King County
Landmarks Commission
Parks, Planning and
Resources Department
1115 Smith Tower
506 Second Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98104
(206) 296-4858

INTERVIEWEE: Ray L. Olson

I, the undersigned interviewee, hereby give and grant to the King County Historic Preservation Program this recorded interview and subsequent ones for such research, instruction, publication, and other purposes as the Program shall determine. Copies of the tape and resultant transcripts may be obtained by individuals and institutions. All of my rights in this information I dedicate to the public. This gift does not preclude my use of the information included in the recordings.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS:

Ray L. Olson
Interviewee's signature

11-23-88
Date

Esther H. Mumford
Interviewer's signature

11/23/88
Date

RAY OLSEN
BUDGET DIRECTOR FOR COMMISSIONER ED MUNRO
35TH DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE

KING COUNTY GOVERMENTAL HISTORY PROJECT -

INTERVEWEE: RAYMOND OLSEN

INTERVIEWER: ESTHER MUNFORD

DATE: NOVEMBER 23, 1988

DRAFT

Interview with Ray Olsen, November 23, 1988
Interviewer: Esther Mumford

Mumford: This is an interview with Mr. Ray Olsen, in his home, on November 23, 1988. Esther Mumford interviewing. This is a recording.

Mr. Olsen, I'd like to start with some auto-biographical. Would you please state your full name, date and place of birth, parents' name?

Olsen: My name is Raymond Olsen, born in Baker City, Oregon, September the fourth, nineteen hundred and four; father's name was Louis Olsen; mother's name was Alice Olsen.

Mumford: Any sisters or brothers? Sisters or brothers?

Olsen: No brothers and no sisters.

Mumford: Did you spend all your growing up

Olsen: Came to Seattle when I was 11 years old.

Mumford: Have you been here ever since?

Olsen: Lived here and Bremerton and Seattle ever since.

Mumford: Would you give me information about your education?

Olsen: Graduated Bremerton Schools and Lincoln High School in Seattle; also Bremerton Business College. As far as I went to school.

Mumford: So, from Bremerton Business School, then you went to where?

Olsen: Went into the Men's Schooling and furnishing goods business at the early age of 20 years old. Soon as I was out of school, and continued into that business for about 15 years.

[Tape off/on]

Olsen: ...store.

Mumford: This was in 1939?

Olsen: Yeah, I sold my store and Warren Magnuson appointed me to take the 1940 Assistant Supervisor to take the 1940 census. So that's when I came to Seattle. To be the Assistant District Supervisor to take the 1940 Census in the First Congressional District, along with Joseph P. Adams, who was appointed District Supervisor. And that's when we took the 1940 Census. And that's when I moved to Seattle from Bremerton.

Mumford: This then is your first interest into political...?

Olsen: Actually I got started in politics in 1940 in Seattle after I'd taken the 1940 Census.

Mumford: How long did you remain Assistant District Supervisor?

Olsen: Six months.

Mumford: Okay, and once that job was done?

Olsen: Yeah. When that sentence was over. It took six months to take the census. We had opened an office in the Fourth & Pike Building. We had 10,000 applications for jobs, and I hired 360 enumerators. We had 10,000 applications for people for work. And completed the job in six months. And then after the census was over, Mr. Adams and I took on the job as being the campaign managers for C. C. Dill to be his campaign managers for King County for Governor. He was running for Govenor for the State of Washington against Lang~~ley~~. Langlie

Mumford: Dill lost to Langley.

Olsen: Yeah, we lost the campaign. We went to--the night of the election we were ahead several thousand votes, but when the votes come in from over in Spokane County where Dill hometown was, he lost in his own district over there. Langley beat him in his hometown. We got him a plurality over here in King County, but Dill lost over there, in his hometown. And that's the day the bridge fell down over the--the Narrows Bridge. The _____ girdy we called it.

Mumford: How do you account for--Now you worked on the campaign from the beginnings, had you not?

Olsen: Yeah.

Mumford: How do you account for the lost?

