elena and the children, and I knew that they supported them in many, many, different ways, connected them, introducing them to other unions and financially helping the family out. By the way, as I recall, the family's budget was \$5 a week at that time.

I went on many of the collections, as we did some of the picket lines at the produce yards, and they were some of the most difficult times, but also some of the most rewarding times. We saw the generosity of unions sticking together and helping this small union, which is now quite large, get on its way. Many of the steelworkers and the other people at the plant gates did not forget where they came from—that they had small beginnings also. As I said earlier, the steelworkers I think were in the lead on this, but that was one of those times when your telephone would ring or your alarm would go off at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning and you used to ask yourself, "Why did I get

involved? Why did I say yes? Why are the Rojasés still here? Will the Valencias (lettuce boycott) ever go home?” Those were the questions you asked yourself, but in the final analysis at the day’s end, you realize that once again they help you to live your faith, and we were always grateful.

Father Jack spoke about the religious aspects of the boycott. For many Catholics in the 60s, the boycott came right after Vatican II, the massive renewal movement in the church.

Father Jack O’Malley: I think Cesar Chavez challenged and encouraged the Catholic Church, him being Catholic, and most of the farmworkers were Catholic, Christian people, and I think Cesar challenged the bishops to act upon their faith and to see that there was dignity in the workplace in the fields. And after we were educated and after we were challenged to put the scriptures and our Catholic teaching into practice, we were the better for it. So, yeah, I would see myself as a pastor, working with parishioners because they lived in our area; they lived actually in the rectory, in the building next door to the rectory, the former convent. I’d see myself as a person that was encouraged and challenged because of my faith and then of course with the families that stayed with us, the relationships. And you build this relationship of trust and confidence and you visit California and you see the conditions, hear the stories of the plight of migrant farm children in going from school to school, and see how disrupted their lives were and the education. And so your hearts went out to them but at the same time they were our mentors at the time, and I basically followed some real good directions and leadership.

Their role was to educate us to put us out there with them, and to see that we used all the contacts and influences we had in the city to work with other people who were also involved at that time in the civil rights and peace movements. And I think the Merton Center—the Thomas Merton Peace and Justice Center—was getting under way at the time to bring a group of clergy and laity who would be probably considered progressive Catholics, who were prepared to act on their faith. This was also Vatican Council II time and this was really the age of the laity. And so the laity were teaching the clergy in many ways—the Rojasés and farmworker families, and other Catholic lay people and Christian lay people, and Jewish folks, were teaching us; so we might have had some of the Scripture, but they had the lived experience. That was a wonderful marriage, a wonderful relationship. Organizations like that and the NAACP . . . are still in place and our relationships are deeper, and the issues might be a little bit different, but farmworkers are still in our hearts and because for many people that was the first real, real, deep involvement in Catholic social teaching and in justice.

A major topic for the boycotters was the religious aspect of the grape boycott. The experience of Our Lady of Guadalupe banners, and the praying and singing that accompanied pickets and actions were clearly not the norm for many activists. The interviewees had very personal views on their own religious or nonreligious involvement, and those who have strong religious connections reflect at length about what the boycott did for their own beliefs.

Those who considered themselves outside the religious sphere also had things to say about their own beliefs, the farmworkers’ use of banners and religious symbols, and whether this was a problem for them or others.

Florence Black: I had just left the Catholic Church. There were some local priests who were involved. I don't know that the rank-and-file Catholics in the suburbs were particularly interested. But certainly there were some people who were very supportive, such as Father O'Malley.

No, religious symbols were no problem to me and to anyone I knew who was involved. Symbolism is important to a movement and it's very important to the people who are in the forefront of it and have the most to lose and the most to gain. The American flags that people started flying after September 11 were a prime example of what symbolism can do for the psyche of the people involved.

