

Early 1800s **GUILDS**

In the US, worker cooperatives were organized by some of the very first North American labor unions in the early 1800s. The earliest unions came out of guilds, which included both masters and journeymen, and structured the industries. They were basically mutual aid organizations. At the point that masters became bosses, the journeymen broke away and formed separate organizations. These developed into what we know as unions. They too specialized in mutual aid. In many of the earliest strikes, the journeymen formed worker cooperatives, sometimes temporarily to support themselves during the strike, and sometimes to continue on a permanent basis. These cooperatives were facilitated by the fact that most industrial production was still done with comparatively simple hand tools. (Curl, 2010)

1834 **NATIONAL TRADES' UNION**

During the early 1830s was the first great rise of unions in the US. Workers' wages were lagging behind prices and cost of living, due to runaway paper-money inflation, and employers also hit workers with wage-cuts and layoffs. They formed trade unions to fight back; many struck and lost, then turned to worker cooperatives.

American wage-earners' experience had long taught them that small strikes, guerrilla battles, were not getting them the larger things they wanted even when they won. Offensive strikes, waged when the bosses needed workers (often when the economy was on an upswing), sometimes did win. But even then their gains were usually soon whittled away, by speedup, inflation, by any of a hundred tricks. As soon as recession hit, layoffs and wage-cuts were shoved down workers' throats. Defensive strikes, against these, almost invariably lost. The bosses simply didn't need them any more; unemployment created a large labor pool so workers had to compete furiously to survive and bosses could call all the shots. It was during and after these defensive strikes, that wage-earners first formed cooperatives. Many soon realized that this was a bit late, and unions later formed cooperatives in expectation of hard times. The cooperatives would take in unemployed union members. Less unemployment meant less competition in the labor market and therefore higher wages. In 1834 the Philadelphia cabinetmakers union opened a cooperative warehouse; by '36 it was one of the largest in the city. Soon much of the Philadelphia trade union movement swung to cooperation: the hand loom weavers opened five shops in '36, soon followed by the tailors, hatters and saddlers. That same year shoemakers unions opened cooperatives in New Brunswick, N.J., Cincinnati, St. Louis and Louisville; in the last three cities, tailors unions followed suit. Painters' unions in New York City and Brooklyn lost strikes in 1837, then formed cooperatives.

In the early 1830s unions began coming together into city-wide federations, "trades' unions," the first organizations of American wage-earners that cut across trade lines and looked to the interests of wage-earners as a class. Very soon these trades' unions joined into the National Trades' Union, the first national labor organization. The third annual convention of the NTU in 1836 appointed a committee on cooperation, which recommended that all unions investigate setting up cooperatives, because "until a system of Cooperation is adopted by which the producers of wealth may also be its possessors...the great burden of the evils of which we so justly complain, will never be removed." (Curl, 1980)

1866

NATIONAL LABOR UNION

The NLU was the first national [labor federation](#) in the [United States](#). Founded in 1866 and dissolved in 1873, it paved the way for other organizations, such as the [Knights of Labor](#) and the AFL ([American Federation of Labor](#)). It was led by [William H. Sylvis](#). The National Labor Union followed the unsuccessful efforts of labor [activists](#) to form a national coalition of local trade unions. The National Labor Union sought instead to bring together all of the national labor organizations in existence, as well as the "eight-hour leagues" established to press for the [eight-hour day](#), to create a national federation that could press for labor reforms and help found national unions in those areas where none existed. The new organization favored [arbitration](#) over [strikes](#) and called for the creation of a national labor party as an alternative to the two existing parties.

1869

KNIGHTS OF LABOR

The K of L (officially "Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor") was the largest and one of the most important American [labor organizations](#) of the 1880s. Its most important leader was [Terence V. Powderly](#). The Knights promoted the social and cultural uplift of the workingman, rejected Socialism and radicalism, demanded the [eight-hour day](#), and promoted the producers ethic of [republicanism](#). In some cases it acted as a labor union, negotiating with employers, but it was never well organized, and after a rapid expansion in the mid-1880s, it suddenly lost its new members and became a small operation again.

It was established in 1869, reached 28,000 members in 1880, then jumped to 100,000 in 1885. Then it mushroomed to nearly 800,000 members in 1886, but its frail organizational structure could not cope and it was battered by charges of failure and violence. Most members abandoned the movement in 1886-87, leaving at most 100,000 in 1890.

Remnants of the Knights of Labor continued in existence until 1949, when the group's last 50-member local dropped its affiliation

At the same time as the Knights of Labour fought for higher wages and better working conditions, they were also attempting to construct a vast chain of cooperatives. Their mission was to abolish what they called "wage slavery" and replace the capitalist wage system with workplace democracy in what they termed a *Cooperative Commonwealth*. This concept arose autochthonously in America, parallel to the growth of the socialist movement during the same period, to which it was conceptually interrelated. The Cooperative Commonwealth vision was based on free associative enterprises in a regulated market economy, with the government relegated to infrastructural and public utilities functions, such as maintaining and managing water systems, roads, railroads, etc. This concept was fundamentally distinct from the state socialist concept of the government running the entire economy with all workers as government employees. The Cooperative Commonwealth vision was Jeffersonian. (Curl, 2010)

1869
**NATIONAL COLORED
LABOR UNION**

The CNLU arrived shortly after the development of the [National Labor Union](#), which happened to be the first major organization founded by Andrew Cameron in 1866. The National Labor Union was dedicated with helping unions such as construction and other skilled groups and even sometimes farmers.

Isaac Myers worked with Sylvis and Fredrick Douglass to break the color line of the National Labor Union. Myers was the keynote speaker on that topic at the 1869 NLU convention.

Encountering opposition, Myers and Douglass organized the affiliated National Colored Labor Union (NCLU), the first national organization of it's kind. Myers was elected its first president, and Douglass succeeded him in 1872. The NCLU's program, like the NLU's, backed worker cooperatives. Besides the usual advantages, cooperatives could help remedy racist exlision from the skilled trades. Cooperation was widespread in black communities across the country, rural and urban. The NCLU led union organizing efforts in Alabama, Georgia, Teneesee, and Missouri, and successfully helped organize the longshoreman's union for a wage increase in Baltimore. But on the whole, their pioneering efforts did not result in extensive unionization of African American workers (Curl, 2009).

The CNLU welcomed all workers no matter what race, gender, or occupation. In the end, both the CNLU and the NLU began to decline because of new organizations like the Knights of Labor who promoted having a national organization which united workers "without regard to race or color." The [Knights of Labor](#) adopted the slogan, "An injury to one is a concern for all."

