

CHRONOLOGY OF MINNESOTA WORKERS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS

Last ice age: People first come to Minnesota, following herds of large game as the glaciers melted.

Late 1600s: French fur traders arrive in Minnesota. They find long-established communities of Dakota people.

1800s

1820s: Fort Snelling is constructed. In the next decades, large numbers of immigrants come to Minnesota. In 1838, St. Paul (originally called Pig's Eye) is settled. The land where Minneapolis stands, once part of the Fort Snelling reserve, is opened to settlement in 1855. Duluth is incorporated in 1857.

1830s: Dred Scott works as a slave at Minnesota's Fort Snelling, property of the fort's surgeon, Dr. John Emerson. At Fort Snelling, Scott meets and marries Harriet Robinson, also a slave, and they have two children. In 1846, the Scotts turn to the courts to gain their freedom, citing their years of residence in free states. For the next 10 years, the case moves from court to court. In an infamous decision, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that as a slave, Scott is not a U.S. citizen, not entitled to sue for freedom in federal court, has never been free, and has to remain a slave.



1845: Half a million Irish emigrate to Minnesota and other states when the potato famine ravages their homeland.

1848: War breaks out between Mexico and the United States after the U.S. takes all or parts of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada and Utah. Mexicans in those areas lose their citizenship rights.

1849: The Minnesota Territory, including the state's current boundaries and parts of the Dakotas, is formed.

1850: Women make up 24 percent of the nation's manufacturing workforce. Large numbers also are employed in domestic service and teaching, while continuing to do the majority of the unpaid labor on farms and in the home.

1854: The Daily Minnesota Pioneer carries the first known report of a strike in Minnesota, by journeymen tailors in St. Paul. The outcome is unknown.

1856: St. Paul printers organize the first union in Minnesota during a dinner to commemorate Benjamin Franklin's birthday. It eventually becomes International Typographical Union Local 30.

1858: Minnesota becomes the 32nd state. The vast majority of the 150,000 inhabitants work as farmers, small business owners, mill workers, teachers, and in-home workers.

1860: In the summer of 1860, a slave named Eliza Winston is brought to Minnesota by her master, a Mississippi plantation owner. Tourists from southern states travel by boat up the Mississippi River to see famous sights like the falls of St. Anthony, sometimes bringing slaves with them. Minnesota abolitionists say state law declares that no man or woman can be held in bondage in Minnesota, even if they are just visiting. Antislavery activists in Minneapolis successfully petition a judge to have Eliza Winston freed. She eventually moves to Canada. Such actions take place across the country as the movement to abolish slavery grows.

1860: Training schools for teachers open in Winona, Mankato, and St. Cloud. For the first time, women are allowed to attend and train for a profession outside of the home.

1861: The Minnesota Education Association (MEA) is founded in Rochester as a professional organization for teachers and administrators. Their focus is providing a quality education for every child.

1860s: Minneapolis and St. Paul printers' unions lose their charters as members leave the state to fight for the Union Army. The charters are reissued after the war. Minnesotans were among the first to respond to President Abraham Lincoln's call for troops to stop the South from seceding from the United States.

1863: At the Battle of Gettysburg, the First Minnesota Regiment makes a heroic charge, losing 215 of 262 men.

1865: Congress adopts the 13th Amendment, outlawing slavery. The end to official slavery is perhaps the greatest labor victory in U.S. and Minnesota history. Yet the struggle for equal rights was far from over; the same year that Congress adopted the 13th Amendment, the Ku Klux Klan was formed.





Immigrants at Ellis Island

1867: Oliver Kelley, a Minnesota farmer turned government clerk, holds the first meeting of The Grange, with a focus on fighting high rail rates for shipping farm products.

1867: German immigrants in Minneapolis establish a Workingman's Society to find jobs for Society members, the first mutual benefit group of its kind formed in the state.

1868: About 75 Minneapolis and St. Anthony coopers (workers who make barrels) strike for 3 cents more pay per barrel, which would mean a \$1.05 increase in their \$20 weekly earnings; two Cooper leaders are arrested but the charges are later dropped.

1868: In the aftermath of the Civil War, Congress proposes and the states ratify two very important amendments. The 14th Amendment, adopted in 1868, establishes that African Americans are citizens. It also provides all Americans with due process and equal protection under the law. The 15th Amendment, adopted in 1870, prohibits the federal government and the states from using a citizen's race, color, or previous status as a slave as a qualification for voting. However, it still excludes all women from voting.

