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# Red Harbor: Class, Violence, and Community in Grays Harbor, Washington

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**Abstract:**

This thesis is a study of class struggle and class formation in Grays Harbor, Washington, between the 1890s and 1933. Grays Harbor was the most prolific lumber-producing and lumber-shipping region in the world during the first three decades of the twentieth century. It was also a center of unionism and radicalism, a place where trade unionists, socialists, and revolutionary syndicalists formed large and lasting institutions. Despite the size and strength of local worker's organizations, divisions of race, ethnicity, gender, and ideology limited their effectiveness and opened them up to the employer attacks. Employers used strikebreakers, violence, labor spies, police, the courts, and blacklists to combat the trade union campaigns of the 1900s and the mass strikes led by revolutionary organizations during the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s. By 1912 the largest and most dynamic workers' organization on the Harbor was the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). The IWW led mass strikes in the region in 1912, 1917, and 1923. IWW halls in Grays Harbor also functioned as centers of culture and community, particularly for Finnish Americans, the largest ethnic group within the Grays Harbor IWW. Contrary to most of the historiography on the Pacific Northwest, the lumber industry, and the IWW, this study shows that the Grays Harbor IWW was a mass movement with a large base of support in the community. This community support was a major reason why the IWW was able to fend off the attacks of employers and the state during the 1910s and 1920s, and maintain a large membership into the 1930s. A quantitative analysis of IWW members during the 1920s and 1930s reveals that it was composed of large numbers of skilled workers, members of the middle class, married men, single and married women, and children. As late as the 1930s the Wobblies still counted over six hundred members and supporters in Grays Harbor, hosted elaborate cultural festivities, and lent support to the numerous lumber strikes that occurred during this period. This thesis concludes with an examination of the IWW and Communist Party as the groups struggled for members and influence during the 1930s.

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