1806
**COMMONWEALTH VS.
PULLIS**

Commonwealth vs. Pullis was the first reported case arising from a [labor strike](#) in the [United States](#). It decided that striking workers were illegal conspirators. In 1794 [Philadelphia](#) shoemakers organized the "Federal Society of [Journeyman Cordwainers](#)" (the name came from the cordovan leather they worked with) in an effort to secure stable wages. Over the next decade, the union secured some wage increases. Through 1804, the Journeymen received moderate wage increases. In 1805 the union struck for higher wages. The strike collapsed after the union leaders were [indicted](#) for the crime of [conspiracy](#). The jury trial was in the [Philadelphia Mayor's Court](#), which unfortunately was not a court of record. The only report historians have today consists of [shorthand](#) notes by [Thomas Lloyd](#), a young [Jeffersonian](#) printer who later published the proceedings.

Eight leaders of the Federal Society of Journeymen Cordwainers were brought to trial and accused of conspiring to increase their pay rates after leading an unsuccessful strike for higher wages. The employers, not the government, paid the prosecution's expenses. The arguments in Pullis promoted the idea "'that workers were transitory, irresponsibile, and dangerous", and were, thus, properly the subject of judicial control'After a three day trial, the jury found the defendants guilty of "a combination to raise their wages". The union of Philadelphia Journeymen Shoemakers was convicted of and bankrupted by charges of criminal conspiracy. The defendants were fined US\$8 each (the cost of one week's wages) and made to pay the costs of the suit.

1835

PHILADELPHIA GENERAL STRIKE

The Philadelphia General Strike took place in [Philadelphia, Pennsylvania](#). It was the first [general strike](#) in North America and involved some 20,000 workers who struck for a ten-hour workday and increased wages. The strike ended in complete victory for the workers. Carpenters in [Boston, Massachusetts](#) had struck for a ten-hour workday in 1825, 1832, and 1835, but each strike ended in failure. A circular written during the 1835 strike influenced workers in Philadelphia. The circular read "We have been too long subjected to the odious, cruel, unjust and tyrannical system which compels the operative mechanic to exhaust his physical and mental powers. We have rights and duties to perform as American citizens and members of society, which forbid us to dispose of more than ten hours for a day's work." Influenced by events in Boston, Irish workers on the [Schuylkill River](#) coal wharves went on strike for a ten-hour day. They were soon joined by workers from many other trades, including leather dressers, printers, carpenters, bricklayers, masons, house painters, bakers, and city employees.

On June 6, a mass meeting of workers, lawyers, doctors, and a few businessmen, was held in the State House courtyard. The meeting unanimously adopted a set of resolutions giving full support to the workers' demand for wage increases and a shorter workday, as well as increased wages for women workers and a boycott of any coal merchant who worked his men more than ten hours.

The strike quickly came to a close after city public works employees joined the action. The Philadelphia city government announced that the "hours of labour of the working men employed under the authority of the city corporation would be from 'six to six' during the summers season, allowing one hour for breakfast, and one for dinner." On June 22, three weeks after the coal heavers initially struck, the ten-hour system and an increase in wages for piece-workers was adopted in the city. As news of the strikers' success spread to other cities, a wave of general strikes forced most of the country to adopt the same standard.

1842

COMMONWEALTH VS. HUNT

Commonwealth vs. Hunt was a landmark legal decision by the [Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court](#) on the subject of labor unions. Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw ruled that unions were legal organizations and had the right to organize and strike. Before this decision, labor unions which attempted to 'close' or create a unionized workplace could be charged with conspiracy. This repealed the decision of Commonwealth vs. Pullis.

1916 THE ADAMSON ACT

The Adamson Act was a [United States federal law](#) passed in 1916 that established an [eight-hour](#) workday, with additional pay for overtime work, for interstate [railroad](#) workers. The terms that were embodied in the act were negotiated by a committee of the four railroad labor brotherhoods of [engineers](#), [firemen](#), [brakemen](#) and [conductors](#), chaired by [Austin B. Garretson](#). Garretson was the respected leader of the conductors' union. He had formerly been a member of the President's [Commission on Industrial Relations](#), investigating the causes of industrial violence. Congress passed the Act in order to avoid a nationwide [strike](#). Named for Georgia representative [William C. Adamson](#), this was the first federal law that regulated the hours of workers in private companies. The [United States Supreme Court](#) upheld the [constitutionality](#) of the Act in 1917. When the railroads refused to abide by the law while their court challenge to its constitutionality was pending, the railway [unions](#) began preparing again to strike. The Supreme Court's decision brought the employers around, however, and they entered into settlement discussions concerning implementation of the law.

The unions' success spurred other railway employees not covered by the Act to press similar demands. Their negotiations were leading to a strike when President [Woodrow Wilson](#), exercising the authority granted by the [Army Appropriations Act of 1916](#), took over operation of the railroads on December 26, 1917.

1882 LABOR DAY MARCH

30,000 workers march in the first Labor Day March in NYC. Labor Day ([Labor Day](#) in the USA) is an [annual holiday](#) to celebrate the achievements of [workers](#). Labor Day has its origins in the [labor union](#) movement, specifically the [eight-hour day](#) movement, which advocated eight hours for work, eight hours for recreation, and eight hours for rest. For many countries, Labor Day is synonymous with, or linked with, [International Workers' Day](#), which occurs on 1 May. For other countries, Labor Day is celebrated on a different date, often one with special significance for the labor movement in that country. In [Canada](#) and the United States, Labor Day is the first Monday of September and considered the official end of the summer holiday for most of the respective countries, as public school and university students return to school that week or the following week. ([Parliament](#) normally also begins its new session after the holiday, except in cases of prorogation.)

1886 AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

The AFL was one of the first federations of [labor unions in the United States](#). It was founded in [Columbus, Ohio](#) in May 1886 by an alliance of [craft unions](#) disaffected from the [Knights of Labor](#), a national labor association. [Samuel Gompers](#) of the [Cigar Makers' International Union](#) was elected president of the Federation at its founding convention and was reelected every year except one until his death in 1924. In 1896 the AFL came out in support of Rochdale-style consumers co-ops, while retaining their opposition to production cooperatives: "trade-unionism and co-operation are twin sisters... where one exists the other is almost compelled by nature's inexorable laws to follow... therefore be it Resolved, That (the AFL) recommend to all affiliated bodies... the Rochdale System... and wherever favorable conditions exist to give their aid to such cooperative efforts." The AFL was the largest union grouping in the United States for the first half of the 20th century, even after the creation of the [Congress of Industrial Organizations](#) (CIO) by unions that were expelled by the AFL in 1935 over its opposition to [industrial unionism](#). While the Federation was founded and dominated by [craft unions](#) throughout the first fifty years of its existence, many of its craft union affiliates turned to organizing on an industrial union basis to meet the challenge from the CIO in the 1940s.