1870: The Minnesota Legislature provides the first legal basis for cooperatives. Among the first producer co-ops are barrel shops. Most failed by the late 1880s, however, as sacks replaced barrels in the milling industry.

1873: Nationwide financial panic leads to widespread joblessness; unions fold or witness shrinking memberships.

1875: Minnesotan Ignatius Donnelly helps found the National Greenback Party to challenge the rail and timber monopolies. In the 1880s he gets involved in starting the People's Party (also known as the Populist Party) which champions the 8-hour day among other causes.

1878: The Knights of Labor establish an Assembly in Minneapolis; they form another the following year in St. Paul. The Knights of Labor are known for their inclusiveness (accepting women and African American members), but they also support the Chinese Exclusion Act. Their key demand is the 8-hour day.

1878: On May 2, the Washburn 'A' Mill — the largest flour mill in the United States at that time — explodes when flour dust in the air inside it ignites. The explosion claims 18 lives, decimates the surrounding area, and brings instant notoriety to Minneapolis. The tragedy leads to safety reforms in the milling industry, including the installation of ventilation systems. The ruins of the mill are now part of the Mill City Museum.

1878: First organization of the Stonecutters Union in St. Paul.

1880s: From 1880 through the 1940s, immigrants change the face of America. Drawn by economic opportunity and fleeing war and political or religious repression in their homelands, waves of people from across the globe come to the United States. Mostly working class, they form the backbone of the U.S. economy but often face discrimination. Chinese are particularly singled out and are denied citizenship through the Chinese Exclusion Act, enacted in 1882.

1880s: The notion of "Employment at Will" starts to become the pervasive doctrine in American workplaces and remains so today. The central tenet of this doctrine is that workers have no right to their jobs. Rather, employment is simply viewed as an economic transaction between equal parties that can be terminated by either party for any reason or no reason. Today, the vast majority of U.S. workers who have no union are subject to "employment at will." Only those with union contracts are protected against discipline, demotion or firing without cause.

1880s: Throughout the decade, many Building Trades unions are formed in Minnesota, including the Bricklayers, Plasterers, Plumbers and Carpenters.

1880s: Minnesota passes its first law limiting child labor, but comprehensive legislation fully prohibiting child labor is not adopted until 1909. According to the 1890 census report, 4,460 children between the ages of 10 and 14 were "gainfully employed" in Minnesota.

1880: Minnesota farmers are among those who form the Northern Alliance (also known as the Farmers Alliance) which along with The Grange challenges the power of the railroads and banks.



Child labor in the textile mills

1881: The first Knights of Labor assembly is established in Duluth.

1882: The St. Paul Trades & Labor Assembly is founded with the assistance of the Knights of Labor Assembly. The Minneapolis Trades Assembly forms in 1883, Duluth in 1887, all with assistance from the Knights. Later they become central bodies under the American Federation of Labor.

1883: Longshoremen on Duluth's waterfront, although they have no formal union, win a strike for a wage increase.

1884: First shipment of iron ore from the Vermilion Range to the port of Duluth. The Mesabi Range ships its first ore to the port in 1892 and the Cuyuna Range in 1911. From 1900 to 1980, the Mesabi Range contributes about 60 percent of the country's total iron ore output. The mines are worked mostly by immigrants; the dominant nationalities are Finnish, Swedish, Slovenian and Croatian.

1884: Retail store workers in St. Paul and Duluth form "Early Closing Societies" to seek shorter hours. They join the Knights of Labor to enlist its support for a 7 p.m. closing time.

1884: A total of 73 local unions are reported to be operating in Minnesota, 27 in St. Paul, 17 in Minneapolis and 29 in Duluth and elsewhere.

1885: The Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen establishes its first lodge in Minnesota, Great Northern Lodge 83 in St. Cloud. By 1890, the various railroad brotherhoods have 47 lodges in the state.

1885: Other new unions form, including the Teamsters Protective Association and Hack & Cab Drivers Union in Minneapolis, the United Laborers Union in Winona and the Scandinavian Laborers Association in Minneapolis.

1885: Knights of Labor Master Workman Terence Powderly speaks to about 1,000 workers at Harrison Hall in Minneapolis and an equal number at a St. Paul rally.