Olsen: Well, we just never could account for Dill losing in his hometown, over there in own district in Eastern Washington. Of course we took care of--We were worrying about King County and the surrounding territory here. We got him about a thirty-seven hundred plurality over here, but he was always telling us "wait until the votes come in from over in Eastern Washington. We'll win by a big majority". Heh heh heh. "You fellas can hold it over here, why we'll be in great shape." Well, that didn't happen that way. Instead of winning greatly in his own district, why he lost.

Mumford: Who was the Adams? You mentioned Adams, also campaign manager. Adams.

Olsen: Joseph P. Admas. Joe Adams. Joseph P. Adams. He's a retired Brigadere General in the Marine Corps now. Shortly after the election was over, he had leave with his--he was in charge of the Marine Corps Reserve here out at the Naval Station here in Sandpoint. He had to leave with the war. So, he ended up--he's retired now and lives in Penscola. We correspond quite often. Once in a while I call him on the phone and talk to him. We chat with each other. He was a local fella at the University; he was an attorney here in town. Married a Tacoma girl who also graduated University of Washington, I think. He was a graduate of University of Washington.

Yeah, Ellen and I were all set. We were just going together. We were all set to moved down to Olympia. I was going to me the Director of Licenses. (Laughter)

Mumford:

Olsen: Already to take over down there and go to work for four years as the Director of Licenses and instead of that, we didn't have any job. I was all through with the census and all through on the political job, so. When that was over with, Earl Millikan decided to run for Mayor. So I got busy and went to work working in his campaign for Mayor. I worked--he was our County Auditor at that time. Very popular fella. And he was elected Mayor. And so when he was elected Mayor--Bobby Morris was his Chief Assistant and he was appointed...

Mumford: County Auditor.

Olsen: ...County Auditor to take Millikan's place. And so I had a job in the Auditor's Office. And I went to work in the Auditor's--the County Auditor's Office. So I had a job for a while there. And Bobby was the new County Auditor; Millikan was the new Mayor and so we had a nice set up there.

Mumford: So that went according to hope and expectation.

Olsen: What?

Mumford: That went according to hopes and expectations.

Olsen: Yeah. That one worked pretty good. It was alright. And I was working along there in the Auditor's Office and Al Rochester, who was a very close friend of Warren G. Magnuson, our Congressman at that time, was the Director of Office of Government Report in the Federal Office Building. And he was also a good strong Democrat and a good member of the Young Men's Democratic Club, which I was a member, most all of the county employees were. hahahahaha And that was one of the largest Democratic clubs in the country, Young Men's Democratic Club. Had a very strong membership from the County Courthouse. Met every week.

Al was head of the Office of Government Reports, and he had an opening in his office where he was allowed to hired an Administrative Assistant. And I don't know what happened but he had his eye on me as a kind of a hard worker. And so one day he says, "How would you like to be my assistant?" Well I said, "Well, I sure would like to be your assistant." He says, "Good." He said, "You come up to the office and we'll talk about it." So I went up to his office at the U.S. Courthouse and he had me fill out an application and he got Warren Magnuson's okay on it. Warren had already appointed me to take the census over in Bremerton in Kitsap County, and got his okay on the job. Before I knew it, I had an appointment to go to work at the office as an

assistant to Al Rochester, as his assistant, and also got my report, which paid a lot more money than I was making in the Courthouse down at Bobby Morris' office and the Auditor's Office.

Mumford: What was your title in the Auditor's Office and what was your...?

Olsen: I was Assistant, ohh, what was my title? Ummm. I had a title. Let me think what it was.

Mumford: Okay. If you think of it as we go on, just say it.

Olsen: Yeah.

Mumford: How was it that Magnuson appointed you to be the Assistant District Supervisor for the census? Now you had your own store at that point.

Olsen: No. I had sold my store.

Mumford: You sold your store but you had not--Had you been active in politics and also clubs?

Olsen: I was Precinct Committee.

Mumford: Okay.