After the demise of the KOL, the surviving American Federation of Labour (AFL) began its domination of the mainstream US labour movement. The AFL abandoned the idea of abolishing the wage system, and instead focused only on negotiating contracts and working conditions. Some unionists in the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and other organizations continued to fight for industrial freedom and workplace democracy, but instead of building cooperatives they looked to take over the existing industries (Curl, 2010).

1886 HAYMARKET SQUARE RIOT

The Haymarket Square Riot refers to the aftermath of a bombing that took place at a labor demonstration on Tuesday May 4, 1886, at Haymarket Square in [Chicago](#). It began as a peaceful rally in support of workers [striking](#) for an eight-hour day. An unknown person threw a dynamite bomb at [police](#) as they acted to disperse the public meeting. The bomb blast and ensuing gunfire resulted in the deaths of seven police officers and at least four civilians; scores of others were wounded.

In the internationally publicized legal proceedings that followed, eight [anarchists](#) were convicted of [conspiracy](#). The evidence was that one of the defendants may have built the bomb, but none of those on trial had thrown it. Seven were sentenced to death and one to a term of 15 years in prison. The death sentences of two of the defendants were [commuted](#) by Illinois governor [Richard J. Oglesby](#) to terms of life in prison, and another committed suicide in jail rather than face the gallows. The other four were hanged on November 11, 1887. In 1893, Illinois' new governor [John Peter Altgeld](#) pardoned the remaining defendants and criticized the trial.

The Haymarket affair is generally considered significant as the origin of international [May Day](#) observances for workers. The site of the incident was designated a [Chicago Landmark](#) in 1992 and a public sculpture was dedicated there in 2004. In addition, the [Haymarket Martyrs' Monument](#) at the defendants' burial site in nearby Forest Park was designated a [National Historic Landmark](#) in 1997.

1925

BROTHERHOOD OF SLEEPING CAR PORTERS

The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters was, in 1925, the first labor organization led by blacks to receive a charter in the [American Federation of Labor](#) (AFL). It merged in 1978 with the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC), now known as the [Transportation Communications International Union](#).

The leaders of the BSCP—including [A. Philip Randolph](#), its first president, and [C. L. Dellums](#), its vice president and second president, became leaders in the [civil rights movement](#) and continued to play a significant role in it after it focused on the [eradication of segregation](#) in the [South](#). BSCP members such as [E. D. Nixon](#) were among the leadership of local civil rights movements by virtue of their organizing experience, constant movement between communities and freedom from economic dependence on local authorities.

The campaign to found the union was an extraordinarily long one, that put it at odds with not only the company but also many members of the black community. The Pullman Company was not only one of the largest employers of blacks in the 1920s and 1930s but also had created an image for itself of enlightened benevolence by its financial support for black churches, newspapers and other organizations.

Porters were dependent on tips for much of their income; that, in turn, made them dependent on the whims of white passengers, who often referred to all porters as "George", the first name of [George Pullman](#), the founder of the company (see also [Society for the Prevention of Calling Sleeping Car Porters "George"](#)). Porters spent roughly ten percent of their time in unpaid "preparatory" and "terminal" set-up and clean-up duties, had to pay for their food, lodging, and uniforms, which might consume half of their wages, and were charged whenever their passengers stole a towel or a water pitcher. Porters could ride at half fare on their days off — but not on Pullman coaches. They also could not be promoted to [conductor](#), a job reserved for whites, even though they frequently performed many of the conductors' duties.

The company also squelched any efforts they had made to organize a union during the first decades of the 20th century by either isolating or firing any union leaders. Like many other large, ostensibly paternalistic companies of the time, the company employed a large number of employee spies who kept the company informed of employees' activities; in extreme cases, company agents assaulted union organizers. When 500 porters met in Harlem on August 25, 1925, they decided to make another effort to organize. During this meeting, they not only launched their campaign in secret, but also chose Randolph, an outsider beyond the reach of the company, to lead it. The union chose a dramatic motto that summed up porters' resentment over their working conditions and their sense of their place in history: "Fight or Be Slaves".

1894

THE PULLMAN STRIKE

The Pullman Strike was a nationwide railroad strike in the United States in the summer of 1894.

It pitted the [American Railway Union](#) (ARU) against the Pullman company, the main railroads, and the [federal government of the United States](#) under President [Grover Cleveland](#). The strike and boycott shut down much of the nation's freight and passenger traffic west of [Detroit, Michigan](#). The conflict began in [Pullman, Chicago](#), on May 11 when nearly 4,000 factory employees of the Pullman Company began a [wildcat strike](#) in response to recent reductions in wages.

Most factory workers who built Pullman cars lived in the "[company town](#)" of Pullman on the South Side of Chicago. The industrialist [George Pullman](#) had designed it ostensibly as a model community, but he controlled it thoroughly. When his company laid off workers and lowered wages, it did not reduce rents, and the workers called for a strike. They had not formed a union. Founded in 1893 by [Eugene V. Debs](#), the ARU was an organization of unskilled railroad workers. Debs brought in ARU organizers to Pullman and signed up many of the disgruntled factory workers. When the Pullman company refused recognition of the ARU or any negotiations, ARU called a strike against the factory, but it showed no sign of success. To win the strike, Debs decided to stop the movement of Pullman cars on railroads. The over-the-rail Pullman employees (such as conductors and porters) did not go on strike.

Debs and the ARU called a massive boycott against all trains that carried a Pullman car. It affected most rail lines west of Detroit and at its peak involved some 250,000 workers in 27 states. The [Railroad brotherhoods](#) and the [American Federation of Labor](#) (AFL) opposed the boycott, and the General Managers Association of the railroads coordinated the opposition. Thirty people were killed in response to riots and sabotage that caused \$80 million in damages. The federal government secured a federal court injunction against the union, Debs, and the top leaders, ordering them to stop interfering with trains that carried mail cars. After the strikers refused, President [Grover Cleveland](#) ordered in the Army to stop the strikers from obstructing the trains.

