CSEA HISTORY PROJECT

TOM QUIMBY INTERVIEW

12/7/04

INTERVIEWER: Okay. This is December the 7th of 2004.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

INTERVIEWER: And we have with us Tom Quimby. Tom, why don't you give us your full name and tell us what you did with CSEA in the years you were here, just kind of a little brief description of your involvement?

MR. QUIMBY: Okay. Full name is Thomas Butterworth Quimby and I was here from 19...July 1974 to February 1988. From '74 to '79 I was a field rep in Dutchess and Ulster counties with 33 contracts in both of those. From '79 to '81 I was Director of Education, '81 or '82, and from '82 to '88 I was Director of LEAP.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And what -- what have you done subsequently since leaving CSEA?

MR. QUIMBY: I've been working with Cornell School of Industrial and Labor Relations in mostly dispute resolution, interest-based bargaining, mostly toward management areas because that's where the demand seems to be.

INTERVIEWER: What did you remember

when you first heard of an organization called CSEA?

MR. QUIMBY: I don't know when I first heard of it exactly but I do know that when I got out of graduate school at Cornell I got offers from ICI and Corning Glass and somebody else and CSEA was unique because it was the one Union that would hire people who hadn't come up through the ranks. It would hire outside people to be field reps, and so I decided, well, if you go to work for a Union first and then leave, that's better than going to work somewhere else and then trying to work for a Union, so -- so that's why I went to work for CSEA.

INTERVIEWER: So how is it that you actually came to be employed by CSEA?

MR. QUIMBY: I think I just -- I decided that I wanted to work for a Union, and if I was gonna do that I'd better do that when I was young and I remember the job interview -- I know that Alice Adams was there, who was chapter or local president of Dutchess County. Jim Moore was there. There were some other people there, I can't remember, but there were -- was

quite a hiring interview because you walk in and there's eight people that are sitting there and you're kind of going, oh-h-h, a little bit like that, but then they done their homework and they said, well, now, supposing a member wanted you to process a nonmeritorious grievance, what would you do? And I said, well, I'd try to dissuade them based on the merits of the grievance.

And they said, well, what would you do if he still wanted you to process the grievance? And I said, well, I'd -- I might find him some arbitration decisions or something like that and show him some similar cases and how they were ruled and -- and try to give him the basis for my determination.

And they said what would you do if (laughter) he still wanted to do it? And I said, well, I'd look around the bargaining unit, I'd see what kind of friends he had and how much political support he had, and if he had a lot I'd probably go with him. He said, that's my boy.

(Laughter.)

So, they hired me.

INTERVIEWER: So what -- what did you actually do when you were first -- when you were first hired?

MR. QUIMBY: They gave -- it was kind of funny 'cause they gave the new people that were hired political subdivisions. The older guys with more seniority got the State stops and that was 'cause State stops were day work. They didn't have any negotiation in 'em and the political subs were day work and night work, which I discovered when I was -- when I was negotiating and so I was doing counties, cities, towns, school districts, grievances, negotiations. The tougher stuff -- the bigger bargaining units they gave to people like Manny Vitale or Roger Kane, who were some of the collective bargaining specialists.

But I remember one time having 18 contracts open. That was bad planning on my part or somethin' like that. It was a tough job. You go out the door 8, 8:30 in the morning, get home 11, 12, 1 o'clock at night, get up, go out the door 8:30 in the morning, and

you do that three or four days a week, week after week after week.

INTERVIEWER: But I imagine those must have been pretty interesting times, though. You're freshly out of school and --

MR. QUIMBY: Yep.

INTERVIEWER: -- you've got basically a new law. The Taylor Law was relatively young at that time --

MR. QUIMBY: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I would assume you were probably making up some of it as you went along.

MR. QUIMBY: Yeah. You couldn't -- people were still afraid of fact-finding. Employers were still afraid of fact-finding. Now nobody really gives a hoot about it, I don't think. We had the first strike in Dutchess County, in a county in New York State, in Dutchess County in 1976. Back then we gave people that picketed, I think, $5 a day for picketing and sandwiches for lunch.

INTERVIEWER: Were you the field rep at that time?

MR. QUIMBY: I was, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Could you explain a little bit about how that came about?

MR. QUIMBY: Uh, I think -- as I recall it was just a matter of well, there were -- since I think it was the first strike and fairly high stakes, there was a fair amount, I think, that -- that I wasn't exactly privy to. There was something funny that was going on between Bernie Veet, who's now deceased, who was the unit president, the local president, and goodness knows who else, but I think it was just a good classic case of they didn't come forward with enough that we thought they should have and it was eventually resolved.