1885: First observance of Labor Day in Minnesota. Twin Cities and Stillwater Knights of Labor Assemblies call for a picnic at White Bear Lake. The crowd is estimated at 3,000. Duluth holds its first Labor Day celebration in 1887.

1886: Printers in Duluth organize, followed within a few months by the Cigar Makers.

1886: The Knights of Labor, the Northern Alliance, The Grange and the trades assemblies hold a joint convention in St. Paul. The convention calls for creation of a Bureau of Labor Statistics, arbitration of disputes, no child labor in factories or mines and no convict labor contracts.

1886: The Haymarket Protest in Chicago marks the beginning of the decline of the Knights of Labor. On May 1, some 80,000 workers, many of them immigrants, march in a parade to demand an eight-hour day. At a rally May 4, someone throws a bomb into the crowd, killing a number of people. Eight organizers of the Haymarket gathering are put on trial, convicted without evidence and four are executed. Although the Haymarket Massacre, as it also is called, leads to the demise of the Knights of Labor, it also sparks an international movement for worker rights. Today, May 1 is marked as International Workers Day in many countries.

1886: The American Federation of Labor, which would become the dominant labor federation, replacing the Knights of Labor, is established in Columbus, Ohio.

1887: The opening of a Pinkerton Detective Agency in St. Paul arouses strong protests from the St. Paul Trades & Labor Assembly. The governor and mayors of both Twin Cities declare themselves opposed to the use of Pinkerton men, who often are used to spy on workers and break strikes.

1887: The Minnesota Legislature prohibits some convict labor, although convict labor is not completely prohibited until 1913. The Legislature also establishes a rule that railroad companies are liable for injuries to their employees, the first move toward workers' compensation laws.

1887: Thirteen tradesmen form The Brotherhood of Painters and Decorators of America in Baltimore, MD, and within a year, the union grows to more than 7,000 members in over 100 locals.

1888: Organizer Louis Nash calls a mass meeting of retail clerks in St. Paul. Three hundred people, half of them women, turn out to protest the 16-hour day and six-day week. They donate 25 cents each toward handbills, hall rent and the cost of an application for a union charter.



Samuel Gompers
First President, American Federation of Labor

1888: Some 260 female employees walk out at the clothing factory of Shotwell, Clerihew & Lothman in Minneapolis. Dubbed “the striking maidens,” they are members of the Knights of Labor. The strike fails, but the company does not win, either. A community boycott leads to its eventual closure.

1888: Labor organizer and reformer Eva McDonald Valesh (a.k.a. Eva Gay) writes a series of articles for the St. Paul Daily Globe, revealing the intolerable and unsafe conditions endured by female factory workers.

1889: In the first major transit strike in the Twin Cities, nearly 1,500 street railway employees in the Twin Cities stop work. Despite public support, the walkout fails and many strikers are blacklisted.



Eugene V. Debs

1889: With support from the local Knights of Labor, immigrant laborers working on Duluth streets and sewers strike when contractors renege on their pay agreement. When the mayor calls out the police, violence ensues and three people are killed.

1890: The Minnesota State Federation of Labor is formed. Its platform includes the 8-hour day; state inspection of mines and factories; free textbooks for all schoolchildren and state ownership of the railroads, telegraph and telephone system.

1890: Starting in 1890, the former Confederate states enact measures that have the effect of denying blacks the right to vote. Forms of disenfranchisement include poll taxes — requiring payment of a fee to exercise the right to vote — and measures requiring the ownership of property in order to vote. In Texas, these “Jim Crow” laws are also used to deny Mexican-Americans the right to vote.

1892: The St. Paul Trades & Labor Assembly raises money to help defend the Homestead steel strikers who have been arrested and sends famous Twin Cities criminal lawyer W.W. Erwin to Pittsburgh to assist in their defense.

1893: Workers in Minneapolis bakeries begin the first union organizing in that industry in Minnesota.

1894: The year of the great railroad strikes by the American Railway Union, formed by Eugene V. Debs. In the Great Northern strike, workers shut down the rails from Chicago to Seattle, forcing James J. Hill — “the Empire Builder” — to restore a pay cut. But later that year, the Pullman Strike is crushed when President Grover Cleveland sends in federal troops. The ARU never recovers and Debs is sent to jail.

1896: The first of the state’s three central labor council newspapers, the Duluth *Labor World*, is founded by 29-year-old Sabrie Akin. Under her editorial direction, the *Labor World* champions the cause of “laundry girls” and immigrants working in the ore and logging industries — workers whom others in the labor movement have ignored. The St. Paul *Union Advocate* is founded in 1897 and the Minneapolis *Labor Review* in 1907.