1912 LAWRENCE TEXTILE STRIKE

The Lawrence Textile Strike (also referred to as the Bread and Roses Strike) was a strike of immigrant workers in [Lawrence, Massachusetts](#) in 1912 led by the [Industrial Workers of the World](#). Prompted by a two-hour pay cut corresponding to a new law shortening the workweek, the strike spread rapidly through the town, growing to more than twenty thousand workers and involving nearly every mill in Lawrence. The strike united workers from 51 different nationalities. Carried on throughout a brutally cold winter, the strike lasted more than two months, defying the assumptions of conservative [trade unions](#) within the [American Federation of Labor](#) that immigrant, largely female and ethnically divided workers could not be organized. In late January, when a bystander was killed during a protest, I.W.W. organizers [Joseph Ettor](#) and [Arturo Giovannitti](#) were arrested on charges of being accessories to the murder. I.W.W. leaders [Bill Haywood](#) and [Elizabeth Gurley Flynn](#) came to Lawrence to run the strike. Together they masterminded its signature move, sending hundreds of the strikers' hungry children to sympathetic families in New York, New Jersey, and Vermont. The move drew widespread sympathy, especially after police stopped a further exodus, leading to violence at the Lawrence train station. Congressional hearings followed, resulting in exposure of shocking conditions in the Lawrence mills and calls for investigation of the "wool trust." Mill owners soon decided to settle the strike, giving workers in Lawrence and throughout New England raises of up to 20 percent. Within a year, however, the I.W.W. had largely collapsed in Lawrence.

1938 FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT

The Fair Labor Standards Act (also referred to as the Wages and Hours Bill) is a [federal statute](#) of the United States. The FLSA introduced a maximum 44-hour seven-day workweek, established a national [minimum wage](#), guaranteed "[time-and-a-half](#)" for [overtime](#) in certain jobs, and prohibited most [employment](#) of [minors](#) in "oppressive child labor", a term that is defined in the statute. It applies to employees engaged in [interstate commerce](#) or employed by an enterprise engaged in commerce or in the production of goods for commerce, unless the employer can claim an exemption from coverage. The FLSA was originally drafted in 1932 by Senator [Hugo Black](#), who was later appointed to the [Supreme Court](#) in 1937. However, Black's proposal to require employers to adopt a thirty-hour workweek met stiff resistance. In 1938 a revised version of Black's proposal was passed that adopted an eight-hour day and a forty-hour workweek and allowed workers to earn wage for an extra four hours of [overtime](#) as well. According to the act, workers must be paid minimum wage and overtime pay must be one-and-a-half times regular pay. Children under eighteen cannot do certain dangerous jobs, and children under the age of sixteen cannot work during school hours. There were 700,000 workers affected by the FLSA, and Roosevelt called it the most important piece of [New Deal](#) legislation passed since the [Social Security Act of 1935](#).

1947

THE TAFT HARTLEY ACT

As stated in Section 1 ([29 U.S.C. § 141](#)), the purpose of the NLRA is: To promote the full flow of commerce, to prescribe the legitimate rights of both employees and employers in their relations affecting commerce, to provide orderly and peaceful procedures for preventing the interference by either with the legitimate rights of the other, to protect the rights of individual employees in their relations with labor organizations whose activities affect commerce, to define and proscribe practices on the part of labor and management which affect commerce and are inimical to the general welfare, and to protect the rights of the public in connection with labor disputes affecting commerce. The amendments enacted in Taft-Hartley added a list of prohibited actions, or [unfair labor practices](#), on the part of unions to the NLRA, which had previously only prohibited unfair labor practices committed by employers. The Taft–Hartley Act prohibited [jurisdictional strikes](#), [wildcat strikes](#), solidarity or political strikes, [secondary boycotts](#), secondary and mass [picketing](#), [closed shops](#), and monetary donations by unions to federal political campaigns. It also required union officers to sign non-communist affidavits with the government. [Union shops](#) were heavily restricted, and states were allowed to pass [right-to-work laws](#) that outlawed closed union shops. Furthermore, the executive branch of the federal government could obtain legal strikebreaking [injunctions](#) if an impending or current strike imperiled the national health or safety, a test that has been interpreted broadly by the courts. Though smaller unions were negatively affected as a result of the act, the labor movement as a whole was not greatly impeded by Taft-Hartley. Arguably, the controversial act also helped President Harry Truman get reelected, given that the act galvanized labor unions into opposing Republicans. The Taft Hartley Act was quoted as being “the most vicious demonstration of corporate lobbying” by Representative John McCormack of Massachusetts and “the first ugly, savage thrust of fascism in America” by John L. Lewis, former president of United Mine Workers

1881

ATLANTA’S WASHERWOMEN STRIKE

In July 1881, 20 laundresses met to form a trade organization, the Washing Society. They sought higher pay, respect and autonomy over their work and established a uniform rate at \$1 per dozen pounds of wash. With the help of black ministers throughout the city, they held a mass meeting and called a strike to achieve higher pay at the uniform rate.

The Washing Society, or “Washing Amazons,” as their opponents called them, established door-to-door canvassing to widen their membership, urging laundresses across the city to join or honor the strike. They also involved white laundresses, who were less than 2 percent of laundresses in the city—an extraordinary sign of interracial solidarity for the time.

In three weeks, the Washing Society grew from 20 to 3,000 strikers. By August, municipal authorities were taking direct action, arresting strikers, fining members and making house visits. The laundresses were not deterred. But the white establishment was so agitated that city politicians got involved. The City Council proposed that members of any washerwoman’s organization pay an annual fee of \$25 and then offered nonprofit tax status to businesses that wanted to start commercial laundries. Even though the \$25 fee would mean several months of wages, the strikers were not discouraged. They responded with a letter to the mayor, agreeing to pay the fees rather than be defeated. “We mean business...or no washing,” the letter stated.

The resolve of the striking laundresses—despite the arrests, fines and proposed fees—inspired other domestic workers. Cooks, maids and nurses began demanding higher wages. Hotel workers went on strike. Unlike past strikes, employers—aware of the magnitude of the black labor unrest—weren’t confident they could find replacement workers. So the following week, the City Council rejected the proposed fees. The laundresses had prevailed. In the end, the strike not only raised wages—it, more importantly, established laundresses—and all black women workers—as instrumental to the New South’s economy.

1934

TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION OF AMERICA

The TWU is a [United States labor union](#) that was founded by [subway](#) workers in [New York City](#), then expanded to represent transit employees in other cities, primarily in the eastern U.S. This article discusses the parent union and its largest local, Local 100, which represents the transport workers of New York City. The TWU is a member of the [AFL-CIO](#).

The TWU established a reputation for militancy and for left-wing politics and was one of the first unions to join the [Congress of Industrial Organizations](#). Its president, [Mike Quill](#), renounced his former [Communist](#) allies in the early days of the [Cold War](#), avoiding expulsion from the CIO. The TWU began representing airline employees in 1945, when it organized ground service employees at [Pan American World Airways](#) in [Miami](#); it then expanded to represent flight attendants and airline maintenance employees as well. TWU represents ground service employees, maintenance workers, flight attendants and other employees at a number of different airlines.