Jim Scardina : I was pretty much unchurched at that time. When I came out of the seminary, I had some serious doctrinal concerns, and I had some serious bureaucratic concerns, and it didn't seem to be related just to the Roman Catholic Church that I had the background in, because some of the same issues were raised in my mind in different ways with some of the other denominations. I didn't look outside the Christian community, but I certainly was looking and I pretty much felt like it was a lot of work to do, a little in my mind, about my gaining peace and happiness through participation at the church level. That changed later on, but at the time I was pretty much unchurched.

As far as names, the three that come up right away are Monsignor Rice, Father McIlvaine, and Father Jack O'Malley. And they were good supporters, and they were very interested, and felt they had a very sincere effort to be supportive, without trying to lead, which is an interesting thing to see. There were some people from the Quaker meeting house on Ellsworth Avenue that were part of some of the activities that we did, but I don't remember their names. We even had a few meetings there as part of the group of the grape boycott.

I felt at the time that the people that I dealt with, at least within the Roman Catholic group, were more the exceptions than the rule. I felt that they were not just people who were kind of spokesmen for the larger religious community, but rather people who had a special gift and somehow were allowed within the bureaucracy to share that gift almost in spite of it (the bureaucracy) in some ways. I think their roles grew within that bureaucracy and within that institution, religious institution, over the years. But at the time I don't think it was all that happy a relationship.

Carrie Lund: This is going to sound a little strange, but that's OK. I've always had religious affiliation or non-affiliation as the case may be. Mary Baker Eddy was a cousin—I never met her of course. I remember my grandmother saying to Dick, who was my husband, before we got married, "Watch out for her, periodically she gets religion!" And my grandmother wasn't your typical church lady. I tried to remember when this happened. I think it was before the boycott, but when I came from New York, I think I always considered it, though it isn't, my hometown. When I was there my friends were Jewish and I didn't even know anyone else was there and I spent a long time studying Jewish history,

trying to study Hebrew; I even subscribed to the *Jerusalem Post Weekly* so I could take their lessons. It was really hard to read, not only because it was in a totally different language, but when I came here I was surrounded by so many religiously affiliated people that I finally got fed up with it, and I would occasionally carry signs saying “Pagans for peace,” or something. But it was just kind of like a semi-joke, I just got tired of being surrounded by Presbyterians; who else was around? There were quite a few Catholics—I did notice that! And my ex-husband was half-Jewish, his mother came from Israel, and he was not even remotely interested in any of this. We did eventually, after Martin Luther King, Jr., go to Quaker meeting for a while, but it made me nervous.

Molly Rush: I think one of the influences probably on me in terms of labor issues long before I got involved directly was number one, reading Monsignor Charles Owen Rice in the *Pittsburgh Catholic*. He regularly covered all kinds of labor issues. Also I think my leaving my own parish had much more to do with my civil rights and peace activities, but it was wonderful to find a home at St. Joseph’s, Manchester. Here there was a broad array of support and of course the CIC was always trying to get the official church engaged and involved with these things with more or less success. I’m sure in some ways there was a network—I can remember nuns getting arrested in picket lines down in Market Square—things like that, and I can remember individuals. They may have had an influence in their communities, and I suspect the sisters did in terms of one or two nuns would get arrested, but they probably got more support from their communities. I think the parish was the tougher nut to crack.

Russell Gibbons: (Speaking of my own experience as a Catholic and a Pittsburgher living in a city not populated by Hispanics), I think this was a learning experience for all of us, particularly back in the 60s or 70s. Mexico was literally a foreign country. Pittsburgh never had a large Hispanic population, interestingly enough. With all the ethnic groups that came to Pittsburgh to work in the mills and mines and the factories of the industrial era—living in a city that was known as a melting pot—Pittsburgh, unlike upstate New York, for example, never had a substantial Hispanic population.

I’ve been a card-carrying Catholic with the ups and downs that everybody has, you know, it depends on who’s the incumbent Pope, that sort of thing, but that was the time of Vatican II; it was 1965. I think that the good feeling and residue of social activity within the church was post-Vatican II and that correlated with the farmworker movement. They had good people like George Higgins—who died this past week—people who were activists and who translated the policy of the bishops to the local level. Or at least they enunciated it through the Catholic press: the farmworkers are our people; this is a cause for the despised; and if Jesus were here, he would say these people are our constituents.