And Manny Vitale was negotiating that contract and it was -- that was very interesting. I remember, unfortunately, my marriage, I think, was starting to disintegrate at the time and I was trying to salvage it and -- and took a vacation and when I came back I got a call about five o'clock in the morning, you know, get your hiney out of bed and get down there and take care of the picket line. There's a strike going on.

Which was the same time that Ted Wenzel, I think, had gone in and signed the Thruway Authority contract. I guess they'd been negotiating for two years or something like that or three years, and Wenzel, I guess, had just finally had it and went in and closed the deal himself. I don't think it was put up for ratification, 'cause legally you don't have to have a contract rati...that's not in the Taylor Law, I think, that a contract has to be ratified by the membership.

And Bill McGowan was interviewed -- I remember hearing it on the radio, and I said to Ted Wenzel, well, now that the contract has been signed and the membership is -- I can't remember exactly what the quote was, but Wenzel's answer to it was, well, that's a very good question to which I don't have a very good answer.

(Laughter.)

INTERVIEWER: McGowan?

MR. QUIMBY: No, that was Wenzel, actually, and then McGowan, who was the vice president, said, well, this is a democratic Union. The membership has spoken and, you know,

it was just interesting to see the two of 'em.

INTERVIEWER: Well --

MR. QUIMBY: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Just to go back to Dutchess --

MR. QUIMBY: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: -- so what were the circumstances of the actual strike? What did they actually do and how long did it -- did it last?

MR. QUIMBY: I think it was -- I think it was around a week. It wasn't over two weeks. We set up pickets, I think, early in the morning. We were quite successful, I think, in keeping people out from work. My area was the county office building. There were the typical picket signs. I think everybody on the line was pretty well-behaved.

Some of the others, like Orange County strike was -- was the worst, I think, but Dutchess, since it was new, I came -- we came away with quite a good package. I can't remember exactly what it was, but --

INTERVIEWER: What were the

ramifications for CSEA in terms of Taylor Law penalties?

MR. QUIMBY: Well, there were the -- that, I think, people were feeling their way about also. There were the Section 210 hearings where your -- those are where you're -- you're presumed guilty and at the 210 hearing you try to prove your innocence. I think our regional attorney, Tom Mahar, who was a very good regional attorney, probably put both his kids through college on the 210 hearings and all the legal work he had to do, but he did -- he did a very good of it.

INTERVIEWER: But basically the outcome of this was that the members felt empowered? They felt like they had made their point and came away with --

MR. QUIMBY: Yeah. They had. We -- that was I think the County didn't believe that CSEA was going to strike and we did and we pretty well shut the place down, and I don't know if they gave us exactly everything that we wanted, but that was a -- I can't remember the specifics, but as I recall it was a pretty good

package.

INTERVIEWER: And you referenced an Orange County strike. Were you involved with that?

MR. QUIMBY: Yeah. What they used to do, it was very interesting times because we weren't an AFL-CIO affiliate at the time so we used to get -- we didn't have Article 20 protection, so we -- we used to get raided a lot and when there was either a strike or a raid, you needed to drop what you were doing, your own field area, and go take care of that and try to do two field areas as best you could and Orange County was -- Orange County went on for two weeks.

The -- we only had, I think, about barely 50 percent of the people out, which was why it dragged on. It turned out that the mediator had had an offer in his pocket that he didn't give our negotiator. He was waiting until we got sore enough and -- and troubled enough to take what he had to offer, so he kept the offer in his pocket for two weeks and -- if he -- if the mediator had come out and given the

offer to our negotiator it would have been a much shorter strike. There was somebody that got run over and got her leg broken and -- it was during the winter. It was ugly.

INTERVIEWER: Those two examples that you just described --

MR. QUIMBY: M-m h-m-m.

INTERVIEWER: -- really seemed to be the exception rather than the rule in terms of CSEA's history. There haven't been a lot of strikes. Why do you think that is?

MR. QUIMBY: That there were -- that they were -- that there haven't been? Well, oddly enough there was also -- it was funny, 'cause there was a spate of them. There was Rockland County, which followed Orange County, and that was over New Year's Eve because I remember toasting my hands over a trash barrel on New Year's Eve (laughter) and we all got a bottle and passed it around, and that was a very good one.

There was Yonkers School District, which was quite good, in that we got what we wanted. There was Putnam County where we

thought we were gonna have to go out but we didn't 'cause the County Executive or the Sheriff said you got more field reps here than I got deputies. We can't do this and they -- but that -- you're right, and I don't know why they all happened in that area. And you're right, there haven't been -- very few since then.