It also represents employees of Amtrak, Conrail and several small short line carriers. The TWU began representing railway employees in 1954, when it absorbed the United Railroad Workers Organizing Committee, an organizing committee formed by the CIO in 1943 as a rival to the railway brotherhoods within the [American Federation of Labor](#).

The union, which faced significant resistance within its own predominantly white membership to elimination of employment discrimination against blacks, nonetheless joined with the NAACP, the [National Negro Congress](#) and [Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.](#) in pressuring privately owned bus companies the other transit companies to allow blacks to work in positions other than the porter and heavy maintenance positions to which they had been relegated. The union negotiated strong language in 1941 requiring the companies to set quotas for the hiring of black mechanics and drivers to undo the historic exclusion of blacks from those positions. The union also adopted a strong civil rights platform, calling for national legislation and combating racism in its own ranks.

1946

THE STRIKE WAVE OF 1945-1946

The Strike Wave of 1945-1946 (also called the Great strike wave of 1946) was a series of massive [post-war](#) labor strikes from 1945 to 1946 spanning numerous industries and public utilities. They were the largest strikes in [American labor history](#). During the Second World War, the [National War Labor Board](#) gave trade unions the responsibility for maintaining labor discipline in exchange for [closed membership](#). This led to acquiescence on the part of labor leaders to businesses and various [wildcat strikes](#) on the part of the workers. Often the strikes were against work discipline, In a study done by Jerome F. Scott and [George C. Homans](#) of 118 strikes in Detroit from 1944-45, only four were for wages, the rest were for discipline, company policies or firings. After the war, wages fell across the board leading to large strikes from both union leadership and the rank and file. Among the strikers included:

- 43,000 oil workers (October 1945)
- [225,000 United Auto Workers](#) (November 1945)
- 174,000 electric workers (January 1946)
- 93,000 meatpackers (January 1946)
- 750,000 steel workers (January 1946)
- 340,000 coal miners (April 1946)

Others included strikes of railroad workers and "general strikes in Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Stamford, Connecticut; Rochester, New York; and [Oakland, California](#)." In total, 4.3 million workers participated in the strikes. According to Jeremy Brecher, they were "the closest thing to a national general strike of industry in the twentieth century."

1935 NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS ACT

The National Labor Relations Act (also known as the Wagner Act after NY Senator [Robert F. Wagner](#)) is a foundational statute of [US labor law](#) which guarantees basic rights of private sector employees to organize into [trade unions](#), engage in [collective bargaining](#) for better terms and conditions at work, and take [collective action](#) including [strike](#) if necessary. The act also created the [National Labor Relations Board](#) which [conducts elections](#) which, if voted in favor of representation, awards [labor unions](#) (also known as trade unions) with a requirement for the employer to engage in collective bargaining with this union. The Act does not apply to workers who are covered by the [Railway Labor Act](#), agricultural employees, domestic employees, supervisors, federal, state or local government workers, independent contractors and some close relatives of individual employers.

1916 COOPERATIVE LEAGUE

Founded in 1916 as the Cooperative League of the United States of America, the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) is a [United States membership organization](#) for [cooperatives](#), businesses that are jointly-owned and democratically-controlled.

The league's founding president was medical doctor [James Peter Warbasse](#), who served in that role until 1941. Thereafter, the league's presidents included Murray B. Lincoln, former U.S. Congressman [Jerry Voorhis](#), Stanley Dreyer, Glenn Anderson, Morgan Williams, Bob Scherer, Russell C. Notar, Paul Hazen, and currently Michael Beall. In its first few decades, it focused on [consumer cooperation](#), and published a monthly magazine, Co-operation. In 1922, it originated and trademarked the twin pines symbol used to represent North American cooperatives. In 2000 the group successfully lobbied the [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers](#) to establish a new [top-level domain](#) exclusively for business cooperatives. The domain, [.coop](#), became active in 2002. NCBA members include some well-known United States consumer [brands](#), such as [Ace Hardware](#), [True Value](#), [Florida's Natural](#), [Cabot Creamery](#), [Organic Valley](#), and [Land O'Lakes](#). A representative from the direct-charge chain of cooperative stores in Montreal called Cooprix states in the 1970s that the Cooperative League of the USA is “North America’s only current effort to develop consumer goods cooperatives on significant scale in major metropolitan areas.”

1874

THE ORDER OF THE SOVEREIGNS OF INDUSTRY

According to an article published by Earle later in 1874, the Sovereigns of Industry was to be dedicated to "elevating the character, improving the condition, and, as far as possible, perfecting the happiness of the laboring classes" through the establishment of [consumer cooperatives](#). Earle saw exploitation of the workers by [wholesalers](#) and [shopkeepers](#) and other middlemen as a primary cause of their misery:

"We propose to have Purchasing Agencies, through which [consumers](#) reach the producer direct, without so many needless 'middlemen,' who do nothing to merchandise but add to its cost. We think 'middlemen' have grown rich enough already.

'Middlemen' not only exact a tax from every consumer, but they are responsible for 'shoddy goods,' 'short weights,' and [adulterations](#). We are determined to secure pure goods at lower prices." Earle characterized "hand-workers" as "the real producers of wealth" and declared the Sovereigns of Industry's intention of establishing a cooperative network which would allow workers to "control the whole of what they produce, and exchange it as near as may be even with other hand-workers..."

Despite this orientation, the Sovereigns of Industry decried the "waging any war of aggression upon any other class, or for fostering any antagonism of labor against capital, or of arraying the poor against the rich," but rather insisted upon its goal of "mutual assistance in self-improvement and self-protection" of its members. The constitution of the Sovereigns of Industry called for national, state, and local councils, with the National Council to be composed of two representatives from each state.

At the organization's zenith in 1875, 101 local councils were reported as having established some form of cooperation, with 46 of these operating stores, 20 making use of the [Rochdale system](#), and another 26 selling [commodities](#) at cost to members only. The Sovereigns of Industry made efforts to cooperate with the Patrons of Husbandry (Grange), including in at least one case the joint operation of a cooperative store. The Sovereigns of Industry was the first network of cooperatives in the US to utilize the Rochdale Principles.