Olsen: I was the Democratic Precinct--It had to be a Democratic Precinct Committeeman to have any of those jobs. Even to be an enumerator. We had 10,000 applications, but the only ones we interviewed were

Precinct Committeeman. They're the ones that got the jobs. And even in 1950, when I was Assistant Director of the census, same deal. You had to be a Precinct Committeeman to be intereviewed first and if you qualified, you had to give them a test. And they had to pass the test. And they were tough tests. They weren't just handed over the job. They had to--The tests were really tough.

Mumford: Now, you were a Precinct Committeeman at that point which presupposes that you were involved in politics.

Olsen: Yeah. You had to be a Democratic Precinct Committeeman.

Mumford: When did you get involved, actually get involved in politics?

Olsen: Well I was a Precinct Committeeman when I was in Bremerton. And I had my store, but I was a Democrat. I voted for Al--What was the name of the guy that ran for President? Al...

Mumford: Al Smith?

Olsen: Smith was the first President I voted for and I've been a Democratic ever since.

Mumford: When did you _____. Was this while you were still in business school or...?

Olsen: Yes. When I was in [interference]

Mumford: That was the first...

Olsen: ...And I had been a Precinct Committeeman. I've been working for the Democratic Party every since. And that's why I was--County Chairman came to me when I didn't have--I'd sold my store and I wasn't doing anything so I was eligible to be the Assistant Director to take the census. And it had to be somebody from Kitsap County because Adams was from King County to be the Director. So I was picked from Kitsap County to be the Assistant Director to take the 1940 census.

Mumford: Since you sort of brought this to a close, I have a miscellaneous question I'd like to insert here.

Olsen: Yeah. Okay.

Mumford: And one of those is concerning the Bill Langley election. Now you expected fully to have that job in the Licenses Department. Were you all set for a victory celebration when that vote came in from Spokane or had you gotten that far?

Olsen: Well, we were set to have a victory celebration in--We had--they didn't have their big get togethers like they do nowadays on election nights, the get together, you know, like they do down at the heh heh League of Women Voters and down at the hotels and places. We had a little headquarter in the Fourth & Pike Building where our office was. We thought we were--we got the election

returns in from our King County Auditor's office. We knew that we had won. Of course, the election returns didn't come in as all over the state in 1940 like they do now. You know, it was hard to tell. We had--We really didn't know. We thought we had won about one o'clock at night. But then the next morning, well, we got up, the morning P.I. was out with the election returns that Langley had won. When the returns coming in from Eastern Washington, there was a lot different. hahahahahaha

Mumford: You mentioned with a chuckled. You chuckled when you said that as a county employee you were--that all the county employees were members of the Young Men's Democratic Club.

Olsen: Oh, not all of them but I mean a great many of them were...

Mumford: Okay.

Olsen: ...practically--I don't know what you mean now.

Mumford: My question is really--I'm concerned with was that sort of a prerequisite for having the employment?

Olsen: Oh no. It wasn't a prerequisite. It just--it just seemed like--Well, it was the thing to do. It was the thing to do to be a member of the Young Man's Democratic Club. And each office, everybody--practically all the fellas all belonged to the club. It was the thing to do was to be...

Mumford: Was that a result of the Roosevelt ascendancy? When Roosevelt came into office?

Olsen: I suppose. It was a strong--Well practically every other office was a Democratic office, you know. They're all Democratic holders, all elected on the Democratic ticket, so, I don't think there was too many of them workin if they weren't a Democratic--supposedly a Democratic. hahaha I wouldn't think.

Mumford: You mentioned working in the Auditor's Office and then getting a better job.

Olsen: I don't think there was anybody there running around there with a Republican ticket any place.

[laugher from both]

Mumford: You were told to come down, take the test if you wanted the job.

Olsen: Oh, you mean umm...

Mumford: I'm moving on now from...

Olsen: Well we gave--the people that were good Precinct Committeeman and Precinct workers, you know, come down and qualify; come down and take the test. And then if they took the test and passed them, why then they were qualified for the jobs. But...

Mumford: But you were already in County government beginning with your Auditor's position, permanent county...?

Olsen: You mean for the census workers?

Mumford: No, moving from there to when you worked in the Auditor's office.

