

Museum of History and Industry
Historical Society of Seattle and King County

Transcript

Morris Alhadeff and Jerry Ross - taped interview

June 9, 1985

corrected and edited transcript approved July 18, 1985

Side A

This is an interview with Morris Alhadeff and Jerry Ross, on June 9, 1985. The interviewer is Lorraine McConaghy for the Museum of History and Industry.

Q. Please tell me what was Victory Square.

Mr. Alhadeff Victory Square was the name of a location, but it also represented an idea that some leaders in the city of Seattle had in 1942, not only to raise money for war bonds but also to recognize the efforts of our armed forces, the soldiers and sailors and marines, who were involved in the war.

It was formulated by a group of leading citizens in the community: Mr. Boettiger, who was at that time publisher of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, was one of the directors, and many, many other prominent citizens in the city of Seattle.

Q. So it wasn't the mayor's office?

Mr. Alhadeff No, it was a community effort.

Mr. Ross It was sponsored by the Seattle Ad Club.

Mr. Alhadeff The Seattle Advertising Club. Frank McCrillis was very active in it at the time, and the idea was to bring people together, and in order to do that we had to have entertainment, and we had to have VIP's - Very Important People - from the military and show business. That's where Jerry Ross, who's sitting across from me, was the greatest single factor because of his contacts in show biz, coming out of Hollywood and all that, that he was able to bring people like Jack Benny and Bing Crosby and those kind of people.

There was a committee, the Trustees of Victory Square.

Mr. Ross Al Jolson was the first of the big names. He was staying at the Olympic Hotel, and he was on his way to Alaska but they held him up because it looked very bad for us up there at that time. He was in there getting a shave, I remember, and he heard his name, and he said, "What about this Al Jolson?" The barber said, "You're Mr. Jolson, aren't you?"

And he said, "Yes. I'm on my way to Alaska for a war bond [drive] and the USO - the United Service Organization."

So he was there that first day and he was terrific - all those old Jolson songs, "Sonny Boy," and "Mammy" and all of that.

Q. How large were your crowds?

Mr. Alhadeff In Victory Square, which, by the way, was located between Fourth and Fifth Avenues, and University Street. On the right hand side facing east was the Olympic Hotel, and on the left hand side, was another building which is now where Rainier Square is.

They cut off the whole blocks, and built this building that looked like Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, and then at the end was the pylon, wasn't it, Jerry?

Mr. Ross Yes.

Mr. Alhadeff And I started to tell you earlier that the Trustees of Victory Square in 1946, four years after it was built, were Russ Young, who is still with us and who was with the Seattle Times at that time. He is probably the one individual that has more memorabilia about Victory Square than anybody. B.D. Stevens, Charles Frankland, Arnold from the Seattle First National Bank, C.B. Lindeman from the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Roy Marshall, Jerry Ross - and there he is right there -, Andrew Sears, and George Stoddard, and Dietrich Schmitz was treasurer of Victory Square and he was with another bank.

The whole thing about Victory Square was that it was a total community involvement. Jerry can tell you that he was at the Palomar Theatre, one block away, and that if we needed some entertainment, why, up would come Bob Hope or Bing Crosby or people like that.

Jerry and I were talking earlier that one of the most exciting things was to have Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife of the President of the United States, there. She was a very warm, natural person.

Mr. Ross Boettiger was her son-in-law.

Q. Did Victory Square have more than one purpose? Was its primary purpose to raise morale, to sell bonds, or what?

Mr. Alhadeff Those are two primary purposes right there: to raise money for bonds, and to revitalize the morale of people in the greater Seattle area. Also, to bring to attention not only the seriousness of the war, but the tragedy of the war.

It started off a couple of times a week, and then it went almost every day, didn't it, Jerry?

We would get, I think twenty-five hundred to three thousand people...

Q. Every day?!

Mr. Alhadeff Not every day, but for the bigger attractions we would get that kind of crowd. Let me show you a drawing of what it looked like. (a xerox of this drawing is in the file.) Here is the Olympic Hotel over to the right.