I had no problems at all with the farmworkers’ use of cultural and religious symbols. I don’t think most people had any problems with it. I remember I was doing the PR for the UFW coalition when we had a rally at Soldiers and Sailors Hall, which seats a couple of thousand people. We had a good turnout. Cesar Chavez came to speak; he was the top bill.

The farmworkers had their signs and banners and what not—they were very colorful, they were very different, and they were unique for an industrial town. These symbols certainly attracted attention on the campuses and probably attracted some people who might not otherwise have come to the rally. Union picket signs are usually bland, showing the logo of your union, but the symbols of the farmworkers were always colorful. I suppose it is easy to romanticize a struggle when it's not in your own backyard but far away in a place in California. In the 1960s the farmworker activities in Pittsburgh would be similar to that of Poland and Lech Walesa in the 1980s—the great struggle. It wasn't in our backyard, and it was a good thing to get involved with.

Father Jack O'Malley talks about his own experience with the symbols of the Mexican-American farmworkers in his Pittsburgh liturgies.

Father Jack O'Malley: There was no question about it, that this was during a period of time when the church understood that if you wanted to be a person who would work in the community unlike the community that you grew up in, you'd better be very sensitive to people's practice and culture. So we learned early on that Our Lady of Guadalupe was an important part of Mexican-American religion. We learned to respect other people's signs and symbols. I can remember at liturgy, very often there was a banner of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the procession and so forth; it was wonderful! It was a symbol and sign that made the farmworkers feel more comfortable and at home. People made vestments that were culturally Mexican or Mexican-American, and I was privileged to wear these vestments. I have a vestment in the other room with a black eagle on it. We would have liturgy with the wonderful music and the singing of *De Colores* and so forth. It really helped us appreciate someone else's culture and taught us a lot about liturgy in another culture and another language. So it was always inspiring.

Pittsburgh is a unique community because so many Catholics are union members. Union people would respect the leadership—and clearly the leaders of the farmworker movement were people like the Rojas family. Albert and Elena are very articulate people, very bright people, very committed people, so if you joined their picket line and their procession, you would not criticize their culture or their religious symbols. I mean it was very obvious to the people who were informed that the farmworkers were people of faith, and mostly Christian and mostly Catholic. So if you joined their picket line, it shouldn't be an issue with you. If I join a picket line of people from the Mid-East and I support their cause, obviously they are going to bring their culture and their faith into it and I ought not to be offended.

There was a particular interest in the religious issue because of the presence in Pittsburgh of several so-called "labor priests." For Pittsburgh citizens involved in labor, the reputation of Monsignor Charles Owen Rice, active in Catholic trade union efforts and a long-time labor supporter, was always a factor in movements such as the grape boycott. And there were younger priests such as Fathers Jack O'Malley and Donald McIlwaine and Garrett Dorsey who eventually became labor supporters. The orders of religious women were also

extremely strong in the boycott. Nuns like Marcia Snowden and Betty Sundry were among those arrested for boycott actions.

Dr. David Montgomery: I remember seeing the offices of the United Steel Workers suddenly sprouting posters of eagles and even Zapata under the combined impact of the boycott struggle and Vatican II.

Dr. Bruce Laurie: I was fascinated by Chavez for the religious roots of his social activism. He seemed so anomalous in the 1960s, given the general conservatism of the Church and more particularly its support for the war as reflected in the position of the hierarchy nearly everywhere. That's probably why people like Dave Montgomery thought it was so important to include Father Rice on our platforms whenever possible. (The only problem being that he was aging and always had to speak early in order to get home and get to bed!) The fact is, however, that he was pretty much of a voice in the manger as far as the pastorate was concerned. I think he was tolerated for his past work in the coal fields against the reds (a sorry chapter in an otherwise noble life and one he publicly repudiated at our rally "The War Nobody Wants"), for his age, and for his marginality within the church.