1844

THE ROCHDALE SOCIETY OF EQUITABLE PIONEERS

The Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers was a group of 10 weavers and 20 others in [Rochdale, Lancashire, England](#), that was formed in 1844. As the mechanisation of the [Industrial Revolution](#) was forcing more and more skilled workers into poverty, these tradesmen decided to band together to open their own store selling food items they could not otherwise afford. With lessons from prior failed attempts at co-operation in mind, they designed the now famous [Rochdale Principles](#), and over a period of four months they struggled to pool one [£1-0-0](#) per person for a total of 28 pounds of capital. On 21 December 1844, they opened their store with a very meager selection of butter, sugar, flour, oatmeal and a few candles. Within three months, they expanded their selection to include tea and tobacco, and they were soon known for providing high quality, unadulterated goods. Ten years later, the [British co-operative movement](#) had grown to nearly 1,000 co-operatives.

The Archive for the Co-operative movement in Rochdale is held by Local Studies, Rochdale Boroughwide Cultural Trust.

Rochdale Pioneers traded independently until 1991, with name changes inspired by mergers with neighbouring co-operatives, as Pioneers from 1976, and Norwest Pioneers from 1982, based in [Wythenshawe, Manchester](#) by 1991. In 1991, then Norwest Co-operative Society transferred its engagements to [United Co-operatives](#), that was run from Rochdale when it in turn transferred to the Manchester-based national hybrid society, [The Co-operative Group](#), in 2007. The Rochdale Principles are as follows: 1. Open Membership 2. Democratic control based on one member-one vote 3. Promotion of Education 4. Dividends in proportion to purchases 5. Limited interest on capital investment, and limit on number of shares any member can own 6. Political and religious neutrality 7. Cash trading; no credit 8. Active cooperation among cooperatives

1844

WORKINGMENS' PROTECTIVE UNION

Between 1845 and '60, the first major American "consumer" cooperative movement rose and fell. The Working Men's (New England) Protective Union was begun by John Kaulback, a journeyman tailor and a former member of the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics and Other Workers, which had organized cooperative buying in the '30s. 1845 was a time of fast-rising prices. In '47 the economy slipped badly again, but by that time there were over 3000 Protective Union members and soon there would be a chain of stores across the north-east. The Union's principles were similar to those of the British Rochdale movement, and were developed separately at about the same time. Union membership was open to the whole community; anyone could buy a share. No matter how many shares owned, each member had only one vote in electing the board that managed each store. Stores were locally controlled but federated for wholesale buying and other mutual-aid. Unlike Rochdale, they sold at near cost instead of giving refunds. Many Unions set up production and service cooperatives for their members. The New York Protective Union, for example, ran a smithy, a wheelright shop and a bakery. By 1852 there were 403 divisions in New England, New York, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin and Canada; five years later there were almost twice that number. But in 1853 a schism developed in the organization. Kaulback and his supporters withdrew and started a new organization, which also grew strong, with 350 units in ten states in 1857.

But the financiers panicked again in 1857. As the economy plunged, their capitalist competitors hit the Protective Unions with a ferocious attack in many areas at once. They used every weapon in their arsenal: price wars, blacklisting by merchants, employers and suppliers, etc. Soon the Unions were no longer able to meet members' needs, and the membership simply could not afford to support them. By 1860 the Central Divisions of both rival Protective Unions were gone. The Civil War devastated them. Nevertheless a few locals hung on, and one observer in 1886 was able to unearth four still-functioning Union stores. (Curl, 1980)

1870

THE FARMERS' ALLIANCE

The Farmers' Alliance was an organized agrarian [economic](#) movement among [American](#) farmers that developed and flourished in the 1870s and 1880s. The movement included several parallel but independent political organizations — the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union among the white farmers of the [South](#), the National Farmers' Alliance among the white and black farmers of the [Midwest](#) and [High Plains](#), where the [Granger movement](#) had been strong, and the Colored Farmers' National Alliance and Cooperative Union, consisting of the [African American](#) farmers of the South.

One of the goals of the organization was to end the adverse effects of the [crop-lien system](#) on farmers in the period following the [American Civil War](#). The Alliance also generally supported the government regulation of the transportation industry, establishment of an [income tax](#) to restrict speculative profits, and the adoption of an inflationary relaxation of the nation's money supply as a means of easing the burden of repayment of loans by debtors. The Farmers' Alliance moved into politics in the early 1890s under the banner of the [People's Party](#), commonly known as the "Populists." As a widespread movement consisting of three independent branches and existing for more than two decades, reduction of the Farmers' Alliance to a few universal objectives is problematic. The accomplishments of the Farmers' Alliance are numerous. For example, many Alliance chapters all set up their own cooperative stores, which bought directly from wholesalers and sold their goods to farmers at a lower rate, at times 20 to 30 percent below the regular retail price. Such stores achieved only limited success, however, since they faced the hostility of wholesale merchants who sometimes retaliated by temporarily lowering their prices in order to drive the Alliance stores out of business.

1862

UNION COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

A shoemaker, Thomas Phillips, and a group of his friends came together to organize the union Cooperative Association of Philadelphia (UCA) in 1862, three months after Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. UCA was the first American co-op modeled on the Rochdale plan, and the founders took it directly from Holyoake's book. After two years of planning, they opened their first store with twenty-three members during the Civil War in 1864, and met with early success. The co-op was promoted as more than a store: it was a community center, a new way to do business, based on "simple honesty... for we have no interest in deceiving or cheating our customers." UCA had a room for socializing, and set aside a percentage of profits for a library. In their exuberance, UCA members assimilated two other cooperative stores that had opened autonomously in another part of the city, and started a third branch in 1886. Among the members of the UCA were John Samuel and John Shedden, both later prominent in the Knights of Labor, and William Sylvis, later to head the National Labor Union. Phillips and Shedden later also became prominent members of the International Workingmen's Association and the Sovereigns of Industry.

Phillips wrote a series of columns for a weekly national labor newspaper, Fincher's Trades' Review, explaining the Rochdale Principles and the possibilities of cooperation. This met with an enthusiastic response around the country, and over thirty similar stores connected with unions were begun in twelve states, mostly in industrial towns. More than simply stores and community centers, they were also venues for union organizing. By early 1866, there were similar cooperative grocery stores in Pennsylvania, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Maryland, Connecticut, Maine, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, and Missouri. At its peak the following year, "the movement had extended until practically every important industrial city between Boston and San Francisco had some kind of distributive cooperative.

COALITION OF BLACK TRADE UNIONISTS

The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) is a [nonprofit, nonpartisan](#) organization of [African American trade union](#) members affiliated with the [AFL-CIO](#).