1896: The Duluth Assembly gets a report that Minnesota mining companies have posted bulletins threatening immediate discharge of any miner who joins a union. The State Federation of Labor convention demands a law requiring mining companies to remove bodies of miners buried in cave-ins after officials at Eveleth’s Vega mine apparently ignore a fatal cave-in and order crews to keep right on working. By the late 1890s, the Western Federation of Miners is actively organizing miners on the Iron Range.

1897: The Minnesota State Federation of Labor hires its first lobbyist to promote worker issues at the state Legislature.

1897: The Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America was chartered by the American Federation of Labor. In most meat packing plants, unskilled workers were the majority, with many earning less than \$6 a week. Skilled workers were paid better, with their wages ranging from \$3 to \$3.50 a day.



Sabrie Akin

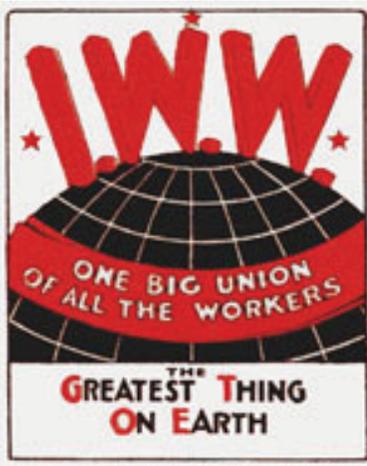
1900s

1900: The Boot & Shoe Workers union organizes a Minneapolis plant in 1900 and two St. Paul plants in 1901.

1902: Charles James, African-American leader of the Boot & Shoe Workers, is elected president of the St. Paul Trades & Labor Assembly.

1903: Brewery workers organize in St. Paul.

1903: Beginning of the culinary unions in Minnesota. St. Paul founds the Cooks Alliance and Waiters Alliance,



Duluth establishes a Cooks and Waiters Alliance while Minneapolis has a Waiters Alliance. Cook wages average \$6 a week plus meals. Waiters, who receive no regular salary, literally have to buy their jobs. They work long hours, earning only tips, to pay off their employer and earn a meager living.

1903: Some 1,800 workers at the Pillsbury, Peavey and other Minneapolis flour and grain mills unsuccessfully strike for an 8-hour day. Owners hire scabs, including dozens of University of Minnesota students. The employers' win is a huge boost to the fledgling Citizens Alliance, an organization of anti-union businesses dedicated to maintaining the "open shop."

1903: Minneapolis Sprinkler Fitters & Helpers Union Local No. 417 is organized with 15 members.

1903: The first national union for roofers, The International Slate and Tile Roofers Union of America, forms.

1904: St. Paul packinghouse workers join in the first national strike by the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen. The walkout fails and many strikers are blacklisted. The companies employ a divide-and-conquer strategy, replacing the largely white workforce with African-Americans and immigrants.

1905: The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) is founded in Chicago. The Wobblies, as they are known, would build strong representation among Minnesota lumberjacks and lead the Mesabi Iron Range strike of 1916.

1905: Starting in 1905 and stretching into the 1960s, a mass migration of more than 4.8 million African Americans, dubbed "The Great Migration," took place from the south to the north. Many left to escape overt racial discrimination in southern states, only to encounter racial tensions in the north as whites viewed them as a threat to their jobs.

1907: The Western Federation of Miners leads a strike against the Oliver Iron Mining Co. on Minnesota's Iron Range. Hundreds are blacklisted after the walkout fails.

1907: Minnesota joins two other states in setting minimum standards for nurses, the main employment option available to women interested in the medical field. Nurses generally work 12-hour shifts, six days a week, for minimal pay.

1908: The Theatrical Stage Employees International Alliance holds its national convention in Minneapolis, with American Federation of Labor President Samuel Gompers giving a speech.

1909: Female shirtwaist workers in New York go on strike against sweatshop conditions in what became known as "The Uprising of the 20,000." Their leader, Clara Lemlich, a 23-year-old Ukrainian immigrant, became a union activist while still in her teens. When the male leaders of the workers resisted taking action, she took the floor and called for a general strike.

1910s

1910: St. Paul Post Office clerks are the first to organize in Minnesota.

