

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

Transcript

Ewen Dingwall - taped interview, January 23, 1985, at Mr.
Dingwall's office at the Seattle Center
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Side A

This is an interview with Mr. Ewen Dingwall, on January 23, 1985. The interviewer is Lorraine McConaghy for the Museum of History and Industry.

Mr. Dingwall I had been in the British Information Service, in New York City. Just to give you a little bit of factual background, the mayor was duly elected in, I think, 1942, and I got a call back there asking if I would come back and be his executive assistant.

Q. Is this Mayor Langlie?

Mr. Dingwall No, this is Mayor Devin, who followed Mayor Langlie. Langlie was there in the thirties. He had been on the City Council, became mayor, and then went on to be governor.

William F. Devin was just a great gentleman, and we have been close friends down through the years.

Anyway, the British Information Service was just a desk job. It hadn't held up well, as is the case sometimes when you get a job and it sounds very glamorous, but then you get to going to work every day at 8:30!

I came back out here, and started working with him in what must have been 1943. I worked with him for about a decade as his principal staff. I learned such a tremendous amount about how the city worked which proved very helpful in things I've done since then.

Q, Was that a brand new position that you moved into in '43?

Mr. Dingwall No, it wasn't, and I don't want to make comparisons with other people who held that job, even by implication, because they're still around and they're nice folks. They had always served as more or less a secretary to the mayor, in terms of appointments and that kind of thing. He brought me in to help manage the damn thing. I really worked as a sort-of junior partner. That's my characterization which I've thought a lot about since. It was a remarkable experience for me. We did a lot of work in many aspects of city government - the Charter, the Police Department, the Health Department, planning, and many others. It was a a very rich experience for me, as I realized later. It was not well-paid. (chuckling)

Q. Well, nothing really is!

The city was under enormous strains at that time, because of the wartime footing...

Mr. Dingwall Yes, it was.

My recollection is very scattered of that time, but I thought the most painful element of it was the internment of the Japanese people in the first place had been very, very good citizens. Many of them were farming in the Kent Valley, before it had been paved with asphalt, and were hard working, fine citizens. They were close-knit families. The crime rates where they lived tended to be much lower than in other parts of the city - these same comments applied to the Chinese population, and I think still do. But the Japanese were under this terrible, heart-breaking pressure.

Q. Were there still repercussions in 1943 in Seattle from the internment?

Mr. Dingwall There were still repercussions, and you don't have to scratch very deeply to pick them up now. It was a very deep wound, I think.

Q. How were you made aware of that feeling at the time?

Mr. Dingwall I'm not sure I could reconstruct it. I don't mean that there was a widespread movement in any particular direction, but people were very concerned about it as a matter of whether they had been treated properly as individual citizens of the United States or not.

Q. In the Magnuson papers at the University of Washington, there are innumerable letters from people asking that the Japanese not be returned here...

Mr. Dingwall Oh, yes, that sort of thing was going on. There was a very unattractive type of prejudice being exhibited by people who seemed not to be as much concerned about the human rights aspect as about safety. That's very true.

I can remember at the end of the war that there were incidents at the end of the war when those who had been interned began coming back. Their houses were marked and things of that type. It was a very distressing time, and not at all like the city of Seattle that I was born in, and know something about! It was a terrible aberration.

Q. Did the Mayor's office get involved in insuring their property rights in any way?

Mr. Dingwall In any legal way, no. That would have been outside the powers of the Mayor. We were very concerned about their safety. It was a very difficult thing, and as I recall, it seemed to be the most difficult thing for many of the people.

Q. Did you have much active involvement in Civilian Defense?

Mr. Dingwall I was involved in it; I didn't think it was terribly efficient! (chuckling) What my involvement amounted to was coming into this building once a week and spending the night with others who were involved.

Q. This was the Armory at that time?

Mr. Dingwall Yes, this was the State Armory.