CBTU was started in September 1972 when more than 1,200 black union officials and rank and file members from 37 national unions met in [Chicago, Illinois](#), to discuss the role of black trade unionists in the [labor movement](#). At the time, it was the largest single gathering of black unionists in the history of the American labor movement. Five black labor leaders ([William Lucy](#), [Nelson Edwards](#), [William Simons](#), [Charles Hayes](#) and [Cleveland Robinson](#)) called the new organization the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

They believed [AFL-CIO](#) President George Meany had been ignoring the voice of black trade unionists. They also believed that the AFL-CIO might attempt to declare its neutrality in the forthcoming U.S. presidential campaign in which President [Richard Nixon](#) was seeking re-election. Even though the main reason for the meeting was the presidential campaign, the most important development was the establishment of a permanent organization.

Since 1972, CBTU has improved the influence and power of black workers in the trade union movement as well as in their communities. CBTU has led efforts to make more union leadership positions available to women, African Americans, and other minorities.

Advancing the cause of African American women is particularly important to CBTU. Approximately 37 percent of the delegates who attended the first meeting were black women. Five of them served on the first executive committee of the CBTU. The CBTU executive council subsequently organized the National Women's Committee, which now holds conferences and workshops that allow participants to improve their unions and communities.

Many elected officials and appointees (mayors, judges, governors, members of Congress, U.S. Presidents) have benefited from the CBTU's commitment to political action, and CBTU was an early supporter of the [Congressional Black Caucus](#).

1973

LABOR COUNCIL FOR LATIN AMERICAN ADVANCEMENT

The Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) is a [nonprofit, nonpartisan Latino](#) organization affiliated with the [AFL-CIO](#) and the Change to Win federation. It was formed in 1973 to provide Latino [trade union](#) members in the [United States](#) with a more effective voice within the AFL-CIO, to encourage Latino participation on the democratic process, and to encourage the organization of Latino workers into labor unions. LCLAA is the official "voice" of Latinos within the AFL-CIO, and one of six official "constituency groups". It is based in the headquarters of the AFL-CIO in [Washington, D.C.](#) In 2006, it had 65 chapters in the United States and [Puerto Rico](#), and claimed to represent 1.7 million Latino trade unionists.

1974

COALITION OF LABOR UNION WOMEN

The Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) is a [nonprofit](#), [nonpartisan](#) organization of [trade union](#) women affiliated with the [AFL-CIO](#). CLUW has four goals:

- Promoting affirmative action in the workplace
- Strengthening the role of women in unions
- Organizing more women into unions
- Increasing the involvement of women in the democratic process.

CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ([Pub.L. 88-352](#), 78 [Stat. 241](#), enacted July 2, 1964) is a landmark piece of [civil rights](#) legislation in the [United States](#) that outlawed major forms of discrimination against racial, ethnic, national and religious minorities, and women. It ended unequal application of voter registration requirements and [racial segregation](#) in schools, at the workplace and by facilities that served the general public (known as "public accommodations"). Powers given to enforce the act were initially weak, but were supplemented during later years. Congress asserted its authority to legislate under several different parts of the [United States Constitution](#), principally its power to regulate [interstate commerce](#) under [Article One](#) (section 8), its duty to guarantee all citizens [equal protection](#) of the laws under the [Fourteenth Amendment](#) and its duty to protect voting rights under the [Fifteenth Amendment](#). The Act was signed into [law](#) by [President Lyndon B. Johnson](#).

AFL & CIO MERGE

The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL–CIO) is a [national trade union center](#), the largest federation of [unions](#) in the [United States](#), made up of fifty-six national and international unions,[3] together representing more than 11 million workers (as of June 2008, the most recent official statistic).[4] It was formed in 1955 when the [AFL](#) and the [CIO](#) merged after a long estrangement. From 1955 until 2005, the AFL–CIO's member unions represented nearly all unionized workers in the United States. Several large unions split away from AFL–CIO and formed the rival [Change to Win Federation](#) in 2005. The largest union currently in the AFL–CIO is the [American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees](#) (AFSCME), with more than 1.6 million members.”

ROCHDALE WHOLESALE COMPANY

In 1899 representatives of a number of co-op stores in rural California communities came together in Oakland and organized the Pacific Coast Cooperative Union (PCCU). A co-op wholesale, Rochdale Wholesale Co., opened in 1900 in San Francisco. At that time there were six stores in California. They set out to organize more stores, as they considered these needed to make the wholesale viable. An organizing bureau was formed, and by the end of 1900, there 28 stores in the Rochdale Family. In 1900 the PCCU and the Rochdale Wholesale Co. had the distinction of being the only cooperatives in the US sending delegates to Europe to the congress of the International Cooperative Alliance. In 1905, out of 65 co-op stores in California, 51 were part of the Rochdale group. Historian Ira Cross wrote in 1905: “In no place is the cooperative movement so strong or so successful as in California.” In 1906, there were 100 stores. But the movement in San Francisco was hurt by the earthquake and fire. They moved the wholesale temporarily to Oakland. The financial panic of 1907 hurt many co-op branches. In 1910 there were about 50 stores in California, including San Jose, most in smaller towns. Of these, 46 were organized together in the Rochdale Family. Each store held stock in the Rochdale Wholesale Co. of San Francisco. They were attacked by other wholesalers, which were trying to force Rochdale into bankruptcy. Many stores were weak, and the wholesale needed a bigger movement to support it. In 1910 they reorganized on new plan. Called the California Rochdale Co., they aggressively organized new branches. Branch managers worked under centralized supervision of the manager of Rochdale Wholesale Co. By 1912 they were a chain of 12 branches. They collapsed in 1913, and all branches closed. Rochdale Wholesale Co. was on verge of collapsing, with less than 30 co-op store as members. However, there were still 100 independent associations in California.

1900

MID-1960'S TO EARLY 1970'S

NEW WAVE OF FOOD COOPERATIVES

Consumer-owned food stores have emerged, grown, and declined in waves since the 1850s. The most recent growth period occurred during the mid-1960 and early 1970 when there was a nationwide resurgence of cooperative food stores. By 1979, an estimated 3,000 food stores and buying clubs operated in the United States and Canada ([Food Co-op Project, 1979](#)). By the 1990s, however, the changing social and political climate resulted in a substantial decline in the number of cooperatives, accompanied by a period of consolidation and growth for the strong cooperatives. Consumers' interest and participation in retail food cooperatives tends to increase in periods of social, political, and economic turmoil. Although their secondary needs may vary considerably, cooperative members consistently want their cooperatives to provide price, quality, and selection advantages. Growth periods also occur when large numbers of consumers experience economic difficulties and develop an interest in ownership and control of their retail food sources when they become concerned for food safety and when they experience a strong desire for an ethical society ([Hoyt, 1982](#)). Failure of cooperatives is consistently traced to decline in member participation, lack of management skills, inadequate capitalization, strong competition, increasing concentration in food retailing, and "loss of the cooperative spirit" ([The Co-op Handbook Collective, 1975](#)). The most extensive impact food cooperatives have recently had on the grocery industry has been their pioneering introduction of natural and organic foods, which began with the "new wave" of food cooperatives in the early 1970s. Cooperatives dominated this market until the 1990s, when several independently owned natural foods markets began large-scale expansion. The Food System movement, based in "new wave" wholesales and regional federations around the country, became central to the entire counterculture movement, and as such was the center of ideological struggle over the aims and strategy of the movement by the mid-70s.