1910: Women represent 1 in 4 workers in the waged workforce. By 1930, they represent 3 in 10, and by 1940, they are 1 in 3. These numbers only refer to waged work, and do not count women who are employed in seasonal, temporary, or part time work.

1911: On March 25, a fire breaks out at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York City. Some 146 garment workers — most of them young, immigrant women — die in the largest industrial disaster in the city's history. Locked inside by factory owners, many jump to their deaths from the 10-story building.

1911: The Building Trades Council of Minneapolis is founded, with a membership of 18 local building craft unions. The council's motto is "We must hang together or hang separately."

1912: The Rev. John Ryan, "the workers' priest," calls for creation of a State Minimum Wage Board.



The 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist fire in New York City shocked the nation.

1912: Duluth streetcar workers strike to seek recognition of their union and reinstatement of nine fired union men. Thousands riot, destroying railcars and barricading streets. Despite strong community support, the strike is lost.

1912: Lawrence, Massachusetts, textile workers launch an eight-week strike that popularizes the slogan "Bread and Roses" - dignity and improved conditions as well as higher wages.

1912: International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 110 is chartered in St. Paul.

1913: The Minnesota Legislature passes a workers' compensation law, one of the first in the nation. W. E. "Billy" McEwen, secretary of the Minnesota State Federation of Labor and editor of the Duluth Labor World, is considered to be the "father" of this first compensation law because of his work in drafting its terms.

1913: Motion picture machine operators begin organizing at the many theaters popping up to show silent movies. Membership in the union reaches its peak in 1927, about the time "talkies" are introduced, and before the advent of new technology and competition from television and video.



1917 transit workers' strike

1916: Students at the Work Peoples' College in Duluth distribute Joe Hill's ashes outside the school, in accordance with his wish that his remains be spread in every state except Utah (site of the IWW organizer's execution). The College, operated by the IWW, teaches a curriculum that includes English, bookkeeping, parliamentary procedure and "the works of Marx, Engels, Kautsky and others of the best authors on socialism."

1916: The Wobblies lead an unsuccessful strike among miners on the Mesabi Range. One striker is shot by agents of the Oliver Mining Co. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, one of the IWW's founders, raises legal and relief funds for the strikers. Her patriotism called in question, Flynn remarks, "It is better to be a traitor to your country than a traitor to your class!"

1916: The Wobblies also lead a strike by 4,000 workers in the timber industry for the 8-hour day and a 25-cent wage increase.

1916: The Duluth Federation of Labor launches the "Labor Forward" movement and signs up 4,000 new union members.

1916: Municipal firemen begin organizing in unions in Minnesota, preceding the creation of the International Association of Fire Fighters.

1917: The Minnesota Commission on Public Safety, created during World War I by the state Legislature, assumes near unlimited power and is hostile to organized labor.

1917: Thousands of people rally in support of workers employed by the Twin City Rapid Transit Company, but the workers' strike is crushed with the help of the St. Paul Civilian Auxiliary and units of the State Home Guard. With the United States involved in the First World War, the strikers are condemned as unpatriotic.

1917: The Minneapolis Cooperative Association is organized at Federation Hall. The company sells groceries to union members on a cooperative basis.

1917: Three hundred newsboys organize to protest a cut in pay by the Minneapolis Tribune.

1918: The first Minnesota local of the American Federation of Teachers is formed in St. Paul.

1918: A special census taken of women workers on the Iron Range reveals that American-born workers average 25 cents per hour for 56 hours per week, while immigrant women average 13 cents per hour for 67 hours per week. Women who work in boarding houses fare worst of all, averaging 10 cents per hour for 100 hours per week. These waged work hours are all in addition to women's unwaged work within the home.

1919: The first unions for city and county employees in Minnesota are chartered by the American Federation of Labor in St. Paul, Minneapolis and Duluth. Seventeen years later, these locals have an influential role in founding AFSCME, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. State and local government workers and school district employees lack full collective bargaining rights until passage of PELRA in 1971.

1919: Twin Cities residents crowd Commonwealth Hall in Minneapolis for a showing of "The Blacklist," a realistic film depicting the massacre of miners and their families in Ludlow, Colorado, five years before.

1919: Ordered by U.S. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, with the assistance of a young J. Edgar Hoover, federal agents round up and arrest some 10,000 suspected "aliens," anarchists, communists and labor activists. Some 556 people were eventually deported. The Palmer Raids were the most notorious event in a period that became known as "The Red Scare."