I think that employers got smarter about invoking -- the provisions of the Taylor Law is really pretty Draconian as far as strikes goes, and I think after the jubilation wore off and it became apparent how expensive it was and the dam...I mean strikes are just plain ugly and they -- they create bad blood that people feel for a long, long time and to the Union I think they were quite expensive, and so it became something that was used much more sparingly, if at all.

INTERVIEWER: What was -- what was the relationship between members and the staff back in those days?

MR. QUIMBY: Well, that's a good question. I -- I think some of it obviously depended on the bargaining unit. You tried to

do -- when you were a field rep you obviously tried to do as good a job as you could, but you couldn't make -- it was hard because management was never happy to see ya. The local presidents, you could never really do enough for them ta -- 'cause they had political ambitions, obviously. That's the way it is, and the membership, you know, their grievance is important and if you can't get the grievance, you know, what good are ya?

But I did have some -- some very good relationships with some people. It was also made more difficult because with Article 20 protection, SEIU, for instance, used to come in and try to take over -- SEIU and NYSUT. NYSUT was much more -- SEIU we could usually beat. NYSUT was much more formidable, especially in school districts because teachers had cachet and everybody aspired to have teacher status in an organization and tried to achieve that, I think, by becoming a member of the Teachers' Union if it was offered to them, so the teachers really did pretty well.

I lost -- I never lost anything to

SEIU. I lost two to Teachers. I lost Pine Plains School District and I lost Ellenville School District.

INTERVIEWER: You had a reference before, the fact that with the staff there was a little bit of a split between those who had the more senior folks having the State --

MR. QUIMBY: Yep, yep.

INTERVIEWER: -- stops versus the younger or more junior staff having the local government stops.

MR. QUIMBY: M-m h-m-m.

INTERVIEWER: Was there a real, almost like a cultural divide between those two areas or was the approach still pretty much the same?

MR. QUIMBY: I think there was a cultural divide. I think some of that is a function of age where you got younger people that were still pretty vigorous and, you know, wanted to go out and do something. There were four guys -- and I say "guys" because they were guys -- in Dutchess County that were hired altogether where there was George Sanko, Frank Marteran and Larry Scanlon and myself, and they

put us all in a common place.

The more senior people with the State stops had separate offices. They put all the new guys in a place that we called The Pit (laughter), and when you were talkin' to people, you'd have to talk to people like this (indicating) so you could hear the person on the other end of the phone, but we had a lot of fun because we could overhear each other's phone conversations and make editorial comments and try to crack each other up. You know, while somebody was talkin' on the phone we'd make jokes perhaps about what they were havin' to deal with and try to crack 'em up.

INTERVIEWER: Was the orientation of the statewide organization more toward the State units or was there an opportunity for the local governments to be heard?

MR. QUIMBY: I think there was op...I think there was opportunity for the local governments to be heard and I think the local gov...I think within the whole Union the State probably got more emphasis, but I think that the political subdivision -- and this is just from

the perspective of somebody who was workin' with 'em, I think the political subdivision people realized that they had more control over their destiny than the State people did because they negotiated their own collective bargaining agreements, so -- so it was sort of a much more full-service operation.

I think the relationships tended to be closer between the people that worked in political subdivisions and their officers than between the State and their officers, but I can't really say for sure 'cause I never had any State stops.

INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m. So I -- the late seventies, then, you came up to CSEA headquarters to become Director of Education?

MR. QUIMBY: Yep, '79.

INTERVIEWER: Were -- was that the first time that there had been an actual Director of Education or --

MR. QUIMBY: Well --

INTERVIEWER: -- did they have a program before that?

MR. QUIMBY: -- they had Dr. Diamond

before that. I don't know that they let him do a whole lot. I don't know if he want -- you know, for whatever reason there wasn't a lot going on and I remember we were affiliating with -- we were affiliating with AFSCME and it kind of broke my heart 'cause AFSCME's big thing was education and just at the time that I became Director of Education we affiliated with AFSCME so I got half a secretary.

INTERVIEWER: And any intent was a lot of the education program --

MR. QUIMBY: Was -- was gonna come from AFSCME.

INTERVIEWER: -- was gonna come from AFSCME.