Q. And on this pylon?

Mr. Alhadeff Were the names of the dead.
 They have since, when they took it down, put
the names on a plaque, and that plaque now is in the tunnel [in
Rainier Square].

 The mayor of the city was Mayor Devin, wasn't
it?

Mr. Ross Yes, and Arthur B. Langlie - who was he?

Mr. Alhadeff He was governor.
 Everybody was active. Dick Keplinger, who
was a top newsman at KJR who is no longer with us, was one of
the MC's. Jerry Ross, and in those days, I went by the name of
"Jerry Morris," and was with the Mutual Broadcasting Company at
radio station KOL. My fondest memories, together with Jerry's,
are the people that we met and the communications that we had
with groups all over the city - the Lions Club, the Rotary, and
all those kinds of people.

Mr. Ross They had a "Chinese Day," a "Colored Day,"
"Czechoslovakian Day"...

Mr. Alhadeff Yes, and Poland.

Mr. Ross But no Japanese day.

Q. The Japanese were gone by the time Victory Square began.

Mr. Ross Yes, they were down in Puyallup for a while,
and then they were put into concentration camps. But they sent
most of them to Idaho and Utah.

Q. It seems as though radio was a lot more important to people
then than it is now.

Mr. Alhadeff There was no television, and the only
communication that you had on an instant basis was radio, all
day and all night long news reports. We used to carry the
Victory Square program on radio station KOL, live, and I think
they did on KJR, from time to time.

Q. At that time, there were three major newspapers in Seattle,
the Star, the Times, and the P-I. What was the radio scene
like? Were there more stations than now, or fewer?

Mr. Alhadeff There was KOMO-KJR, and in those days, it was
the Red and Blue Network, and then the Federal Communications
Commission forced them to split, and they became KOMO and KJR.

Mr. Ross What station did Saul Haas have?

Mr. Alhadeff That was KIRO, or CBS. And then there was
KING, which was in those days KRSC, which is now NBC.

 There was KIRO (CBS) and KJR which at that
time was ABC and is now changed.

 There were less radio stations then than
there are now because when FM came in, it broadened the whole
field, but the main stations were the National Broadcasting

Company, Mutual Broadcasting Company, Columbia Broadcasting Company, and American Broadcasting - NBC, ABC, Mutual, and CBS.

And short-wave overseas were transmitted through those stations.

Q. Was this a competitive market for radio?

Mr. Alhadeff Oh, yes. Oh, sure.

Q. What was it like?

Mr. Alhadeff What we were concerned with was getting the latest news the fastest to the public. That depended not upon the local scene, except that we had news wires going day and night at the radio station so we could pick up the news at the same time as the newspapers were getting it except we could transmit it to the public a lot easier.

Mr. Ross When the war started, when the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor, there was a newsboy on the corner, and we called him "the Colonel," and he came running backstage and he said to me, "Mr. Ross, they want you over at KOL! The Japs have just bombed Pearl Harbor! They want you over there."

So I went over there, and over the radio it said all servicemen and servicewomen, report at once to their headquarters for duty because of the war. So I went back to the Palomar, and I stopped in the middle of the picture, and made the announcement from the stage. The theatre was full of soldiers and sailors, and when everybody got up, they practically emptied the theater. That was the way the thing started.

Q. Do you remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor? (to Mr. Alhadeff)

Mr. Alhadeff Yes, I was at home. I remember listening to President Roosevelt talking about the Day of Infamy, and I rushed down the the station. I had three newscasts a day, of fifteen minutes duration, and in those days we had to write the news because we didn't have a complete radio wire. You had UP and AP and INS, and we had to shorten the newspaper stories into radio.

But about Victory Square, there were a number of people like Frank Gilman from Hamrick-Evergreen Theatres, and John Hamrick, and John Danz from the theatre business - they all worked together to have promotions in the theatres and to talk about Victory Square.