One of the enjoyable parts of the interviews was the boycotters talking of their actual involvement and favorite stories from the boycott. One of the memorable stories involved the Pittsburgh demonstrations at the Black Construction Coalition. It was the first effort to publicly call for the mostly-white building trades to integrate, and the trades' members were not particularly thrilled to see UFW boycott supporters waving the Huelga flag and supporting the black community. Over several days of demonstrations, hundreds of people were arrested in mass demonstrations downtown. Many of the boycotters were there, some of us at the first march, having been invited by Nate Smith, an African-American leader who was a boycott supporter and head of the Black Construction Coalition.

Molly Rush: I remember walking down Grant Street and steelworkers throwing things down at us. I didn't take part in the march over on the North Side because my husband was too afraid for me. I think I must have been pregnant at the time, so he and a friend of mine went and the friend got arrested, and my husband was very engaged with that, but he was there more because he knew I wanted to be there.

Florence Black and Jim Scardina, who were married at the time of the boycott, had personal reasons to remember their participation in the coalition: their son was conceived that day! As Florence tells it, "I was there. I believe I got pregnant that day!"

Florence Black: To me there was a strong sense of unity in the people that were marching, and we did it three times, four times. I know there was that disaster when we ran from the police and then when we marched across the bridges with police accompaniment, but everyone around me was very upbeat and glad to have everyone participating.

Jim Scardina: I would have a hard time forgetting it! When you note the people involved, like Nate Smith, a very colorful person, rather flamboyant. I knew him more and more as I

got involved and also the issues involved, and to this day it seems that my son was conceived on the night after one of the big demonstrations downtown, so I'd have a hard time forgetting about that. The construction coalition, as I recall it, the two biggest demonstrations that we did had to do with the construction of the U.S. Steel Building and also the construction of the stadium. I remember people right near me that got maced, and I remember people throwing rivets from the building. I guess it was from the 60th floor, and the only people that were protected were the policemen with their helmets, and the rest of us were quite vulnerable to these dangerous, lethal weapons that were being hurled at us.

My favorite memory had to do with one of our demonstrations in Shadyside at a little family market, Indovina's Market. There was only one street, the main drag, and this little cliquish shopping area that was populated with some students. This was the place with a lot of heavy traffic and a lot of walking traffic and very narrow sidewalks. Indovina's Market used to put a lot of their fruits and vegetables out on the sidewalk, and the crates were out there, and of course some of them were grapes, and that was one of the reasons why we picketed that particular site. The storeowners were good friends with the lieutenant of the local station and they must have called him, because he came down to question us. Rojas and I and another gentleman walked out of the group so they continued to picket and we talked to them about what our constitutional rights of free speech were, and he was demanding that we leave, and we made it very clear the way we saw it. We didn't need a parade permit and we're not interfering with anybody's going in and out of the market, and we were passing out leaflets and asking people not to buy grapes. And they had all kinds of things they could buy there. And he came back about 15 minutes later with a couple of paddy wagons and a crew of police support and said, "I don't want to hear it; you either break up or climb in the wagon," so we all tried to walk away. As we were walking away, three of us were grabbed by the back of our necks, thrown into the paddy wagon, and told, "Oh, no, you're not going anywhere." One of them was Al Rojas, and I was one of the other two. Poor Elena, she was really upset. She and some other women got so upset that they said, "They weren't doing anything that we didn't." Then they started climbing into the paddy wagons with us, and they were being excluded by this—at that time—all male police force, who didn't know what to do with these screaming women. And we were taken up to the local station where they told us that before we could go for an arraignment the next morning, we would have to spend the night in jail. Two things were happening at the same time. The steelworker union was calling the ACLU, and the ACLU and steelworkers were both calling city officials about what happened, and in the meantime, the three of us were sitting on the floor in the main entry area of the station, right in front of the main desk. They thought we were supposed to be scared or something, but we were talking about how great it was because it was the day before Palm Sunday, and if we were arraigned and didn't pay a bond prior to the trial that would have been maybe a week later, this was great! Good Friday was coming up and we were going to get all this publicity. We were going to get crowds downtown in front of the local jail talking about the sufferings of Christ, and because of this we were going to get publicity for the farmworkers. And it didn't take very long for them to move the arraignment up to that evening. It was really

funny, because the only excuse the magistrate could find to look like he was supporting the police was the fact that we were singing while we were on the sidewalk. He lectured us about singing, public singing, so this was his way of saving face with the police while letting us go. There was a lot of humor in some tough times.

