

Eula McGill discusses World War I

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Eula McGill discusses her first recollections of union activities during World War I.

Duration: 1:50

Transcript:

Audio Transcript

Jacquelyn Hall

So when did you first become aware of unions and union activity?

Eula McGill

Oh, when I was about seven years old, when the activity started around Gadsden during World War I. There was quite a bit of union activity. My mother went to all the union rallies when she heard of them; we'd get on the street car and go.

Jacquelyn Hall

You mean not even whether your father was involved or not?

Eula McGill

My father had to work; he never was off during the times we'd have these little rallies, unless it was on Saturday or Sunday. He didn't dare go; if he was seen there, you know, he was likely to get fired, because most of the people who went were people who were already in the unions. There were no laws in those days, no protective laws whatsoever; you had no chance. And if you valued your job, why, you were very careful. It had to be done very quietly. But some of the men who had, you know, already obtained recognition, they attended.

Jacquelyn Hall

What kind of organizing was going on around Gadsden during the war?

Eula McGill

The Textile Workers were organizing the Dwight Mills; the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers were trying to organize the Gulf State Steel; and the Iron Molders and the Founders; and I don't know what union it was (I assume it was the Car Repairmen) in what we called the car works.

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