Olsen: Oh no. I'm talking about the census worker.

Mumford: Oh, okay. Go ahead then.

Olsen: If they wanted a job to work on as a census taker, they had to take the test.

Mumford: Right.

Olsen: And we gave them the test and they had to pass the test.

Mumford: And you said it was a rigorous test.

Olsen: A good strong test. You bet they were.

Mumford: Right. Okay. Okay, now I wanted to move on to your position, you own personal position in the Auditor's Office where you had been a good worker.

Olsen: Yeah.

Mumford: Okay. Then you had a chance for advancement.

Olsen: No. They didn't have any chance.

Mumford: Well, I don't mean in the Auditor's Office but in another

department.

Olsen: No. No. You were hired for a specific job in the Auditor's Office. I worked in the, ohh, I forget what we called it. In the Recording Department.

Mumford: Okay. And about how long did you stay in the Auditor's Office?

Olsen: Oh I was there 'bout a year, 14 months. But I had to learn to record in the big books, to record the papers that come in each day. You know. And it took some time. You had to learn to do it. And it was not easy and that's where you sat and write the stuff in the book, you know, record the papers that come in. And that's a different type of, oh, I don't know what you call them now. Well, there's all kinds of papers that come in. You have to record them.

Mumford: You're still recording. Yeah.

Olsen: Yeah.

Mumford: Uh-huh.

Olsen: And they go on a certain book.

Mumford: Um-hum. Okay. And then the next job.

Olsen: You mean when I went to work for the Office of Government Reports?

Mumford: Um-hm.

Olsen: Well that was a lot different.

Mumford: Okay. You had to learn all over again.

Olsen: Oh yeah.

Mumford: Something new.

Olsen: Yes. Um-hm

Mumford: Okay. Now, you had been approached to come and take the test for that, had you not?

Olsen: No, I didn't take any test.

Mumford: You didn't take a test for that?

Olsen: No.

Mumford: Okay, go ahead and tell me a little bit about that.

Olsen: Well, that was more of a informational deal.

? It turned into the Office of War Information.

Olsen: I hadn't been there more than a couple of months, so they changed the name of it. It was turned into the Office of War Information and everything was secret. And so I had--I couldn't devulge what went on in there.

Mumford: Did you start after Pearl Harbor or just before.

Olsen: Oh it was after Pearl Harbor. So then I had to, haha, be careful with what I--everthing we sent in was over teletype over to Washington D.C. direct. And it was all done by teletype and secret code. And that's about as far as I can explain it to you.

Mumford: How long were you in that office then?

Olsen: Oh, a couple of years.

Mumford: And then did you continue in county government? Did you continue in county government?

Olsen: In that office? No. Stayed there until that job was over and they discontinued the Office of Government Reports and I was out of a job. Then I went to work for the Restaurant Association.

? Community Fund.

Olsen: Oh yes. I went to work for the Office of--the Community Fund.

? Today it is called the United Way.

Olsen: It's United Way now. I worked for them for a couple of years.

Mumford: This was after the war? Or was it still.

Olsen: Yeah, after the war.

Mumford: Uh-huh. Late forties.

Olsen: Yeah.

Mumford: Okay.

Olsen: In the _____ Building were Nordstroms is now. That's the building that Nordstroms are in now. We were on the third and fourth floors there then. I was in charge of the government and--Let's see. I had the government--and the county, parts of the Community Fund at that time.

Mumford: So you were able to use the experience that you had coming out of county government, and you knew people as well.

Olsen: Yeah.

Mumford: Uh-huh.

Olsen: I had the government and county divisions of the Community Funds.

Mumford: Okay. And from the Community Funds did you then go into the legislature?

Olsen: No.

? Washington State Restaurant Association.

Olsen: I went to Washington State Restaurant Association...

Mumford: Um-hm.

Olsen: ...as a public relations director and editor of their magazine.