Molly Rush: I think the songs, the singing at all the protests, were very important and the sense that we were all together and part of something that's not so much a story, but just an experience of being together. Finding myself in and among people whom I respected deeply, that's one of the powerful gifts.

Being engaged in social action with the people that you meet. I was always taken with the Rojas family and their sojourn here, getting to know them up close and seeing the frustration of Albert trying to deal with various groups and churches and labor unions and so forth, but there was always a spirit that kept us together.

Florence Black: The pale green satin dresses that I made, the bridesmaids' dresses for Gloria's wedding. I was not a seamstress and working with satin is never fun, but we managed to do it, and we all managed to wear them and made the bride and her family extremely happy. And then there's the christening. When we were over at the boycott house, I took a bite of some food—I don't know what it was—but I went running to the kitchen for water because I didn't know it was extremely hot with jalapeño seasoning! So, running to the kitchen for water and probably not as funny.

Carrie Lund: I'm quite a blabber, I'm really not much of a speaker and it's always been difficult for me to utilize even my strength of opinion or my grasp of fact in an effective way. So I didn't go speaking, but, yes, I did picket and we had a thing we would do out in the South Hills. I remember one of our first orientations at the Friends Meeting House before going out, and they brought their culture and it was really strong. We'd have prayers, we'd have hymns, we'd have all this God stuff, and I was really not there for this at the time, nor was my husband, but I knew enough to behave myself, unlike some people who'd come and turn their noses up and say, "I can't do this! No way!" But one of the people who helped orient us was a Pittsburgher, a black man. I don't remember his name, but I remember him saying, "You are going out to the master of slaves in South Hills. Don't expect not to be spat on, don't expect not to be harassed and insulted at the very least." But I remember we would go marketing and we would have at some point these little, tiny, stickers that would just fit where the prices went and you'd take a can or something and leave a sign that "Don't buy grapes." That was really cool. I remember at some point demonstrating in Market Square, and there I could actually do a little indoctrinating or preaching, yell about how hard it was for workers in the field, yell about what it was like for them who are harvesting all our food to be treated the way they were, and we didn't even think about it. It was very therapeutic, actually, very cathartic to just put that out there. So I did lots of little things, I did phoning, I did picketing, I did spaghetti dishes, which I would take on the bus over to the North Side; one day I remember it spilled all over the place. If I had realized how hard Elena's work was about feeding her family every day and all of us who turned up, I would have done a lot more cooking.

I was aware that Pittsburgh was not exactly what you'd call a Latin-friendly place and I often missed the atmosphere it could provide. When I lived in New York, I lived close to Nuyorican, the Puerto Rican neighborhoods, and I remember my grandmother was very uptight about them because they were painted as dangerous, dark, desperadoes. I missed the music, the food, and my whole experience living in South America, but for them it was really a change.

I remember Elena telling us what Cesar said about Pittsburgh, "Oh, it's just a little Pennsylvania mining town." Going through the Liberty Tubes onto the bridge, their first view of Pittsburgh was really a kind of shock, and I can really identify with that. I knew they were living on \$5 a week as their pay and I knew that rather quickly some people with some degree of means hooked up with them and made it a little bit easier, like the Trachtenbergs, for example.

My husband and I lived in Dormont, a working-class community at the time, and a brother of one of our neighbors, who was close with us, worked two jobs, one on the riverboats, going up and down, and then when he was off he worked at a lime processing factory. He was very emotional, and I remember that first summer, he would say to the cook on his riverboat, "Well, since you carry grapes, this is what I'm going to do with my share." He picked up a big handful or two of grapes and dumped them into the river.