I can remember people like Leo Weisfield, who was an outstanding citizen, and Rabbi Levine, who is still with us and he was very active down there, and Joe Gluck, who was a very good friend of the Roosevelts and lived in this community. And I can remember, as we were talking on the way up, Frank McCrillis, who was the head of the Toastmasters International, and he was active; Bob Harvey, who was the orchestra leader at the Olympic Hotel years ago, and he's gone. And there were all kinds of people who came in to help.

Q. There must have been a lot of organization work just

getting this thing to fly.

Mr. Alhadeff Yes, there was an active Program Committee, and Jerry Ross was the chairman of the Program Committee, and he's the man that orchestrated what happened, music-wise, and dancing, and so forth, on a regular basis. Then, the stars came in, like Duke Ellington, and who were some of the others, Jerry?

Mr. Ross Louis Armstrong, and Ted Lewis.

Q. And were these free concerts?

Mr. Alhadeff Oh, absolutely. Everything at Victory Square was donated. All the top entertainers, some of the biggest movie stars would come deliberately -

Mr. Ross Charles Thomas.

Q. Was the audience an audience, or did the audience dance?

Mr. Alhadeff The audience was an audience. There were tables all over Victory Square to sell war bonds. One of the biggest things, in addition to the entertainment and the VIP's, was to announce that the Rotary Club or the Lions Club or Frederick and Nelson's or the Bon Marche had ...

 "Today, we have Frederick and Nelson's employees who have bought \$10,000 worth of war bonds."

 Or, "The Boeing Aircraft Company Aero-mechanics have bought \$20,000 worth of war bonds."

 So we announced this, and it became kind of a competition.

Q. Do you know how much or how many war bonds you sold at Victory Square?

Mr. Ross Yes. Two hundred million, I think. I've got it in my office.

Mr. Alhadeff Yes, it was close to two hundred million dollars, and in those days, that was an astronomical amount of money because it wasn't only centered around the city of Seattle. People would come over from Spokane and Yakima and those places to participate in the program.

Mr. Ross Yes, they would have "Tacoma Day," just like down at the race track.

Mr. Alhadeff We'd would have Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, Navy Wives Association, and those kind of things.

Mr. Ross The Coast Guard.

Q. Did you have any problem with your night programs with any kind of blackout regulations?

Mr. Alhadeff We didn't have any night programs with rare

exceptions. Most of the time it was around noon. And sometimes we'd have live broadcasts, and sometimes not.

The only time we had something away from noon was when somebody flew in on their way to Alaska, and we would call a special Victory Square event for 2:30 or 4:00, or when the work day was over, like 5:00.

Mr. Ross I used to take acts, like Sally Rand and a bunch of acts, out to the shipyards, like Skinner and Eddy and J.L. Duthie, and over on the lake.

Q. Lake Washington Shipyards.

Mr. Ross Along the lake in Kirkland, in Houghton.

Mr. Alhadeff I think in answer to your question earlier, what was marvelous about Victory Square, other than the excitement of all the important people, was the unity and cooperation that everybody in the city put into the program, and the effort that they made to make it a celebration of unity. That I think was great, don't you think so, Jerry?

Mr. Ross Yes. I have a plaque in my office given to me by the President of the War Bond Drive, and it says, "Jerry Ross, saluted for selling a war bond for every seat in this house," and that was what they did in different theatres, to try to sell a war bond for every seat in the house.

Mr. Alhadeff He also was awarded the Silver Medal by the Secretary of the Treasury for war bond sales.

Mr. Ross And you got one.

Mr. Alhadeff I think I may have gotten one, too. That was a high honor.

Q. You've mentioned "unity" a couple of times. Seattle grew just tremendously during the war. Another woman who's done an interview for this project worked for the [Seattle] Housing Authority, and said that in one month, they received applications from workers from thirty-eight states coming into Seattle to work in the shipyards and at Boeing. Did you know who was in your audience? Who were the people who came to Victory Square?

Mr. Ross The Cobb Building and the other buildings - everybody would have their windows open and have their heads out the windows looking down at the Square. Anything that was playing at the Metropolitan Theatre, like Helen Hayes or Bob Crosby, Bing's brother, and Veronica Lake -

Mr. Alhadeff Who came from this area, by the way, from Mercer Island.