MR. QUIMBY: And I remember having a discussion with Dave Williams who was trying to be the -- one of the ambas...one of the many ambassadors with the American Express (inaudible) AFSCME American Express card, and we had a -- were somewhat intoxicated at a convention which all of us -- often happened, and Dave said, I can't understand you people. I'll give you anything you want. And I said

anything? And he said anything, and I said I want AFSCME to pay for four staff people and I want (inaudible) and he went, goddamn it, quit yankin' my chain. (Laughter.) A good time was had by all.

INTERVIEWER: So -- so what was your charge then when you -- when you became the Director of Education? What were you trying to do?

MR. QUIMBY: Well, at the beginning I was trying to -- to train the membership and the stewards and -- how to file grievances and protect the rights of the membership, and one of the valuable things that I did learn from AFSCME, and it was really -- it was really quite valuable was that organizing is really much more important than policing a contract, and it's a subtle -- it was a very subtle -- it took me a while to catch on.

INTERVIEWER: Explain that a little bit to me.

MR. QUIMBY: Well, that -- it's a little hard -- it's a little hard to explain but the more empowered -- and I've come to find that

word is a cliche and I try not to use it, but it has utility. The more empowered people feel, the stronger they are, and strength of -- if you can put strength of spirit together with strength of collective bargaining agreement, that's great. If you -- if you just have collective bargaining agreement, then you're -- you're litigious as opposed to forceful and -- and there's a difference. That's probably -- that's as well as I can explain it on one bounce.

And AFSCME used to have a great recipe for -- for their education programs. I used to sweat over mine, but -- but they'd -- and it worked. Doggone it, it worked every time. They'd come in and the format would be get into buzz groups. Okay and they'd get into buzz groups. Identify your ten biggest problems. Okay. Prioritize your ten biggest problems. Report out. Go back into buzz groups. Come up with your ten best answers. (Laughter.) Prioritize your ten best.

And it worked because people like -- people would sooner -- and this was another

value. People would sooner figure out stuff for themselves and that sounds obvious, but I -- I hadn't seen it and I don't think a lot of other people really saw it either.

INTERVIEWER: Well, while we're on the subject of AFSCME, tell me what you remember the most about the affiliation, how it came about, what immediate changes it brought, what the whole climate was.

MR. QUIMBY: Can I take about a two-minute break here? I kind of --

INTERVIEWER: Sure.

(Pause.)

INTERVIEWER: Okay, Steve. Let's pick it up and talk a little bit about the AFSCME affiliation.

MR. QUIMBY: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: What do you remember about those times?

MR. QUIMBY: Well, the first -- what preceded it, George Meany was president of the AFL-CIO and they had -- they obviously didn't like independent unions. They wanted everybody under their umbrella and I think they subsidized

SEIU largely to come after us and the idea was that they were just gonna beat us into submission so that we were going to wind up losing unit after unit until such time as we decided to affiliate and pay the per capita and yada, yada, yada.

INTERVIEWER: Was there a real internal debate in CSEA as to whether to join the AFL-CIO?

MR. QUIMBY: Oh, there was a good vigorous debate and there was a rumor, I don't know how true it was, that we had a chance -- there was some clerical, some small clerical union that we had a chance directly to affiliate with if we would be willing to pay the president of that union, who would lose his position because CSEA would obviously swallow up the clerical, if we would give that person, the president of the clerical union, a job and that's rumor.

I don't know for sure, but rumor has it that Wenzel turned it down and said, well, you know, who would we -- that's dumb. We don't want to do that. Why should we give somebody a

job for life? So then we started getting seriously hammered and the representation, we lost the PS&T. There were two; there was a regular election and there was a runoff, and I remember being in Wassaic Developmental Center trying to tell the staff people that worked there from the clients while my own field area went to hell, and there were the -- so there was a lot of -- really, that was really quite a bitter election.

I think there were some of us that really took it kind of hard because of all of the representation within CSEA that the PS&T had. Most of the officers in the State were PS&T officers. They had a large number of people on the board and then they're, you know, crying that they weren't well-enough represented and blah blah blah blah, so they were gonna go form their --

INTERVIEWER: When you say it was "bitter," in what way did that manifest itself in the work sites in the fight?

MR. QUIMBY: Well, there was some fairly acid campaign literature which I remember

coming up with some ideas for and was very pleased for having come up with 'em. There was some acrimony between some of the -- the people that were going to become officers of PEF or who did, were going back sort of doing the nyah, nyah. You know, we beat you and you're not good, blah blah blah blah blah blah. You couldn't find your way out of a paper bag, or worse, so it was pretty bitter.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So then to get back to the AFSCME affiliation --

MR. QUIMBY: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: -- and PEF has left CSEA, that it's obviously moved into the AFL-CIO to put pressure on CSEA?