They brought in units to be, I suppose, on guard, but it turned out to be a pretty routine kind of thing. (chuckling) This was the headquarters for it, and I later studied civilian defense while I was in the Mayor's office. There was a national program that brought civilian defense tests to various major American communities, including here. We had a week of hypothetical defense questions, and we were up in the school auditorium in their headquarters on Fourth Avenue. Governor Warren of California was there. I became very interested in the subject of civilian defense.

At that time, though, everybody was grappling with a new thing, and many of us tried to help. But it became pretty routine stuff, at least from our viewpoint.

Q. And the Mayor's office had little involvement?

Mr. Dingwall That was a program that came down from the Federal and State governments.

Q. The many defense industries that were in Seattle - the shipyards and Boeing - what was your perspective on them, both as a citizen and as a member of the government?

Mr. Dingwall Well, we had employment as we seldom see! And of course it was quite a new thing for women to be widely employed, particularly in industrial capacities. It was, in a sense, a novelty. These gals were trudging off with their lunchbuckets. There had been some of that earlier, but this was a very widespread activity at Boeing and the shipyards and various other industries. It was a sort of recasting of their participation in industry, and it was very significant.

It has always seemed to me that it was a forerunner of much in recent years about women being able to handle a lot of responsibility and being available for service in unusual places like law enforcement. A lot of that started in those years when they were handling jobs that had never been conceived of as women's jobs, and handling them very, very well. And I've always seen a relationship between that, and the movement that started in the late 60's.

The general morale in the city was very good. There had been a period of great uncertainty at the time of the first crisis. When it all settled down, it was a very productive and stable period in the city's industrial and economic growth.

Q. Did you ever have a sense that the war was going on and on and on? Had you thought it would be a shorter war, or were you not surprised?

Mr. Dingwall There was some writing, as I recall although I can't pinpoint it, that once America got into it formally as against what FDR had been doing in combination with Churchill, that they would make short shrift of it. But that's the standard American ego thing, and I think it probably did go on longer than many people would have guessed.

Are you talking to Jack Gordon?

Q. No. I don't know who he is.

Mr. Dingwall Well, Jack is the president of the Washington State Restaurant Association, and he is a guy you should add to your list. I know he'd be glad to talk to you. Do you know about Victory Square, downtown outside the Olympic Hotel?

Q. Yes.

Mr. Dingwall Well, he was the guy that presided at all those great events down there in terms of returning war heroes and all. He developed dockside programs for the ships returning from the Orient with soldiers on them. He was just an excellent master of ceremonies in probably hundreds of such events. He produced programs for tens of thousands of people.

Q. When you were working for the Mayor's office, was Seattle at all a homefront city? A mobilized city?

Mr. Dingwall I'm not clear on what you're describing as "homefront."

Q. Well, a city oriented to being a wartime city, part of a country at war - a home for servicemen, a home for...

Mr. Dingwall Well, yes, there were very strong programs in that direction. People were inviting servicemen into their homes, and there were big agencies like the USO, and other programs that the city and state governments worked very hard to support.

From extensive reading I've done, I would say that the "homefront" reminds me of the British situation. I would think it would not be in that same starkly real sense, where they had a lot of suffering of their own. But certainly there was a very strong movement here of everybody doing his share.

Q. Well, there seemed to me to be a few city-type problems that...

Mr. Dingwall What would they be?

Q. Well, the housing crunch. Was that pretty much over by the time you had arrived? The federal housing projects built?

Mr. Dingwall I'm just drawing a blank on those.

Q. Do you remember that enormous influx of population? And traffic?

Mr. Dingwall Oh, yes, it was a congested city, but I don't have a memory of when the emergency housing fitted in. You're wondering how it fitted into the context of the needs, I gather.

Q. Did you have any involvement with law enforcement at that time?

Mr. Dingwall Well, only in the sense that the Police Department was one of the departments reporting to the Mayor. We worked very, very closely with the officials of that day on all their work. Are you relating it to possible involvement of military personnel?

Q. Well, I'm asking generally, I suppose, whether there was an increase in the incidence of certain kinds of crime; whether crime rose significantly; whether there was any difficulties in law enforcement because Seattle became a twenty four hour a day town. And that was a change from the Depression.