While we were involved in the grape boycott, my husband went down to the City-County Building for something and he was carrying our younger daughter on his shoulders and there were all these flags at the City-County Building and Freya looked up and said "Don't buy grapes! Don't buy grapes!" I thought that was wonderful.

I was at my parents' house in the Catskills that summer and heard over the radio that the boycott had been successful. Just a big thrill in my life.

Father Jack had an interesting story about why he experienced hostility and the produce yards.

Father Jack O'Donnell: We grew up in the produce yards area—they call it the strip district—and my dad was a ward chairman. The people on the docks who worked in the produce yards knew my father, because my father would go down there regularly when we were kids—I guess to get the food for us and food for some of the poor people in the community. Because the produce workers knew me, I was sometimes singled out for their criticism because I was a priest, and a lot of Catholics think priests should stay in their pulpit. They were angry because they saw the farmworkers' union as a real economic threat to them and they questioned why a Caucasian priest would be supporting the farmworkers.

Police officers would also make comments: "What's this white priest doing hanging out with radical students and peaceniks and people of color?" But they didn't have the advantage I had; they didn't have the same experience I had with the farmworker

movement, and once you've had that experience, you cannot not be a part of it. I had been lucky enough to get in a position to meet farmworkers and to work with Al Rojas. I heard a lot of abuses leveled at him and at same time, I saw how well he dealt with it. He was a very bright and courageous person; he stood up to the opposition. He had no fear and it was a little scary to go with him to some places because he didn't have any fear. The thing I remember the most about the boycott is all the mornings we got up to go down to the produce yards to picket. Oh boy, what dedication the boycott staff had. I remember going to bed at midnight and thinking, "I've got to get up in two hours." But when you look back at it, you realize that was the right thing to do and was I lucky to be a part of it.

Russell Gibbons: I remember a couple of times down there in the strip district, which was a volatile situation because that's where the produce came in. This might have been the lettuce and it could have been the grapes. I don't know, but theoretically this was intra-union conflict because most of those people down in the yards were organized and I'm not sure who they were, whether they were laborers or what unions would have the people who handle the vegetables, the produce, the fruits. The Teamsters were certainly big there, if nothing else, in transportation. So these were volatile things where union guys were calling each other names and they resented the steelworkers if we weren't literally from the mill but just from what they would consider pork-choppers from the international union. And to them it was a jobs issue and you're trying to take our jobs away, which is not the case of course, all we were trying to do then was say, hey look, what you're handling! Here is scab stuff and we're trying to make sure it's all union produce. They were touchy times. The cops were called in several times.

The interviewees shared their motivations for being in the boycott. One of the more amazing revelations was that Carrie Lund's great-grandfather was the legislator who disenfranchised the African-American people in Georgia in the 19th century. This provided her with a reason to stand for the oppressed.

Carrie Lund: My great-grandfather disenfranchised the black people in his state, in Georgia. He was the secretary of ... I don't know of what because he had lots of jobs, but he had his own footnote in W.E.B. DuBois. [His name was Hoke Smith.] He was the Secretary of the Interior during Cleveland and he was a senator for life, and DuBois said—I'm surprised they included it, frankly, but I'm glad he did—that he had a brilliant mind, but he sold out. When I discovered this, I felt bad. I don't know if I felt guilty, but I felt I had the responsibility to try to redress this stuff. Now because of some of the things that happened to me as I was growing up, I didn't live up to my father as a possible scholar or activist, but I have done things to help. Little things, like I supported some women black candidates by doing their laundry when they didn't have time to do it. I have supported close friends by looking after their two children when they were running for city council. So I have done things that are very unsung, but I did them.

Molly Rush: I think the boycotts and the visibility they gave to the farmworker movement and Cesar's nonviolence were so important to those of us who were being inspired at the same time by the civil rights phenomenon and Dr. King. I tend to think of the two in

tandem, King and Cesar, because they both in different ways inspired through their nonviolent action.