MR. QUIMBY: Right. We had lots of raids. I think we had a trial affiliation, I believe, from '78 to '81 where we got a reduced per capita and during that time there were a lot of very well -- I mean I give AFSCME -- I give the AFSCME reps credit for a -- they really took a fair amount of crap and took it quite graciously from us who felt kind of humiliated that we were even considered that. It's sort of

like, yeah, wanna fight? You know, and so the AFSCME reps would offer to buy us a drink or pull out their American Express cards (laughter) --

INTERVIEWER: This was even with the staff.

MR. QUIMBY: Oh, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Even with the staff.

MR. QUIMBY: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: (Inaudible) the members.

MR. QUIMBY: Yeah. Well, we were -- yeah, we were all pretty well charged up 'cause we'd been going through strikes and doing representational actions and I remember carrying a breaker bar in my front seat, you know, with my roofing nails, which was standard issue for (laughter) strikes and my bottle of Southern Comfort under the front seat that I used to take a good swig of when the -- I mean everybody was just -- I didn't do that normally.

This was just during crises, and so we were just in a mood to fight. It's sort of like, we're under attack. Screw everybody. And so they kind of calmed us down and Bob McEnroe,

I think -- I don't know if he's still with AFSCME or not, but he was --

INTERVIEWER: I think he passed.

MR. QUIMBY: Oh, he did. I'm sorry to hear that. I can't remember -- Steve Fantazo, he and I understood each other for some reason, well. I liked Steve. Can't remember some of the other people, but -- so there were various -- there was a lot that went on that I really wasn't privy to. There were -- there were -- there was kind of an -- obviously an inner circle people of the, I don't know whether it's the second floor or the third floor, whatever, but even when I was Director of Education or Director of LEAP, there was a lot of stuff that went on that I didn't -- I just got the tail end of it that said sort of, here, here's your marching orders.

INTERVIEWER: But the -- the trial affiliation period was basically a courtship where AFSCME was coming in and trying to build a relationship with the CSEA --

MR. QUIMBY: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: How did they -- you said

the staff, there was obviously some tension.

MR. QUIMBY: Right.

INTERVIEWER: How did -- how did that evolve with the membership?

MR. QUIMBY: I think the member...well, the membership -- the membership was in a different position because I think they were much more positive to it because they had the sense that they were being wooed. I think the staff, some of us had the sense that we'd failed because we were having to do this and if we were really good, we would have defended CSEA to the death and we wouldn't have to do this thing. I think there were -- maybe I was the only one, but I think there was part of me that felt a little humiliated about, what, we couldn't pull this off and now we gotta deal with these people coming in? We're gonna have to pay 'em a lot of money and listen to people come in to tell us how things are that don't know anything about, you know, whatever. Same crap. You've heard it.

INTERVIEWER: So at this point, though, you're now the Director of Education and

so you were actually trying to work and coordinate with AFSCME?

MR. QUIMBY: Yeah, we're now past the trial. I think I was director during the trial and during the permanent end. I was looking for staff because I had half a secretary and me that was responsible for the whole state, and I was plugging for staff people and I wasn't gonna get 'em because, you know, everything was gonna come from AFSCME and, you know, we didn't need staff people and it was a long, hard fight to get staff people.

INTERVIEWER: And I mean in the -- in the end there was a CSEA education --

MR. QUIMBY: Yeah, and we had a very -- yeah, and thanks in large part, I think, to John Dowling and Bailey Walker who I had -- you could talk methodology with them and programming and stuff. I mean this wasn't just rah rah. You know, you could sit down and you could have an intelligent conversation about this is why this stuff works. Here's what we found to be effective. Let's look at the latest film or slide show that we put together. Tell

me what you think of it. Does it work? Doesn't it work? There was a good collegial relationship, I found, so after a while I was well-pleased for them.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Tell me about the founding of the Labor Education Action Program.

MR. QUIMBY: Oh, yeah. Well, that was -- that was another one that I didn't really know it was gonna happen, basically, until it happened. I think I was told to put together some kind of proposal for State negotiation. I think it would have been the '82 negotiation or '84. I can't remember, can't remember how they fell, but I think in part it was -- I think we started with three or three and a half mil over three years. It was -- its purpose was to provide post-secondary probably job-related education.

I think in part we got it because the Governor's Office of Employee Relations was trying to screw the Department of Civil Service and consolidate the grip that it had on labor relations, including training money and money that you could use to put people to work that

you wanted to put people to work.