Mr. Ross The old Orpheum Theatre, which was down on Third and Madison, was the colored USO. It was strictly for the colored troops, like the Black and Tan Club, and that was their headquarters. They sold food and everything down there.

And the Army took over the Stratford Hotel, and it was full of WACS for the Army. All women. They had a big kitchen down in the basement and they would have all their meals there, and there were other hotels, too, that were taken over by the government.

Mr. Alhadeff To get back to your question about the audience, the audience was people who came deliberately downtown to go and see what was happening at Victory Square, which meant moms with their children, and it also meant people who worked in the immediate area, or anyplace downtown. They took their whole lunch period off, and they used to bring a sandwich, rather than stay where they had been for their lunch period, they would come to Victory Square and have their lunch there.

Then there were groups and clubs that would come down - Boy Scout groups, Girl Scout groups, and Veterans of Foreign Wars, and all types of social groups, nurse and doctor groups from hospitals, etc.

It was a fabric of the people of the city of Seattle and its surroundings. People would come all the way from Vancouver, Washington and Vancouver, British Columbia to see people like Bob Hope. If we knew enough in advance, they would come to see the celebrities.

Q. Were there ever any parades?

Mr. Alhadeff Oh, yes! There used to be parades down Fifth Avenue that would wind up in Victory Square, and parades down Third Avenue for special groups, like from Fort Lawton and Camp Lewis.

Q. This is a little bit different question. You had been Seattle residents for a long time. Did the city change much during the war? Did the mood of the city change?

Mr. Ross Oh, yes. At night, all the theatre signs had to be blacked out, and these big searchlights would be in the air looking for planes.

And Boeing was made over to look like a small town, with houses built over Boeing.

Mr. Alhadeff Yes, it was camouflaged.
It was like a movie set. If you looked at it from the sky, you couldn't see it was a plant. It looked like a small village.

Mr. Ross If you were an Italian, you had to be off the streets at a certain time.

Q. Or a German? Either alien?

Mr. Ross Well, there was a German Club here, but I don't think they had anything like that.

Q. With all the servicemen, did Seattle become a more wide open town? Burlesque houses, peep shows, that kind of thing?

Mr. Ross Oh, yes. They had the red light district down on Washington Street.

Mr. Alhadeff And up Yesler.

Yes, it did change. The city of Seattle, because it was one of the key ports of embarkation, became totally a different city. It went back to the days of the Gold Rush, in 1889, and Seattle became more open, but at night, there was the blackout, as Jerry said.

But we also had anti-aircraft batteries out here at Fort Lawton, and in 1943 at Longacres Racetrack, there was an anti-aircraft battery, and all around the hills.

Mr. Ross The track wasn't open during the war, was it?

Mr. Alhadeff In 1943, the racetrack was closed, and they put an anti-aircraft battery there.

But all around the hills surrounding Boeing, there were anti-aircraft batteries.

Mr. Ross Up on Beacon Hill, Queen Anne Hill, West Seattle...

Q. Were there any Civil Defense precautions specifically in terms of Victory Square for these large gatherings?

Mr. Alhadeff No, that was a daytime thing. We had an alarm system for dispersal if anything were to happen, and we had microphones with big speakers all around. But we never had occasion to use them

Mr. Ross They had bomb shelters all over, and the railway went under Seattle for troops, and you could hear the trains from the Palomar Theatre.

Mr. Alhadeff You could hear the trains. The Burlington Northern used to go under the city of Seattle, and the tunnel's still there. They're talking about using that for transit now, aren't they?

One of the first times I ever appeared on a stage in a commercial theatre was in the Palomar Theatre at the invitation of Mr. Jerry Ross, and I introduced Bob Hope, or somebody like that. I became a big shot over night. (chuckling).

Mr. Ross I followed Bob Hope at the Stratford Theatre in Chicago, and that was when he first started. Every time when he comes here now, I see him. He plays the Paramount, and he still talks about those days.