Mr. Dingwall Are you talking to any police officials? They would probably have access to some records on that - I don't recall data on it.

There were all sorts of entertainments spots running where they hadn't been before, down on First Avenue and other places. I can't relate it to crime incidence, or any data along that line.

Q. Were you aware of any increase or alteration in the racial tensions in town?

Mr. Dingwall Not other than the evacuation, which we've talked about. It could be that that focused people's emotions, those who were involved and concerned about it. I don't have a recollection of any major sentiments in town along that line, other than that one area. And that was enough, I must say.

Q. The problem of postwar planning seems to have arisen pretty early in the war - years and years before there was really a need for having any super hard proposals. Were you involved in this?

Mr. Dingwall We were deeply involved but we were at a peculiar stage in the city's planning history. Prior to the Devin administration, the so-called Planning Commission of the city had in fact simply followed its principal function in the Charter - to pass on requests for zoning changes. We worked very hard to establish the Planning Commission as a long-range planning agency. It simply had not been there as a function before. We brought on a City Planner from Buffalo, John Spaeth, who is retired and lives here, as the director of the city Planning Commission, changed the personnel of the Commission significantly, and changed its major function to city planning. In effect, I'm saying that we began comprehensive city planning during those particular years, and it's been an active part of the city's functions ever since.

Q. Do you remember the content of that postwar planning? What was hoped for in conversion back to civilian production?

Mr. Dingwall Well, I remember that there were many pressures from traffic. Planning for new arteries were very much a preoccupation for many of us down there. The freeway as it now exists was laid out in those years by city, state and federal officials. The late City Engineer, Charles Wartelle,

drove me one day, and we drove north nearly exactly following the freeway route which became a reality a decade or so later.

I remember that we fought a big battle with the Washington, DC planners to have mass transportation included as an element of the freeway. We were turned down cold. They indicated that had nothing to do with what needed to be done, which was move autos! Of course, you can move autos until Christ returns and you're not going to solve that problem unless you get people into larger groups and fewer vehicles. At least that's a big element of it. But it wasn't until relatively recently that our master planners in Washington [DC] have gotten around to recognizing that mass transportation has something to do with moving masses of people on the freeway.

That's the kind of thing that was educational in nature. They had just not thought through, back then, the nature of the urban problem. But it was a very active preoccupation of ours in those years, to start laying out a system.

I've said many times that I wish I had known in my days in the Mayor's office what I've picked up here and there since then about this type of planning. The Alaskan Way Viaduct was built during that period as an immediate relief connecting through traffic via the Broad Street Tunnel with Aurora because there was an urgent need for bypassing the Central Business District. Previous to that time, as you might not realize, the only way people could go north or south was touse Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Avenues. So the Alaskan Way Viaduct did provide a bypass to get people from the North End to the South End without going through the central district.

I wouldn't describe the Viaduct as a master stroke of genius, but we were trying to get solutions because there was an obvious, urgent growth thing happening. We had to move people more easily. The Alaskan Way Viaduct stands as one of our lesser triumphs, to say the least.

Q. There seems to be contradictory evidence about the kind of power the federal government had at that time. Did you have the sense that your planning was decentralized and autonomous here in Seattle?

Mr. Dingwall I think the illustration I've given you, about mass transit, is a good indication of that.

Q. Was that a wartime issue?

Mr. Dingwall I think it was more an issue of the bureaucracy in Washington not having a full understanding of what the cities were up against. I have always felt - and I lived in Washington for ten years, coming back in '74 - that there was a certain attitude by people who live on the other side of the Potomac, and indeed the Hudson, that they really probably do know more than anybody else. It's always been hard for them to let go, and say, "You guys who live out in Seattle or Denver or wherever probably know more about this than we do." That's a relatively rare kind of thinking. In those days, it was entirely rare.