And so -- the memory that sticks in my mind the most from that one was that I -- you know, somebody called me into a room and started the tail end of the negotiation and Bill McGowan, who I liked a great deal and had a great deal of respect for, he wasn't -- wasn't polished but he was smart and he had a great deal of integrity.

He said, and he took his cigar out of his mouth and he said, well, here's three and a half mil, and Sandy Fruscher said, yeah, and don't fuck up, and that was the advice I was given (laughter), and so --

INTERVIEWER: Obviously, you didn't.

MR. QUIMBY: Well, I -- I didn't. It was -- I think I was pretty conservative because at the beginning I thought that there was kind -- there was kind of -- gonna be kind of a law and we needed to establish as much as we could our autonomy from the State and I banged heads with the State a good deal, probably some of it unnecessarily, but I like to think that I made life a lot easier for Ira Baumgarden who

followed me and softened up the State so that he could do some of the good, innovative stuff that he's done.

INTERVIEWER: So, the LEAP program, as it was --

MR. QUIMBY: M-m h-m-m.

INTERVIEWER: -- basically provided tuition reimbursement to State employees who wanted to further their higher education?

MR. QUIMBY: Well, it -- reimbursement was part of it, but the majority of it was actually prepaid. There was no -- we -- God, we had -- we hired one consultant that turned out to be abysmal, but fortunately we didn't pour a lot of money on him, and we hired a guy named Jim Kittler, who I think used to work for the Teachers' Retirement System, who wrote us based on what we wanted to do and it was one of the more intellectually challenging exercises that I had.

We had to construct an algorithm that would queue people in order and allocate courses fairly because we knew, obviously, we had much more -- many more people than slots, so the

question is how are we going to intelligently, fairly and consistently get people into these slots, and we constructed about a ten-step algorithm that required 32 subprograms that Jim Kittler wrote the subprograms for. It was on a -- I can't remember what kind of IBM computer it was, but it was slow enough so that, you know, we get the thing all cued up and then we go ca-ching and it would have to run all weekend and half of Monday to spit out all of the printout of who was gonna get -- it was really -- it was a nice piece of work, and thank God I had some really good people that worked on it, that helped me do it, but it was a -- that was a -- I was afraid that I was not going to be able to pull it off when I had -- there was a lot of mental struggle and a lot of blackness and I remember going to the conventions and you'd need to present your report, and you could see the line forming at the microphone of people and you knew who was gonna ask you a knowledge question, who was just getting up there to break your ass, and who was your ally (laughter).

You could see this line forming and it

finally dawned on me, probably about two years before I left, and it's sort of like, well, duh, you know what? You are the servant of these people. This is their program that you have custody of so, of course, they're entitled to answer -- to answers to their questions and you listen to them and you give them good answers, you know, as well as you can as opposed to, you know, doggone it, why do you have to screw up? You know, we thought about this. We know -- I mean I wouldn't say that, but that's what's goin' through your head and things got a lot easier after that, surprisingly enough.

INTERVIEWER: As you were putting the LEAP program together, did you have any models to follow.

MR. QUIMBY: None. I mean maybe there were -- I looked for some. I didn't find any. Most of them were based on tuition reimbursement and we wanted -- I mean tuition reimbursement, you gotta have the money to put up front and we didn't want to have to -- we didn't want to have to do that, so we identified courses at schools, community colleges, largely some four-year

schools around the area that we thought were appropriate, passed out a catalog to various places. People applied for them and one of the queueing principles about who got in first was did the person apply and was rejected because they'd go to the head of the queue the next time they applied, and there was com...it was quite complex, but the -- there weren't -- there weren't any models that I knew of.

INTERVIEWER: So this was largely a ground-breaking member benefit?

MR. QUIMBY: Yes, it was, and it wasn't -- and Ira has done a great deal with it since then. There was probably so much more innovative stuff that I could have done had I felt more secure with the Governor's Office of Employee Relations, but there were some people over there that I thought were gonna steal our thunder and I didn't particularly want it stolen, so --

INTERVIEWER: So this was -- this was a program that basically gave CSEA members the opportunity to better themselves and ostensibly to advance in their careers?

MR. QUIMBY: Yes. Yep. Yeah, and we had courses targeted for various bargaining units. There -- there -- we had operational courses, institutional courses and administrative courses, and if you were in the institutional bargaining unit and applied for a course that was more job-related to your actual function you went ahead farther in the queue. You got more priority than if you were in the operational unit and wanted to take, I don't know, typing or something.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. One of the things I think is always interesting about CSEA, particularly since the PS&T unit has gone on the State side --

MR. QUIMBY: M-m h-m-m.