And I worked for them for nine years in the Seaboard Building, which was right next door to the _____ Building there. heh heh

Mumford: So you didn't go very far. ahehheh

Olsen: Yeah. Fourth & Pike. heh heh heh

End of Tape 1, Side 2

Olsen: ...1947 I went to Olympia as the Assistant Director for the Department of Transportation. Paul Revelle was the Director, and we lived in Olympia for four years under the Waldron Administration.

Mumford: And then after his administration ended?

Olsen: Well, he was defeated and--Let's see. Then Langley come back again? Langley was real active again. And I moved back to Seattle and went to work for the Washington State Restaurant Association, which you have down there already.

Mumford: Right. And you said it was nine years.

Olsen: Nine years.

Mumford: Um-hm.

Olsen: Um-hm.

Mumford: Okay. Then after that

? In the beginning of that he ran for the legislature.

Olsen: Yeah.

Mumford: In the beginning of the Restaurant Association job?

Olsen: Yeah.

Mumford: Tell me about that Mr. Olsen.

Olsen: In 1950 I ran for the Washington State Restaurant Association, uh I ran for the legislature and was elected.

Mumford: You were representing what district?

Olsen: State representative in te 35th District, which was the downtown district, the downtown area.

Mumford: Okay. Now this is only ten years from the time that you were Assistant District Supervisor for the census, only ten years between...

Olsen: Oh, I took the 1950--Come back in 1949 from the legislature--I guess in 1950 we came back. I got back up here just in time to take the 1950 census.

Mumford: Just in time.

Olsen: Just in time with no job or anything, and so I took the--I was appointed by Mitchell. Senator Mitchell to be the Assistant District Supervisor to take the 1950 census again. So I did that. And then when the census was over, I went to work for the Washington State Restaurant Association to get the six months in there for the census. hahahaha.

Mumford: Okay. You represented the 35th District in the legislature.

Olsen: 35th.

Mumford: 35th. I'm sorry.

Olsen: Which was the downtown area. It was a nice small, compact area. Ran from Broadway to the Waterfront and from Yesler Way to

? Denny.

Olsen: No. A little further over. What's the next street over that? Where we turn to go to the garage.

Mumford: Mercer?

Olsen: Next street over from Mercer.

Mumford: Republican?

Olsen: No.

? Ryan.

Olsen: Ryan.

Mumford: Ryan. heh heh heh. Okay, so it was a small district. It was a highly varied district though, wasn't it?

Olsen: Huh?

Mumford: It was quite varied. You had a variety of populations; you had a mix of residentials and businesses.

Olsen: Well it was nice. Just a nice small area. It wasn't all cut up like it is now. This area is cut up into--part of it's in the 36th--You know where we go to meet now? Clear over by the Ballard Locks, for this precinct. For the Horizon House Precinct would be in. hahahahahaha. The way they've gerrymandered the ground.

Mumford: Uh-huh, uh-hum.

Olsen: Yeah, it's terrible.

Mumford: How was it that you decided to run for the legislature?

Olsen: Well, when I was with the Department of Transportation and I was an advisor to Representative Jeanette _____'s Commerce Committee when I was done in Olympia, to her Commerce Committee on transportation. And I was right in there, pretty near every day it seems exactly how every thing was running, how

the operation was. And I just made up my mind that I wanted to be part of the operation. And I seen how things were going and I decided that I wanted to introduce some legislation that I wanted to take care of a few things in this State which I did.

Mumford: What were the most important things that you wanted to see happen in the state or that you

Olsen: Oh, I don't remember now.

Mumford: Well, you can go back and find out what bills you introduced. That required some cooperation, of course, to get things passed. You already knew people in Olympia because you had lived there working for the Department of Transportation prior to serving in the legislature.

Olsen: Yeah. Well that didn't make much difference when it come to running. That don't help you. heh heh. You got a whole bunch of new people up here to run with. But it was kind of different to run in this district and the downtown area like this, cause it was all apartment houses and very few homes in the district. I did it all by direct mail, practically. We didn't have hardly any meetings, you know. We just had a small once a month meeting of our little 35th District club. We met in the courthouse. And didn't have very large meetings. I did the campaigning all by direct mail. And of course when the freeway went through here, it

took out all our, most of our, a lot of our good population through here; right through here. A lot of apartment houses and hotels and stuff. But I had a lot of good votes in. Cut down the population a lot. So that was...And then they gerrymandered everything around when they re-district. They took out a lot of the--cut-off a part of the population on the other end there. Queen Anne. And took away a lot of the votes I had there; so it was no use running again. So I just quit. No use.