And it showed up in civil defense planning afterward, too. There had to be a master plan that had gone through the filters back there, because "How do we know that

those people out in Seattle or Denver won't make a mistake?" And, of course, we've proved capable in the meantime of making mistakes once in a while! (chuckling)

But very definitely, there was a predominance of the power of the government which was putting up the money. It carried the authority right along with it in many, many aspects. It was an attitude which posed continual problems for local and regional governments.

Q. Seattle seems to me, now, to merit the title of a cosmopolitan city.

Mr. Dingwall I agree.

Q. How would you describe Seattle in the '40's?

Mr. Dingwall Non-cosmopolitan! (laughing)

It was a growing city. We lacked many facilities, and I have a particular fetish on this because the (1962) Seattle World's Fair project brought many facilities which had been lacking previously - fine theatres, and exhibition halls, and things of that kind.

(a short break)

Mr. Dingwall In 1928, Frank Edwards was mayor, and this (showing a picture in a brochure) is a building which still stands, but with a new facade all around it, and inside it, is the Opera House. That was one of the principal acts of the World's Fair.

Q. I had no idea that building was that old.

Mr. Dingwall Yes, it was built in 1928. This is a photo of the foyer, and this is a photo of the mayor who was in office at the time, and this is the arena and the High School Stadium, as it then existed - a muddy hole that the high school football teams had to play in. That was virtually all that existed in the way of public amenities in Seattle.

It was a city that was ready for the kind of energy that the Fair injected into city life in the planning for 1962. It was a wonderful city, and ready to blossom in the forties and fifties. It's just a radically different city now, than it was forty years ago. The public generally has different tastes - this is one of the finest theatre cities in the United States in terms of support, and we have very healthy large and small arts organizations. Each of them has its problems, but basically they're very healthy. They've added just immensely to the richness of life here. And of course, the broad use of our ski areas, and boating, and all that has contributed. The changes in the last forty years have been enormous.

Q. It's my impression in the forties that the neighborhoods were much farther away than they are now.

Mr. Dingwall Indeed. The transportation systems were limited. There was no freeway and there were streetcars and many fewer cars. The plus side of your comment is that the

neighborhoods were very much more important as an element of community life. We do have some very strong neighborhoods now, resulting from the strength that was built into them in those years. Broadway is an excellent example of that, and Ballard, and the University District, and West Seattle and others

Q. Did you perceive Seattle at all as a wide open port city?

Mr. Dingwall Well, that's always been a dichotomy in Seattle. There have always been those who felt we ought to draw up a public policy around the fact that we are a port city, and then there are the moral values that other people uphold. This has been going on all my life, I guess. We've generally wound up on the side of more restrictions than other cosmopolitan cities of this type have had. I think the greatest contrast between neighbors is shown between San Francisco and Seattle. San Francisco has always been a much more liberal and open city in terms of what's tolerated in human conduct. Seattle's always been a kind of persnickety place, which wanted to make sure its morals were all tuned up. I'm not saying this sarcastically, really. It's just been one of the interesting aspects of Seattle's complex personality.

We had a bare-bosomed show at the Seattle World's Fair by Gracie Hansen, who died just the other day. My goodness, that stirred up a lot of interest! To my knowledge, that was the first time that kind of stuff had been off First Avenue. It consistently drew a big crowd, and not all from First Avenue, I would have to say.

Q. Were you aware of a tolerance policy on the City Council during the war years?

Mr. Dingwall Well, actually, the phrase originated with Mayor Devin. It was an effort to realize that the cardrooms, many of which still exist - and the cardrooms really were the essence of it - were the social life for a lot of people who didn't belong to the Athletic Club, where all the same kinds of activities were available. The thought was that these people, too, had some kinds of recreational needs and some rights to more or less do what they wanted to do. It was always very controversial, and I'm not at all sure we had the right answer, but it was an intelligent effort by Mayor Devin who was a very deeply religious guy. He was, as I think religious people should be, very tolerant of other people's views and needs, and we were trying to find a balance as to where to draw these lines.

So the tolerance policy, at least in its origins, had to do with permitting card games, like poker, of some limited stake size in the licensed cardrooms of the city. It was a policy that concerned some people and it was also used as a weapon against the Mayor by people that were cynical about it, and just wanted to get somebody else in there besides him a political basis. But that was the origin of the tolerance policy, as I recall it.