INTERVIEWER: -- you very often see situations where people will go through the CSEA ranks and then actually advance out of the bargaining unit.

MR. QUIMBY: M-m h-m-m.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think that creates in terms of the dynamic for the -- for the Union in terms of having satisfied and

capable members available for Union activity and involvement?

MR. QUIMBY: That's an interesting question. Well, I think to the -- it's diff... it's not as prevalent -- I don't know what your ratio of State is to political subdivision. The problem that you describe isn't -- isn't a player in the political subdivision because in political subs you represent --

INTERVIEWER: Well, sometimes you --

MR. QUIMBY: -- all --

INTERVIEWER: (continuing) -- the management ranks.

MR. QUIMBY: Right, all of them, but I think -- I think the tip-off point for going into a management rank is a higher threshold than for going into the PS&T. I've seen -- I don't know that it's really that big. I don't know that it's really that big a factor because I think a lot of people's success and effectiveness in being a Union officer has to do with heart -- I mean obviously a lot of it has to do with mental horsepower also, but I think a lot of it has to do with a heart -- with heart

and dedication to the labor movement and I think that may be more present in the -- at sort of lower organizational rank perhaps than it is when you get in -- in higher -- in higher -- I don't know that that's a problem really.

INTERVIEWER: As you look back over the time that you spent in CSEA --

MR. QUIMBY: M-m h-m-m.

INTERVIEWER: -- what do you think were the most important benchmark events?

MR. QUIMBY: Well, Dutchess County strike -- the Dutchess County strike was probably one, just because that was historic. The loss of the PS&T, obviously, is another. The affiliation with AFSCME. The affiliation with AFSCME is another. The passage of the Taylor Law. Obviously that happened. It was there. We can't have a Union -- harder to have a Union without a collective bargaining statute. I'd say those were probably -- probably the biggies.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Tell me about some of the personalities that -- that you worked with over your many years. You mentioned

a few of them in passing. Tell me about your experiences with Ted Wenzel.

MR. QUIMBY: I didn't have a whole lot of -- of contact with him. He wasn't really what I would have conjured up in my mind, I don't think, for a union president. I think President McGowan was more the prototypical union president. Didn't have a whole lot to do -- part of that was 'cause I was a field rep and Ted didn't get to Dutchess and Ulster County all that much.

INTERVIEWER: What was -- but what was your perception of him?

MR. QUIMBY: Not -- probably not in terribly close touch with the membership and maybe educated beyond the point of contact with the people that he represented. (Laughter.) Nice enough guy but didn't -- I was very glad when Bill McGowan got elected. I thought, well, you know, by God, now we've got somebody that I can work for well.

INTERVIEWER: Can you think of an anecdote about Bill McGowan that kind of captures the man?

(Pause.)

MR. QUIMBY: Well, I do -- I don't know that this captures him, really, I'd have to think about that. But I do know that when I went to talk to him about -- I was usually looking for money or support or something for LEAP or the -- certainly as Director of Education, and if he -- if he took your proposal and put it in his briefcase and said I'm gonna take it home and study it, you're screwed. (Laughter.) You could pretty well kiss it goodbye.

And I remember his secretary -- I could never pronounce her last name, but it was Kathy Wojo. We called her "Wojo" for short -- called me up one afternoon and -- and I always made sure that I stayed on good terms with her, which wasn't hard because she was very nice, but she was a good yardstick. You know, I'd call her up and say is Bill -- is Bill in a good mood? I gotta get somethin' done, and she'd tell me, yeah, come; no, don't come. And so for the -- you know, that was worth a couple of dinners and I appreciated her.

But one afternoon she called me up and she said, have you got anything that needs to get signed or -- and I said, well, there's some stuff but it's not quite done yet. She said, bring it up here. I said it's not done yet. She said have I ever steered you wrong? Bring it up here. (Laughter.) I said, okay, so I did and I walked in and he approved it. I don't know what happened that afternoon, but just three or four things; bing, bing, bing, bing, bing.

INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m. Now tell me a little bit about Joe McDermott and your perception of him.

MR. QUIMBY: I didn't think he thought terribly highly of the staff. I think it was -- there -- I think one of the reasons that I decided to go to work for Cornell was that the election -- there were -- the election was between McDermott and Moore and it was gonna be hard going from working for Bill McGowan to working for -- for either one of them. I said -- you know, it would have been different. I probably could have got used to it, but it's

kind of like, well, Tom, maybe it's time you look somewhere else.