Some saw the movement as primarily part of an overall struggle against the capitalist system, thought that it should be focused to serve the working population basically, should be anti-profit, and that the movement's capital should not be "privately" owned, neither by groups of workers or consumers. Others saw the movement as primarily economic and serving all classes, with "ownership" remaining decentralized in worker and consumer groups, which could decide questions of "profit" or "non-profit" as they saw fit. There were not two clear-cut camps, as each organization had its own variation of worker vs. consumer control, federation vs. centralization, etc.. There were often different viewpoints within the same organization (Curl, 1980).

INTERNATIONAL WORKINGMEN'S ASSOCIATION

The International was organized in 1864 through the initiative of British and French unionists and cooperators to serve as a central medium of communication and cooperation among workers and worker organizations of different countries. Within a few years it became an umbrella for worker movements in almost every country in the industrializing world. These had all followed a pattern similar to the movement in the U.S.: as industry, capitalism and wage-slavery grew, so grew the resistance organizations of the workers--unions, cooperatives and parties. All the union movements were connected to cooperative movements. All schools of thought were represented within the International. Its yearly congresses attempted to hammer out a common program for worker movements everywhere. The concepts of socialism were rooted in the aspirations of every worker movement. With the IWA, these movements interpenetrated. The largest divisions were between the "scientific," "anarchist" and "cooperative" schools of thought. Despite their many disagreements about strategy and organization, all agreed that in the end production should be run through a system of coordinated worker cooperatives, and not by an all-powerful bureaucratic "state." The IWA advocated workers forming cooperatives, particularly producer cooperatives over stores (because the mode of production is more basic to the system than the mode of distribution, which flows from it); recommended that all cooperatives devote part of their income to supporting and spreading the movement; suggested that workers, whether members or not, should receive equal salaries; and that excess income should be plowed back into the cooperative instead of divided as "profit." It proposed that the land and resources belong to society; that mines, public transport and agriculture be operated by worker cooperatives with assistance from "a new kind of state subject to the law of justice"; and that it was the fundamental task of workers to destroy the wage system and develop a new social order. But it also warned that the past thirty years experience had demonstrated in many countries that cooperative movements by themselves could not defeat the domination of "private" capital, and that they could not succeed without an allied political movement to change basic property relationships and the general conditions of society. Therefore, the IWA concluded, the ultimate value of producer cooperatives in the present society lay in their conclusive demonstration that wage-slaves and a class of employers were unnecessary to large-scale "modern" production. By 1871 there were over 5000 American International members, with sections in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, New Orleans, Newark, Springfield, Washington, and Williamsburg (Curl, 1980).

1895

COOPERATIVE UNION OF AMERICA

Between 1895 and 1899, a group of scholars, including Francis Peabody of Harvard, instigated the Cooperative Union of America (CUA) in Massachusetts with the goal of organizing a national federation of consumer cooperative stores from Maine to New Jersey. A few of them were old Protective Unions. Its newspaper, American Cooperative News, was almost the only source of information among scattered consumer cooperatives in that period. The CUA was the first American cooperative organization to join the International Cooperative Alliance, which it did as soon as the ICA was organized in 1896, marking the beginning of modern institutional ties between the American and international movements. But the ferocious depression year of 1899 destroyed many stores and took down the CUA (Curl, 2009).

1866

THE NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY

Before 1860 small farmers were mostly self-sufficient. They produced for their families and for nearby markets. But the end of the war saw a great expansion in farmed land and in mechanization. Extension of the western railroads connected once-isolated communities into a national market. Farm output skyrocketed, pressing prices down. The small farmer became a tiny link in a great chain, dominated and impoverished by bankers, merchants and middlemen, "fleeced coming and going," overpriced purchasing seed, supplies and equipment, and overcharged marketing produce. Oliver Kelly, once a farmer but by the mid-'60s a clerk in the U.S. Bureau of Agriculture, founded the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry in 1866, as a secret fraternal order of farmers. (A grange is a farm homestead.) Their Declaration of Principles stated "cooperation in all things," and they soon began organizing cooperatives to meet the needs of their hard-pressed members, coming into the open.

With the Grange, farmer cooperation changed from mostly informal and local, to a wide-spread and well organized movement. In their third year the Grange began purchasing and marketing cooperatives in Minnesota. The local Granges were mutual-aid centers, where information about work and survival were shared, and members helped educate each other. In a few years there were Granges throughout the mid-west and south-west. When the economy faltered in '72 and fell the next year, membership soared.

The Grange organized cooperative grain elevators, warehouses, shipping stations, processing plants, grist mills, bag factories, brick yards, blacksmith shops, cotton gins, rail and ship transport, mutual insurance, irrigation, machine and implement works, and at least four banks. By 1875 they had 250 grain elevators just in Illinois. Together the Grangers of the west fought a grasshopper plague; in the South they fought floods. The Grange spread to the west coast (Curl, 1980)

1978

INDUSTRIAL COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

The Industrial Cooperative Association was formed in 1978 in Boston to develop worker-owned-and-controlled cooperatives on a model of self-management. A nonprofit, the ICA expanded the concept to include community-owned businesses and Employee Stock Ownership Plan/Employee Owned.

The ICA defined an industrial worker cooperative as self-governing, with one vote per member-worker and based on the principle that all workers should receive the fruits of their labor within the framework of social and community responsibility for their resources used. It made an exception to all-worker-ownership with retail stores, for which it supported the option of the decision-making structure extending to community representation. With the ICA's guidance, the workers took over the shutdown Colonial Press in Clinton, Massachusetts in 1978, and transformed it into the first true large industrial cooperative formed in the United States in twenty years. The following year, the ICA helped the workers of International Poultry in Willimantic, Connecticut, to become the next. In collaboration with the neighborhood Community Development Corporation in Dorchester, they transformed a shutdown supermarket into a community-worker cooperative, with each group having 50 percent control. The ICA continued its work in the following decades (Curl, 2009).

i" Please note that a majority of these descriptions came from various sources online. If you would like to find out where this information was sourced, please contact me directly at creuge@gmail.com