Q. It's interesting to me in reading the old newspapers from the forties on microfilm how much time the police spent trying to root out gambling! It just seems to have offended so many

people. More time spent on that, it seems, than on prostitution, or any kind of vice.

Mr. Dingwall Well, I think that the political aspects which I've just described briefly a minute ago had something to do with this emphasis, also. The police were responding to various kinds of public pressures on what the community wanted. The mayor was not a popular figure inside the Police Department. He seemed to them to be very moralistic, although I'm not speaking of all of them...

Side B

Q. How would you describe the political climate? What was happening? What were the concerns then?

Mr. Dingwall Well, I think the most significant event that I recall, and this goes back into the thirties, was probably the advent of a reform group called Cincinnatus. I don't know if you've read about them or not, but they were a group of young professional people who fielded a slate of candidates. That was the source of Arthur Langlie's political strength. He ran as a Cincinnatus member for City Council, and there were several others elected at the same time who went in as kind of a slate. Mrs. F.F. Powell, a notably strong City Councilperson, was elected at that time on that same wave.

It was a reform movement that came in with charges of corruption in the Police Department, of heavy prostitution and gambling and that sort of thing.

Mr. Langlie served a period on the City Council, and then the Mayoralty, and finally was voted into the Governor's office. That's one of the few times that any city job here has translated into political power elsewhere.

This period that we're talking about had just seen all this "new broom" business happening in the city government. Devin, as I recall, was not an active Cincinnatus person, though he was generally sympathetic to it. He and Mr. Langlie had been friends for some time as fellow lawyers. But in that period, it's fair to say, the Mayor's office was dominated by what had begun six or eight years earlier as a reform movement to clean up some of the problems the city had.

And I would say, from the reading I've done about city history that there had been need of a reform movement of this type. There had been a kind of low-grade political standard in many, many respects in this city government. I think there was great progress made by those people; more than I would normally attribute to a so-called "reform movement."

I think that is a reflection also of what I believe to be a wider truth. That is that West Coast municipalities in general, in this age at least, being younger cities than those elsewhere, have much more businesslike and cleaner types of city government. There is less of the type of politics which I have noted elsewhere. I don't want to mention specific cities, but I've noticed elsewhere that campaigns are more importantly run on who has the black vote and who has the Polish vote and the Italian vote, and all that sort of stuff, as against what are the city's needs. I think the West Coast has been very fortunate that, by and large, up and down the coast

there has been good government. Partly it's because we haven't been cities as long as the others and haven't had time to make as many mistakes.

Q. When you were talking about reform movements coming in in the late thirties, I was at first thinking, what a difficult time to reform the city, when it was full of sailors on shore leave and soldiers on furlough. And yet maybe wartime is the best time to do a housecleaning like that...

Mr. Dingwall It might be. You see, it wasn't just a moralistic thing. I think Mr. Devin will be rated [quite favorably] eventually - though I don't know exactly where he's rated now.

For example, the Health Department was a city-owned agency and the primary function seemed to be - though I'm exaggerating a little - to get signs out on doors for chicken pox. They had testing laboratories of various kinds. We brought in a public health colonel from the U.S. Public Health Service to modernize the Health Department. We began active campaigns, working with community agencies, on the eradication of tuberculosis, and of sexual diseases. It became more of an agency for attacking problems, rather than just a group of passive people who waited until they got notice of an epidemic of serious disease, and then posted warnings about it. I'm exaggerating a little bit, just to make a point.

There was a radical change. We worked out the first agreement with the county to have a joint city-county health service, and while that hasn't been an unlimited triumph in all respects and there have been problems with it, it is still there.

We spent an immense amount of time on police organizational matters, and city planning, and many other city issues that were tackled in substantive ways by Mayor Devin to try to make them more effective city units.

And I think you may have a point that with the general preoccupation of war, it was a good time to get our homework done.