Q. I was reading an old P-I from the 1940's, about Carole Lombard's death, on her way to sell war bonds, and that she lost her life in an airplane crash.

Mr. Ross Her right name was Jane Peters, and she came from Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

Side B

Mr. Ross They had "Norwegian Days," and one for every race, except Germans and Japanese.

Q. You mentioned black entertainers, as well, like Louis Armstrong. Was that done in the clubs, like at the Trianon? Was that common, to have black entertainers playing in basically white clubs?

Mr. Ross Oh, yes. The Trianon would play all kinds of bands.

Mr. Alhadeff Yes.

Let me read something from a newspaper article in 1942, right at the time when the Thomas Jefferson platform was built. It says:

"Jerry Ross, manager of the Palomar Theatre, is Entertainment Chairman for Victory Square Programs. Union leaders cooperating include Basil Gray of the Theatrical Federation of Seattle, O.R. MacLean, president of the Musicians League of Seattle, and Duke Westcott, representing the American Guild of Variety Artists."

"Ted Harris, manager of the Trianon Ballroom" - and you just mentioned that - "will assist in arranging for appearances of traveling name bands."

That's just in line with the questions that you've been asking.

It's very interesting that Victory Square was designed by the Seattle architect, George Wellington Stoddard, who was a very big name in Seattle.

"On the Fourth Avenue end of the Square will be construction of a replica of Thomas Jefferson's famed Monticello home, and at Fifth Avenue, there will be a miniature copy of the Washington Monument. Flags and bunting will drape the entire block."

It was a very colorful place all the time.

"Construction of the project is in the charge of Andrew Steers, executive vice president and general manager of the Metropolitan Building Company and McDonald S. Denman, vice president of the Crown Zellerbach Corporation. All of the operations of Victory Square were placed by Schmitz and Donough, under the direction of the Seattle Advertising and Sales Club."

"In accepting the assignment, George H. Webber, president of the club and manager of McWilliams and Poole Advertising Agency, said that members of the organization were delighted with the opportunity to do another patriotic job for the city of Seattle. Webber appointed Russell W. Young vice president of the club as his executive officer, his services being loaned to the community by the Seattle Post-Intelligencer."

And, "President Roosevelt has asked us to wave the flag, to have bands playing, to give Americans a chance to shout their allegiance to our country and its gallant and brave fighting men."

That's what Victory Square was all about.

Q. That's a lovely quote.

I want to ask something about Doolittle. I think he was our first hero in World War II. The raid was a wonderful thing for Americans in 1942 - the Pacific War wasn't going very well. The first six months of 1942 were a rough time, with real fears of coastal bombardment. Could you see a change in the mood of people during that summer? Did people become more confident, or is it just that looking back from 1985, it just seems that way?

Mr. Alhadeff As a news reporter, I can tell you that the first six months were very depressing as the Japanese kept winning one victory after another in our attempt to eliminate the Japanese fleet and marines from taking over more and more of the islands, getting closer and closer to the United States. And then, Iwo Jima came, and the Americans prevailed, and that was kind of a turning point.

Mr. Ross Do you remember that they had troops at Sequim, and up along the highway up towards Port Angeles in barricades? They'd be there all night, and then there would be a day shift, and the night shift would go back to their bivouac.

Q. To defend the coast?

Mr. Alhadeff Yes, and the Straits of Juan de Fuca. As a matter of fact, there still exist some of the anti-aircraft batteries, camouflaged underground. I happen to know some people who own property where they exist and they use it as kind of a summer place.

 It overlooks Sequim, which is at the southeast tip of the Olympic Peninsula. And these emplacements on the sides of the hills were naturally camouflaged by Douglas firs and Western red cedars.

 There were sandbags and bulkheads in front of them.

 They had twenty-four hour coverage, as Jerry says. One group would take it for six hours, and then another group would roll in and so on. That was all up and down, because they did not know whether or not the enemy fleet would move into the Straits of Juan de Fuca.