Mumford: But you didn't give up on politics, did you?

Olsen: Oh no. I kept at it. You know, I donate to the party and--well, I'm not exactly as I use to be. aheh heh

Mumford: Do you still go to Committee meetings?

Olsen: Oh yeah. Go to a Committee meeting once in a while.

Mumford: You were an aide Ed Munro who was a county councilman.

Olsen: Oh yeah. Um-hm.

Mumford: And I'd like for you to just tell me how you--how that came about, you serving as aide to him, being selected and serving.

Olsen: Well, he asked me to be his Budget Director. We served in the legislature together; he was--we were, uh, we were friends, you know, before that. And we served in the legislature together and he asked me to be his Budget Director and I accepted the job.

That was it. Aha ha ha ha ha ha. I was very happy to be his Budget Director, and uh...

Tape off/on

Mumford: Okay, You served eight terms in the Legislature. That meant ten _____ every two years.

Olsen: That's right.

Mumford: What was it like? I mean you just _____ you got yourself established on one thing. It was time to kind of going into another year and start that campaign again. Now, you said talked about that, I presume it was the first campaign of mail order and the success of that for going on to Olympia. Excuse me, not mail order, direct mail campaign and you success as a result of that. How was it the rest of your campaigns like?

Olsen: Well, there were all just about the same.

Mumford: You did kind of heavily on the mailing...

Olsen: Oh yes.

Mumford: ...for the future ones too?

Olsen: Yeah. Um-hm.

Mumford: The rest of them.

Olsen: I remember one year, I guess it was the year we were over on Mercer Street, we decided to, the first mailing we sent out. We sent it so we'd get it first class, so we'd get the returns back. And we got about 11 sacks of mail back, you know, so we could correct it, you see. The second mailing.

? Ray had a bunch of dear ladies who would sit hour after hour addressing these envelopes from the telephone directory that gives--What do ya call it? The Reverse _____. And so they'd send these out and send them out, and we often wondered about the turn over of people, and so they tried it this one time, First Class mail. And as he said, so many came back that we were really quite shocked that.

Olsen: Well, anyhow, to tell you, we got this first class sack back. Eleven big sacks of mail back. And we started going through it, and you'd be surprised what a flock of emeralds we got back with checks in them. You know, it wasn't my mail, but we got a whole slug of letters back with...

? First class mail.

Olsen: ...First class mail with checks in them.

Mumford: You said it wasn't your mail.

Olsen: It wasn't mine.

? No, personal letters to _____ Fall.

Olsen: The mail department had done a terrible job on

? Um-hm.

Mumford: Just lumped them all together?

Olsen: You know and did it, you know. We took it all by hand and sorted it. We got all those back and we took them down to the Postmaster, with all those checks in them, you know. It was terrible.

? Just a _____ case of how mail can always get delivered. Get lost

Olsen: All the checks, hundreds of dollars of checks that hadn't got delivered. They would of just went into the junk mail and been burned up, you know, or whatever they do with that junk mail.

Mumford: You had--Mrs. Olsen had mentioned a group of ladies who would come in and address...

Olsen: Oh yeah. Well, we used--I had about five women that worked--I paid them a penny a piece for those envelopes, you know, to address them. See. They got paid for it. They didn't--and they were old gals that worked and had good handwriting. They'd get a penny a piece for each envelope they addressed.

Mumford: You used pretty much the same person over and over again?

Olsen: Oh yeah. Sure.

Mumford: Um-hm. Did you have other groups or other people who would...?

Olsen: No. Just the same ones all the time.

Mumford: I was wondering about some other way of assisting the campaign.