Q. What did you think of the local media? There were tons of newspapers, in comparison to today...

Mr. Dingwall Well, I have always been a total newspaper buff. When I travel, I pick up every newspaper - I just love to see what's happening! In New York City at that time, I guess there were seven or eight or nine daily newspapers. We had, depending on where you stop counting, we had during the war years the Seattle Star, as well as the Times and P-I (Post-Intelligencer), and earlier there had been a labor paper, the Union Record.

I am one of those who has not been delighted with the shrinkage of available newspapers. I think that the variety itself produced - well, you were able to hold a finer mirror up to what the community was really like.

Q. How would you characterize those three major newspapers in the forties?

Mr. Dingwall The Seattle Star was not a tabloid, but it was closer to the tabloids that we now know in other cities than anything else local I can think of. It was a rather sensational paper in its treatment of the news, and I thought it a very good paper in all.

 The P-I - well, at that time, I believe I'm right that William Randolph Hearst was still alive and he ran his chain of newspapers in a very personal sense. There would be front-page editorials signed by him in all his papers and all that sort of thing. So it was very much Father Hearst's creation. I think that one of the notable changes for the better in the P-I, in terms of broadening it and making it a more effective civic instrument and commentator on civic affairs, was the advent as publisher of John Boettiger. This would have been, I believe, in the late thirties. John Boettiger was married to Anna Roosevelt, FDR's daughter, and they came here and lived for some years, and I have great admiration for what he did with the paper. It became a strong investigative paper, and did some notable work.

 The Times has always been a stable, fairly conservative newspaper. I have known intimately more people working on the Times than any of the other papers.

 They were distinctive types of papers, and each one had its own mission. At least so far as a reader could see, they were very competitive. But the Star just couldn't hack it eventually, though I don't remember exactly when they dropped by the wayside, but they just lost out in the three-way competition. And that's a pattern that's been fairly typical around the country.

Q. Did the Mayor's office make much use of the print media in bringing its policies and proposals to the people?

Mr. Dingwall Oh, I would say so. The City Hall reporters, and radio - those were the days when there was not television news - but the reporters came by the office every day. The Mayor had frequent news conferences, and we tried our best to get the word out.

 I think it was pretty well done, and I think that is evidenced by the fact that the history of the city mayoralty had been a long history of very short terms. At that time, the mayor's terms was two years, and the Charter was amended to produce a four year term. We were very active in the Charter amendment. So Mayor Devin served three two year terms and one four year term, for a total of ten years. I would think that itself was some evidence that he was getting some of his messages across and finding good support for them.

Q. Do you remember Victory Square...?

Mr. Dingwall Yes, that's where Jack Gordon was. He was in the middle of that from first to last.

Q. Was the city responsible? Was that that city's idea? Who built that little cupola shaped bandstand that was there?

Mr. Dingwall Well, the city was deeply involved in it, though I can't tell you who built the bandstand. I don't recall

that the city did, though I don't now who else could have.

Q. That may well have been there before you got back...

Mr. Dingwall It might have been.

But it was a very busy place, and became a sort of rallying point for major civic events. The Sonics, when they won the championship, climaxed their big parade at Victory Square and that was fairly recently.

Q. Personally, what did you do with yourself on V-J day?

Mr. Dingwall I was in Vancouver on some business or other; I can't remember why. I got a call that whatever I was doing, I should drop it and get back down here. There was no way to forecast - although we had plans in terms of police and emergency mobilization should it be necessary, and I had particular chores that I was supposed to be responsible for. And this thing, naturally, popped when I was out of town. I don't mean to say I was that essential to it, but I had to get right back down here.

My wife was with me for some reason, and she remained in Vancouver with friends, but I had to come back down that day, very shortly after we arrived.

It was one of those things that was probably going to happen any day, but it was hard to say in advance on which one of those days. It was obviously the wrong time to go to Vancouver. In any event, I came back and did whatever chores were necessary...

There was a great elation all through the country. It was a great relief. There were big celebrations downtown, people milling around in all the favorite gathering spots. It was something we'd done a lot of praying for for some time.