 We were at the point where we were afraid of the bombardment of the Pacific Northwest, because we are closer in line-of-sight miles than any other part of the United States.

Mr. Ross And Canada was in the war before we were. They went in with Britain, before we were in the war.

Q. So people really were ready to have their spirits lifted by a place like Victory Square.

Mr. Alhadeff Oh, Victory Square, as I read the quote from the President - that quote tells it better than anybody. Victory Square was a place to celebrate the unity, the feeling toward patriotism, and to physically express yourself by yelling, shouting, clapping and buying war bonds. Right, Jerry?

Mr. Ross Right.

Q. Did you ever celebrate production goals, as Boeing began building more and more?

Mr. Alhadeff No, we were never privy to that kind of information. That was all very restricted information.
But I can remember as a news reporter going to see the Boeing airplanes being built with hundreds and hundreds of men and women crawling all over the framework of the airplanes, putting in the rivets.

Mr. Ross Rosie the Riveter!

Mr. Alhadeff And I remember going up in a B-29 on a test flight, and I could go on and on.

I think one of the most exciting things was the formation of the United Nations conference in 1945, and I had the opportunity to represent the Mutual Broadcasting Company, sponsored by, of all people, the Teamsters.

Q. Dave Beck?

Mr. Alhadeff Yes, Dave Beck was very active in those days helping the war effort. He was a great leader of unity for the working people and I thank the Lord he's still alive. Dave was very, very active and a great leader. And so was Frank Brewster, in those days.

The Teamsters were in the forefront of the war effort. They put on many programs, and sponsored food kitchens, and sponsored social events for returning soldiers, as did the business community like the banks and the people in the department store and so on.

Unfortunately, it takes something like a war to bring people together. Now if we could only bring people together to unite in the name of love instead of because of hate, we would be fine.

Mr. Ross It doesn't look good right now, does it?

Mr. Alhadeff I have a great deal of confidence that somehow or another, intelligence will prevail.

Q. Were there any special events on V-E Day and V-J Day? What were they like?

Mr. Alhadeff All Hell broke loose, that's what they were like! All the businesses closed; there were parades on the streets; there were bands. As Jerry said earlier, all the windows were open on Fifth Avenue, and on Fourth Avenue, and on Third Avenue.

I have a picture of the Northern Life Tower with confetti coming all the way down, and I also have a picture of me announcing the end of the war. Those are memories that are unbelievable.

It was people like Jerry Ross who had the courage and the foresight to go out and get the kind of people

to get in front of that microphone to attract thousands of people to Victory Square to relieve themselves of their energies, to be patriotic, to bring their families and to buy war bonds.

Q. The entertainers were very willing to participate?

Mr. Ross Oh, yes. Sure, during the war, Bob Hope and Jolson and those people were called "the soldiers of greasepaint." A lot of those entertainers went into the front line trenches, and in USO shows - United Service Organization - all over the place. Everywhere there was an American soldier, there was a troupe.

I know some Japanese over on Bainbridge Island who were born on Bainbridge Island, and they joined the Army and they sent them not to Japan, but to Italy.

Q. Is that the 442nd? That division?

Mr. Alhadeff Yes, I think that's right.

Q. How did you come to know so many people in show business?

Mr. Alhadeff He came from Hollywood!

Mr. Ross I've been in show business all my life, just like Jerry, who's been in the entertainment business all his life, too, until he got in the horse racing business.

But I was lucky, and Victory Square was lucky that the Palomar Theatre was there, and they were still running vaudeville. It was just a half a block away.

Mr. Alhadeff Palomar Theatre was the last full vaudeville house in the city of Seattle

Q. And you were running feature films as well?

Mr. Ross Yes, we ran films. The Orpheum would play a vaudeville show once in a while, and the Fifth Avenue, too, would run shows.

The legitimate shows played the Metropolitan and the Moore Theatre.

Q. I wish you would tell me everything you remember about the entertainment scene in Seattle during the war! Were there any suburban clubs, in Renton or up north?

Mr. Ross Yes, there was a place called "The Ranch" out on the highway, and later they moved it downtown, and called it "The Town Ranch."