I've been arrested a number of times for peace issues and once for a South African protest, but probably the one I've had the most grief with, the most visibility, was the Ploughshares 8 action in 1980. Eight of us, including Daniel and Philip Berrigan, went to a GE plant in King of Prussia and hammered on a couple of Mark 12A first strike weapons, and I am a convicted felon as a result. The belief in nonviolence is very deep in terms of what this is about and the power that one person can have through involvement in nonviolent action and the power of a community that engages in nonviolent resistance or nonviolent action. It takes so many forms not well understood in this country because we tend to see the action as shooting somebody or something like that, but really if you're looking for long-term change of heart that brings real change, nonviolent action in my experience is the most effective and the most long-lasting.

The final summary comes from future historians' presence during the boycott years. Would these academicians, all of whom were graduate students in the history department at the University of Pittsburgh, have something to add to the testimonies of other Pittsburgh boycotters? Would the passage of years allow them to contextualize the experience of the boycott for later generations?

Dr. Frank Couvares: I was part of a radical, anti-war crowd, active in SDS, Students for Peace, and other campus groups, and the boycott seemed a natural. I was one of the campus leaders of the boycott. Two Delano workers came to Pittsburgh (one stayed briefly at my apartment on Dawson Street) with an eye to somehow directing or informing our efforts ... We had a very dedicated corps of people, and we boycotted so successfully that almost all the major chain stores, as I recall, removed Thompson grapes from the shelves. I remember picketing in several places and receiving very positive responses from shoppers.

I'm not sure how it affected my later thinking. It certainly reinforced my tendency to see all political action—electoral or grassroots-activist—as a matter of coalition-building; and as most effective when melding class perspectives with religious, ethnic, or other kinds of perspectives. Still, my own sense that labor succeeded especially when it moved in response to a sort of “community in revolt” impulse probably had something to do with my experience with the UFW boycott.

Finally, I have always thought the history department at Pitt was a splendid place to learn history and how to be a historian. Not only the fine faculty but the grad students were first class. Bruce Laurie, who was my TA in Tom McCormick's intro course, was an inspiration. Luckily, he's been my neighbor [teaching at the University of Massachusetts] for these last 20 years.

Dr. Bruce Laurie: I do recall a time—probably in '66 or '67 when the boycott made an impression, at least in Pittsburgh, thanks to the work of a group of UFW sympathizers

based on campus but extending, as I recall, beyond to progressive households in places like Squirrel Hill. I never belonged to any UFW support group or did anything for the farmworkers—other than read about them— till fellow graduate student Wolf Swoboda (R.I.P., I say with great sadness— he was truly one of a kind— brilliant, multitalented, and funny, the kind of person you never ever forget) whom I met in the graduate program of the history department, asked me to accompany him to a local food dealer to picket for the UFW. I did and have something of a recollection that one chain or another one actually agreed to stop selling grapes.

I don't think Chavez and his movement had much of an effect on how I thought about labor in the 1960s or on how I thought about my work as a labor historian. Perhaps it should have. Had I thought harder and deeper about figures like him and the kind of movement he managed to assemble, I might have developed a more subtle and nuanced perspective on the role of religion in the making of insurgent politics of a progressive sort.

When I began this oral history, I was curious about what people would remember. Would they focus on their personal interests and friends? Would they remember who was on the picket lines? Did they assign more importance to certain people and events than to others? Did the students know the older union members well? Would the older participants welcome young, inexperienced picketers and respect them? Would they miss some of the conflicts that were a reality in a movement that big or see the boycott through rose-colored glasses? Didn't I have some disconcerting situations myself when I told people about the highly successful "shop-ins" where boycotters filled baskets with food and then left them in the aisles when they discovered that grapes were in the store? And the people to whom I related the story were shocked. Wasn't I treated with mild horror when I hinted that Cesar might have been wrong on some occasions?

I still haven't discovered the answers, but I do know that just like the fact that eyewitnesses recall things differently to police, observers of historical events also have tunnel vision. We didn't always see the same thing, or interpret what we did see the same as anyone else. For the record to be complete, it is and will be necessary for many people to lend their voices. Only then will the frame exist for the rest of us to paint the picture.