Q. How had the war affected your family?

Mr. Dingwall I had, among some relatives in eastern Canada, a deep involvement of cousins in the Canadian aspect of it. My own situation and my brothers - my younger brother had physical problems in his chest that he couldn't handle, and I and my two older brothers were up in our thirties, and deeply involved in families. None of the four of us were in the service.

But in my own particular case, I was so deeply involved in what the community and the city was doing, that that really represented where my work lay. As I said, I had been working for the British Information Service earlier, which sounded very glamorous indeed but turned out to be an office chore on the 55th floor of the RCA Building.

Q. Were your children old enough to be aware of the war?

Mr. Dingwall I would say no. Perhaps the older one might have been, in the later stages, but I've never asked. They were coming up as little kids. I had gone through college in the thirties, four years after the normal time because I had had trouble getting money to go to school. So among my college friends were a lot of younger people who were involved in the

war: I was exposed to it very closely at the level of my circle of friends. But my own kids - well, my older daughter would have been five or six years old and perhaps she has some memories of it. Her sister was a couple years younger than that.

Q. Did you find that food rationing or gas rationing or tire rationing affected you directly?

Mr. Dingwall Well, we participated in it. It didn't pose any real problems. We were not involved in any activity that required long driving or long trips. We had a relatively small family, and my wife was an exceptionally good planner and simply kept us within whatever the rules were.

Q. Did you notice any change in your lives in the kind of entertaining that you did?

Mr. Dingwall Well, it was very restricted for a long time. My recollection of it is of a very quiet period. You didn't go out for long trips or vacations, but just stuck pretty close. It was extremely difficult to justify the gasoline for a vacation trip. But those were so minor - it didn't seem to me that there was any major problem that caused us any great trauma.

Q. What did you think of the Seattle art scene? This was the time when Sir Thomas Beacham was here...

Mr. Dingwall Well, he's alleged to have referred to us as a "cultural dustbin," though I understand there's some controversy as to whether he actually said that or not.

I don't know whether you took a good look at the actual interior of the civic auditorium (the current Opera House), but it was just a huge thing and seated six thousand people. It was one of those buildings that had been designed to do a lot of different things, conventions and all sorts of things.

Here's a photograph of it inside. It was designed to do so much that it did nothing well.

Q. It looks like a football stadium.

Mr. Dingwall Well, you could play football in there. Maybe gradeschool kids could've played football.

But the acoustics were very poor, and we just didn't have proper homes for the arts. The Symphony Orchestra leadership at that time was Milton Katims as the director and Ruth McCreery as managing director of the symphony. The opera did not yet exist, as a society. The repertory theatre did not exist. The ballet did not exist. The Symphony, in terms of the performing arts, was the driving force. Their leadership was notable in terms of helping secure the public backing to get the things done that we did in time for the Fair - the Opera House change that I've mentioned to you, putting it inside that old building, and many other aspects. The Symphony gave notable leadership to the artistic development of the fair.

(a brief pause)

Mr. Dingwall So we didn't have the kind of arts thrust that this community has now.

 We did two things during the Fair. We provided new buildings - the Playhouse, the Opera House, the Exhibition Hall, and the Coliseum for athletic events. We hadn't had covered space for athletics. The availability of space led to a wide range of activities.

 The other thing was, in terms of performing arts, the programming for the Fair brought an immense amount of brand-new, international theatre here from all over the world. There had not been facilities for it ever before - it was a magic moment in the history of the city.

 For that and other reasons, the very next year under Bagley Wright's leadership, steps were taken to organize the Seattle Repertory Theatre. It was the first one to emerge following the Fair, and has had a brilliant record in the community.

 The Seattle Opera came along a few years later, and the Ballet was spawned off of that. Of course, in the meantime, there has been a proliferation of smaller theatres in the community. Someone in that field told me recently that we have more Equity actors in Seattle than in any other city of our approximate size anywhere in the country. It's been an extremely healthy city from that standpoint. I'm not loading all that on the Fair, but the Fair unquestionably was a turning point which provided some opportunity and created some appetite for the development of the cultural life of the community.