And there was the "Coon Chicken Inn," they called it. That was a place that played colored bands and entertainment.

There was burlesque in the State Theatre, and the Rialto on First Avenue running burlesque, and there were some vaudeville shows that played the Florence Theatre, that John Danz owned. He used to run amateur nights.

There was a theatre that played some acts

once in a while out in Ballard.

Like Jerry said, the Japs came awful close. In fact, they spotted Jap submarines right off Neah Bay, up on the Peninsula.

Q. Were there any clubs in what I would now call the Central Area, in the black community? I've heard of the "Black and Tan," and that's the only one I know.

Mr. Ross Yes, the "Black and Tan," and there was a couple of clubs up a Twelfth and Jackson. "Noodles" Smith owned them.

Mr. Alhadeff I can't remember the name of them.

Mr. Ross They were gambling clubs, and wide open. In Chinatown, they played the Chinese lottery, and that was wide open.

Q. Was that open to the white community? Could everybody play?

Mr. Alhadeff If you knew the people in the tongs, you could get in.

Mr. Ross I belonged to the Wah Mee Club. I threw that card away, and I should have kept it.

I used to go there all the time, not to gamble, but I would go there and have a drink because there was no booze in the state.

Mr. Alhadeff Well, we had beer but liquor by the drink was not legal until way later.

Mr. Ross The only place that had liquor by the drink was the Elks, or the Moose Club...

Mr. Alhadeff The Italian Club. The Italian Club even used to have slot machines.

Mr. Ross Yes, that's right. Then there was the Press Club.

Mr. Alhadeff Yes, that was in the old Eagles Building.

Q. And you probably had to be a member.

Mr. Alhadeff Oh, yes, you had to be.

Q. Somehow it sounds like there could so easily be a scam with temporary memberships in sleazy clubs. I don't know if that happened or not...

Mr. Ross They had liquor stores where you had to have a permit to buy liquor, not like it is today.

Q. Well, at least you didn't have much problem with people drinking at Victory Square.

Mr. Alhadeff No, there wasn't much of a problem there. I have an editorial which I think tells the story. The title is "Join the Crowd at Victory Square."

"If you are a sidewalk superintendent who likes to oversee a steam shovel on almost any kind of construction work, visit Victory Square today during your lunch hour and see what's going on. Better yet, plan a visit Saturday noon, or some noon next week, or every noon, and come prepared to do some shouting and flag waving. That's what Victory Square is about."

"If by any chance you haven't heard where it's located, try University Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues, Seattle, USA - or just follow the band."

"There is no question about the devotion of Americans to their country. There is no question as to their desire to support their President and to back the Army and the Navy to the limit. But among some of us, there has been lacking to date the emotion that brings a lump, a swelling in the throat, that sets hearts pounding, that sends soldiers into battle singing. The soldiers on the battlefield have it. When a shell burst cut the flag pole at Corregidor the other day, three men - two American soldiers and one Filipino - dashed out and caught the Stars and Stripes before the folds of the colors could touch the ground, and in a few minutes, Old Glory was flying again."

"Let's keep the flag flying at home, too. War at best is sorry business. The war started for the United States with one of the gravest disasters in national history. That fact doesn't call for every citizen of the United States to go about his business with the long countenance of a professional mourner."

"What it does require is work and sacrifice and a fighting spirit."

"Some will fight overseas, and if they sing as they go into battle, it's much more likely that it will be some song like "Hinky Dinky Parlez-Vous" than the doleful strains of "Old Black Joe." People at home would do well to emulate their fighting men. There's a war bond drive on all over the state next week, and that explains Victory Square. Its purpose is to get some singing and shouting and flag waving into our war effort."

"Come! Join the band, see the crowd, buy bonds. There will be a radio program Sunday at 8:30, broadcast by every station in the state. Turn on your radios."

"Minutemen will make their rounds Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday afternoons, knocking at every door and presenting pledge cards. Welcome them and sign up."