Olsen: No. Oh they campaign different, all the others...The way they do it now, they do it by computers now and everything else. But in those days--first we used to go down to the Auditor's Office and take'em off the precinct books. The first set of envelopes. And then we'd bring them back and then take'em off of our own sets, see. Make the second and third sets of envelopes, see, from the precinct books. But they do it so differently now; they've got such fancy ways of mailing people now, it's no comparison to what we did in the old days. ha hahahahahaha

Mumford: You started with Ed Munro as a Commissioner.

Olsen: Oh sure.

Mumford: And then continued after charter government came in.

Olsen: Yeah. I was opposed to the council form of government. Ed was for the council form of government, but he was sorry afterwards.

ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha.

Mumford: Why was he sorry?

Olsen: Oh well, I don't know. Sorry it wasn't working. All that overhead. You know I don't know how many people they got working down there on that budget, but it used to be five of us do the budget. They got about 25 of them doing the budget now, or more.

Mumford: But you feel that...

Olsen: Ha ha ha ha ha ha

Mumford: ...changing the form of government changed added considerably to the payroll of the county or...?

Olsen: Oh no. The county government is greatly increased down there; the number of employees now and what it used to be.

Mumford: Um-hm.

Olsen: I don't know how many--how big a staff the County Council is got down there now, but the--and how big a staff that Tim Hill's got now the County Executive; how big a staff he's got now.

Mumford: You started to mention to me when I came in that you had worked with various county governments when you were in the Legislature. Would you expand on that please.

Olsen: I worked with various county governments. Well, there's the

Associaion of Counties which all the counties belong to, the Associatio of Counties. And they always have legislation that all the counties are interested in. And I used to be the chief sponsor of most of their legislation. I think one session down there--the '65 session, the last session I was there, I got about 38 bills that I entered this for them. And passed about 35 of them for them. That's never happened before for--to get that many bills passed. And I was the chief sponsor for all the bills, for all those county bills. And then in the past, even when I first went down there, I was the first one to introduce bills for the counties to--I introduced--The first bill I introduced was to get help from welfare and insurance for the counties' employees which they didn't have and for the state employees which they didn't have. That was one of my major deals that I did in the state. King County, of course, didn't have any health and welfare insurance, health insurance. But the King County insurance form--Then the next session I introduced a bill and got the sewer and water district employees insurance. Had to have a separate bill for them. Sewer and water district employees. Got that for them. It's been so long ago here, I can't remember.

Mumford: Mr. Olsen, that's quite an accomplished getting 35 bills passed in one session.

Olsen: Hoho. That don't happen.

Mumford: Yeah.

Olsen: You know, it's a...

Mumford: I'm just wondering how was it that you could do that?

Olsen: Well, I don't know.

Mumford: Was this because you feel that most legislators felt that this should--that this should be state law were totally convinced of it or did you do some persuasion on your own to bring them to that point?

Olsen: I just got these out of my drawer the other day here, lookin' at them. Well, I just had the right kind of stuff, you know.

Mumford: Well I think that the benefits helped benefit the colleges and all that and it's important too.

Olsen: Yeah, well you know of a little park, you know where the public market is?

Mumford: Um-hm.

Olsen: You know the little park there at the end of the market?

Mumford: I do.

Olsen: Well, I'm responsible for that park. Back in--I was the number one sponsor to turn that piece of property into a park when the

old Armory was there.

Mumford: How active were your constituents in letting you know what they wanted in way of legislation. Did you ever hear from them in that way?

Olsen: Only the unions, the unions you know. I passed the bill to eliminate the uh,...oh, what's this bill they...they used to make them take a test--Lie dectector test. Used to make the retail clerks take the lie dectector test. I eliminated the lie dectector test. They don't have to take anymore.

Mumford: Was that something the unions brought to your attention?

Olsen: Yeah.

Mumford: Uh-huh.

Olsen: Of course I'm an old retail clerk. I was past president of Retail Clerks Union at one time in my younger days. I was president of the Retail Clerks in Bremerton when I was a young youngster; when I was working.

Mumford: But the union was the most vocal of your constituents. Unions were.

Olsen: Well, I've always been a union man...

Mumford: Um-hm.