 I must say, the University of Washington, under the leadership of the late Glenn Hughes, who headed the Drama Department for many years, and developed the Penthouse and Showboat Theatres and other such facilities, sponsored a very active [theatre] program. I don't mean to say there was nothing else, but by comparisons such as we have now, Seattle was very lean as a community.

Q. It sounds like the arts were principally limited to popular entertainment - the Trianon ballroom.

Mr. Dingwall There was a lot of that, and it was also very characteristic of the times. I assume that sort of thing was going on in many other communities as well - the dance halls out on the highways north and south. It was almost all there was and it was a major recreational pattern for many people, no question about it.

 But the city, since the Fair, has been cited innumerable times as a wonderful place to live and I think a lot of it stems out of the things we're talking about here, plus the always-present recreational opportunities outdoors.

 The combination, I think, has been a major factor in the reputation the city has acquired in recent years. Nobody was calling it by such wonderful adjectives forty years ago, I can assure you of that!

Q. Forty years ago, when the population was so swollen with people working in the shipyards and working at Boeing, and sailors on ships out here and people working at Bremerton, did

you as a planner think that there would be sharp fall in Seattle's population after the war?

Mr. Dingwall I think it was assumed that there would be. It would be hard to contemplate that they would all stick.

Q. Did that materialize?

Mr. Dingwall Well, I can't cite any data, but I know that many, many people came to Seattle during that period and they may have gone back someplace but they put this down as a place they would like to return to. I don't whether you've run into that or not, but it was a very, very common thing. Somebody whose wife was living here while he was in the service would want to return.

Q. Yes, you're right, it's very common.

Mr. Dingwall Generally speaking, a lot of those people did stick or return.

Q. Well, in your planning, were you expecting that the Housing Projects would empty?

Mr. Dingwall Well, in some instances, yes. Many units of that housing were intended for temporary use only. I'm thinking of one in particular of one that I drove by for many years. I live in Laurelhurst, and the University had constructed some temporary housing on the east side, on the flats there, and that stayed a long time. It was half empty or more so when they finally got rid of it. And they've replaced it with some better stuff, I must say.

But there was housing in the Valley and in the Interbay area which was obviously temporary and taken out. But I don't think the city was pessimistic about it - we looked upon it that inevitably there would be a drop in what had been a concentration here for particular reasons during the war years.

But the history since then had been rather notable for these people showing up again and being very good citizens of the area.

Q. Boeing seems to have felt some alarm at going to peacetime production. They were working so hard and so fast to produce B-17's and B-29's that they didn't have time - they weren't permitted to retool for after the war until it was after the war!

Mr. Dingwall And they, up until those years, had not had a notable success in competing with Douglas [Aircraft Company] for passenger traffic. My recollection is that they had not sold well. The great breakthrough for Boeing was the move into jet planes - the 707 and all those - that's when things really took off for them, and they began to dominate in a way that has never stopped.

William Allen was the leader of Boeing at that time and the courage they showed, and determination, and initiative in what must have looked like very long steps into the darkness was one of the most notable phases of our economic

life in Seattle. They're a huge credit to us. I've known a number of the engineers who were deeply involved at that time, and they were planning things which are now commonplace but which moved this city forward very dramatically.

Boeing has occasionally had its lower moments, but, my goodness, they've played a tremendous role. William Allen, in my book, is right at the heart of the leadership that moved them forward.

Q. Seattle has sometimes been faulted for putting all its employment eggs in one Boeing basket...

Mr. Dingwall It's something that was not so much a design as a set of circumstances. There they were and they did this tremendous job during the war years. This is the kind of a community, historically, that did not have a lot of population working in other kinds of industry, by percentage of the total population. So it was less a matter of design, I think, than of circumstance.

I think there's a lot of very intelligent effort going on right now in planning for the future. The whole silicon business over on the Eastside, and in various places in Oregon, is a strong move to balance the region's economy. We've had lumber and fishing and Boeing for a long time, and it's got to be broadened, there's no question.