"It's important to buy bonds, and it's more important to feel it a privilege to have the opportunity to be an American and to play an American's part in our war efforts."

And that's Victory Square, isn't it, Jerry?

Mr. Ross That's very good.

Q. Is that a Seattle editorial? (there is a copy of this editorial in the file, undated and unattributed)

Mr. Alhadeff Yes, it is. There's nothing else to say.

Q. I did want to ask one or two more questions, if you don't mind. When you were broadcasting, the Office of War Information had virtually voluntary censorship that newspaper people practiced on themselves. If you knew what was happening at Hanford, you didn't tell anybody - and there were people who suspected - did you know any secrets?

Mr. Alhadeff It's very interesting that you should ask me that question. I don't know why you do, but the United States Navy Intelligence and Military Intelligence came to see me one day to tell me to stand by, that very soon there was going to be some very important news, and they wanted me to stand by to be flown to Hanford. So it's very interesting that you should ask that question.

Because of the Office of War Information's bulletins on restricted news information, one of the main items that kept coming up all the time was activities at Hanford. Nobody said what it was.

The day that the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, I got the call from the military to go to the airport, to represent American radio at Hanford, and I was there.

And then, of course, the bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

That's a very interesting question. We were restricted; we were given hints on what not to discuss because the war news was regulated. It's a coincidence that you should bring that up...

Q. Yes, I had no idea.

Mr. Ross I was in Japan and Hong Kong two years ago. We flew over to Tokyo, and buildings were still torn down in Tokyo that they haven't rebuilt yet. We took a train that went a hundred miles an hour, and went to Hiroshima and Nagasaki and all those towns in there, and it was just awful.

I was in London where there are churches still demolished. Paris was the only place where you'd think there was never a war, because the Germans got in there quick.

We went to Hong Kong and Macao, and then we took a car, and we drove across the border into China, to Canton, and back again. We talked to a Japanese who took us all through Tokyo, and he went to Harvard in this country, but he was in Tokyo, and said it was a helluva place to be.

I asked, "Did they bomb you much?"

He said, "Sure," and he showed us lots of places that were never rebuilt.

Q. I think they've left some as sort of memorials. Was there a lively Seattle entertainment scene, with local bands and local talent?

Mr. Ross Oh, yes. There was a lot of local entertainment. In fact, Vic Meyers, at the Club Victor - he was the lieutenant governor for years.

Q. He was quite a character.

Mr. Ross And there was a place called Melody Lane by the Eagles, and there was the Show Box down on First Avenue, and they played big names down there, like Paul Whiteman and Sophie Tucker.

Q. When Sally Rand came here, where did she play? She was a bubble dancer and all that, was she respectable enough to play any theatre?

Mr. Ross She played the Palomar Theatre; she played the Show Box.

Mr. Alhadeff The Show Box still stands on First Avenue. Sophie Tucker played down there.

Mr. Ross The last time Sally Rand played Seattle, I booked her into the Washington Athletic Club. They had a stag night. Where you there that night, Jerry?

Mr. Alhadeff No, my mother wouldn't let me out! (laughing)

Mr. Ross She was there, and she packed the place. They had gambling and all that, too. She was sixty-seven years old, and she died a few years ago. She looked great.
When she played the theatre, we wouldn't allow anyone to have a camera so while she was dancing, she was absolutely and totally naked with her fans. Somebody took a picture and she ran off the stage, and out the alley. I was right behind her, and chased her clear up the the Northern Life Tower, trying to get this guy. She was calling him a "son of a bitch" and a "bastard."

Mr. Alhadeff Cut! Cut! Cut! (laughing)

Mr. Ross Oh, pardon.

Mr. Alhadeff You were talking about Al Jolson. Who was the other great entertainer of that time, by the first name of Eddie?

Mr. Ross Eddie Cantor.

Mr. Alhadeff He never played here, but you knew him, didn't you?

Mr. Ross Yes, I knew him when he left the Follies. He played Chicago, and I was there with a comedy called "The Follies of 1922," and he was playing there, too. He was a great guy.