Because I -- by that time I'd been there for 14 years and --

INTERVIEWER: How about Irene Carr?

MR. QUIMBY: Irene Carr was very -- was always very supportive, very good-hearted. I liked Irene a good deal. It always seemed like she had the interests of the membership at heart. I'm sure McDermott and Moore did as well, but --

INTERVIEWER: What do you remember about the young Danny Donohue who was the region president down in Long Island?

MR. QUIMBY: I remember meeting him a couple a times when we went down there. Long Island to me always seemed like kind of an entity unto itself 'cause I was from Upstate (laughter) and the only thing that was more foreign than Long Island was New York City, but he certainly had a good reputation. He was always -- he was always very personable and very cordial and took the time to talk to ya, which I -- which I appreciated and he -- he did -- I

went to the LEAP dinner that they had, the celebration of how many years of LEAP or whatever and he showed up at that and he gave a really nice talk. It was like he gave a hoot about that and so --

INTERVIEWER: What would you say would be the best thing that happened to you while you were in CSEA and the worst thing that happened to you?

(Laughter.)

MR. QUIMBY: Oh, golly. Oh, well, one of the worst -- I don't know that I'll be able to give you the best thing 'cause I'll have to think about that, but the thing that sticks in my mind the hardest was when I was Director of Education I put together the first staff training program they ever had, which was a bunch of four workshops that we delivered to the regions and culminating in a meeting at Lake George and we had groups set up that were gonna solve a case and I had planned on working the regional directors in with the groups.

Well, I'm up there and I'm kind of sweating, hoping this thing is gonna go because

this isn't peanuts, you know. It costs money to lodge people and bring 'em up and blah blah blah blah, and I didn't want the thing to flop. So I got a call from Dolan, that's one person we haven't talked about who was quite prominent. I get a call from Dolan who calls me in and there's all the regional directors standing there with Dolan, Quimby standing my himself, and Joe saying, Well, Tom, I think the most appropriate role for the regional directors is to walk around to the various work groups and make sure that people are workin'. I don't think they oughta be in those groups, do you?

Rhetorical question, you know. They're all saying what am I gonna say, so obviously they'd gone to him and said screw this. You know, we're not gonna be -- we're gonna be a policing function, so I said, you know, I clearly looked like I disagreed with 'em but I said, well, if that's the way it's gonna go down, that's the way it's gonna go down, and went out and proceeded to have a good deal to drink because we were having a banquet.

And then at the banquet Joe gets up

and he puts his arm around me, he said, Tommy, he said, you done a great job. I said, I feel like a fire hydrant in a parade of dogs.

(Laughter.)

MR. QUIMBY: And the best thing? Probably the memory of toasting my hands over a trash barrel during the Rockland County strike where we turned out to be victorious. That was -- that was appropriate exercise of muscle and it -- it paid off well.

INTERVIEWER: What -- why do you think CSEA has been able to survive and endure for close to a hundred years?

MR. QUIMBY: Well, I think we have -- I think -- you know, and I still use a "we." I haven't worked here in -- since '88, but I still -- you know, I still catch my...so it sticks with you.

For some reason, I think it builds a good deal of loyalty. CSEA has a certain innocence that -- in the short term, sometimes it can kind of get in the way, but in the long term I think it's what keeps it honest and attuned to the membership and you can't say

that, unfortunately, about all labor unions, so -- and I think that the fact that CSEA is very much a grassroots organization helps, but I think -- and there's -- there was a professor at Cornell, Maurice Neufelder, who died last year at about 90, but he always said to me when he heard -- I had him in graduate school at Cornell -- when I heard that the -- he heard that I was going to work for CSEA.

He said, great. I have a tremendous amount of admiration for them because they're a very democratic union, and this was a guy that believed in democracy, and every time that I saw him he'd just -- how are things at CSEA? Great union, democratic. So -- and he was a well-respected person in his field.

So I think the fact that it's democratic, that maybe because of that it has a certain innocence, I think that keeps it going and helps protect it.

INTERVIEWER: Good stopping point.

MR. QUIMBY: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: All right. Well, this was great.

MR. QUIMBY: Wow. I --

INTERVIEWER: Great stuff.

MR. QUIMBY: I enjoyed it.

(Whereupon, the interview of Tom Quimby was concluded.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, JEANNE M. CARPENTIER, do hereby certify that the preceding is a true and accurate transcription of the taped proceedings held in the above-entitled matter to the best of my knowledge and belief.

_____

Sworn to before me this

_____day of_____

_____

My commission expires

_____