Olsen: ...you know, even when--I think I belonged---I was Vice President of the Labor Council in Bremerton when I had my store. aheh heh heh heh heh heh But uh, I had clerks working for me. But uh I was still--I've always been a union man.

Mumford: Um-hm. So they found a sympathetic person when they...

Olsen: Oh sure. I always voted for

tape off/on

Olsen: (laughing) When I was at the Worchester, I mean at the

? Community Fund. _____

Olsen: Yeah.

Mumford: And did you ran for it?

Olsen: I got nominated.

Mumford: City Council?

Olsen: Um-hm.

Mumford: Who nominated you?

Olsen: Oh, Lavine. (laughter) I was running against a tough one. (laughter) He'd been in there for 14 years.

Mumford: Oh, he was their opposition?

Olsen: Yeah.

Mumford: Right?

Olsen: Yeah.

Mumford: Oh! That was kind of funky.

[laughter]

Olsen: Oh, I ran just for fun, you know.

Mumford: Thought you'd give it a try.

Olsen: Yeah.

Mumford: Uh-huh.

tape off/on

Olsen: ...three campaigns.

Mumford: For John O'Brien.

Olsen: Um-hm.

Mumford: Did you do it just this passed?

Olsen: Yeah, sure.

Mumford: Oh! So you are--You didn't tell me you were that active.

[laughter]

Olsen: Well. You don't have to be too active to be a treasurer of a campaign you know. All you got to do is get on the telephone.

Mumford: Did you work in the presidential election?

Olsen: Do you see my money?

Mumford: Yes I do. This is a campaign _____ for _____ 1955, '53, 55.

Tape off/on

Mumford: You mentioned Jeanette _____ and the legislature. When you started in '40, what was women's role in county government?

Olsen: In King County Government?

Mumford: Um-hm.

Olsen: Can't remember anybody in--any women in King County government in the forties.

Mumford: Do you remember when they made their appearance when women became

on permanent? There had been women in the judiciary, for instance, well assistant prosecutor, deputy prosecutor. Don't remember?

Olsen: Can remember one, not until County Council started.

Mumford: That's the first your remember...

Olsen: Yeah.

Mumford: ...of women having a role. Okay. Do you remember seeing any people of color in county government in any roles.

? Sam Smith.

Olsen: Well Sam. But he wasn't county.

Mumford: He was city.

Olsen: He was in the city. Sam used to be nice to me in the legislature. Sat right behind me in the legislature; good friend.

Mumford: Um-hm.

Olsen: Very capable.

Mumford: Well, as far as county government is concerned.

Olsen: No.

Mumford: Can't remember in there?

Olsen: Um-um.

Tape off/on

Olsen: ...First bill I introduced was when I was a--first year I was a member of the Legislature.

Mumford: You introduced...?

Olsen: Daylight saving time. It's one of the first bills I introduced. And uh, let's see. Something else was very important to me in those days. (whisper from ?) Oh that's it. I'll get over to that later. Also I introduced the bill to put the picture on the driver's license. I had a hard time gettin' that passed.

Mumford: Does that grow out of your experiences in the Department of Transportation?

Olsen: No. I just um um reading about--something about that last night in a clippin' or something in my stuff last night about that.

Mumford: You sat on the House Rules Committee...

Olsen: Ohh yes.

Mumford: ...in the Legislature.

Olsen: Senior member three--Last three sessions I was on _____. That's how I was able to get so many bills in

the '65 session because I got them out of Rules. I was able to get these bills out of Rules.

Mumford: You were involved with the _____ of the World's Fair Commission from the very beginning.

Olsen: Yeah, I was the senior member of the World's Fair Committee, the first one appointed by O'Brien. I was the first member appointed to the World's Fair Commission. I introduced all legislation for the financing of the World's Fair from the state and also from the county.

Mumford: Were you pretty successful in getting everything that you asked for?

Olsen: I was successful. Yes. But I had to fight for it, but when the vote came, I got a good vote.

Mumford: Do you want to say anthing else about that?

End of Tape 1, Side 2