1920s

1920: Women get the right to vote when Congress adopts the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. The victory follows decades of agitation by the "suffragettes," led by Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and many others.

1920s: Lena Hill becomes the first black woman to practice law in Minnesota. She goes on to become the first female president of the Minnesota NAACP.

1922: Rail workers across Minnesota join in the nationwide shopmen's strike. The walkout fails, but leads to passage of the Railway Labor Act, which provides collective bargaining rights to workers in the transportation industries.

1923: St. Paul teacher Florence Rood is elected president of the American Federation of Teachers. She is the first woman to head a national union that has both male and female members.

1924: Union members and farmers come together to form their own political party, the Minnesota Farmer Labor Party, on a platform of fair wages for workers and fair prices for farmers. The party eventually elects many lawmakers, including two governors and several members of Congress, becoming the most successful third party movement in U.S. history.

1924: Mud and water from a nearby lake flood the Milford Mine near Crosby, Minnesota, drowning 41 of the 48 men working underground. It is the worst mining disaster in Minnesota history.

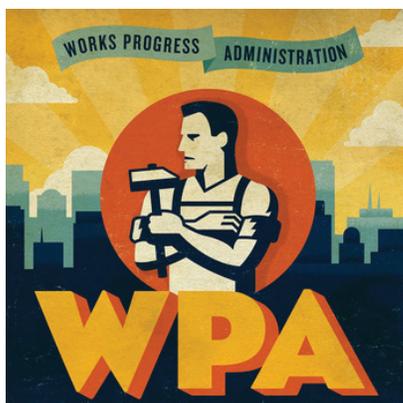
1924: Under the federal Indian Citizenship Act, Native Americans finally gain the right to vote.

1925: The Minnesota Federation of Labor passes a constitutional amendment prohibiting delegates who are communists or advocate communist principles from being seated at the state convention.

1925: African-American workers, segregated into jobs as porters and waiters on the nation's railroads, organize the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

1926: On Jan. 13, Local 3 of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters holds its first meeting, at Welcome Hall in St. Paul's Rondo neighborhood. Frank Boyd, an early leader of the union (along with national President A. Philip Randolph) is elected secretary-treasurer of the local. He is immediately fired by the Northern Pacific Railroad and takes a job at the Armour Meatpacking plant in South St. Paul to support himself and his family while he continues organizing the union. In 1987, a park in St. Paul is dedicated in his honor.

1926: Farmers open a sugar beet processing plant in East Grand Forks, the first of seven to be built in the Red River Valley along the Minnesota-North Dakota border and in southern Minnesota.



1927: Steam Shovel and Dredgemen Local Union 42A of Minneapolis and the International Union of Steam and Operating Engineers, Locals 86 of St. Paul and 87 of Minneapolis, join to form Local 49 of the International Union of Operating Engineers. In later years, Local 49 also grows to encompass Hoisting and Portable Local Unions 517 of Duluth-Superior, 560 of Rapid City, South Dakota; and 723 of Fargo, North Dakota.

1928: In his book, "Spies in Steel," Frank Palmer exposes the Oliver Mining Company's extensive network of spies, thugs and strikebreakers.

1929: The stock market collapses on Wall Street and President Herbert Hoover's administration is powerless to halt the spread of the Great Depression. By the next year, almost one in five Minnesota workers is unemployed.

THE VERY THOUGHT OF IT SCARES 'EM



A 1930s cartoon promoting the Farmer Labor Party depicts Governor Floyd B. Olson helping to unite farmers and wage workers.

1930s

1930: Farmer-Labor candidate Floyd B. Olson is elected governor, a position he holds for six years. "I am not a liberal. I am what I want to be — a radical," he declares. Considered a shoo-in for the U.S. Senate and a possible challenger to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Olson dies suddenly of stomach cancer in 1936.

1930: Northwest Airlines pilots in Minneapolis organize a pilots council, which a year later becomes Council 1 of the new Air Line Pilots Association.



The 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters' strike, during which four people died in bloody street battles, is considered by many historians to be the most important single event in Minnesota labor history.

1931: Congress enacts the Davis-Bacon Act, also known as the prevailing wage law, on federally funded construction. The law requires contractors to pay no less than the wage rates prevailing in the local area for each construction craft. It is intended to protect communities from the economic disruption caused by outside contractors who underbid local wages levels. Many state and local governments then adopt prevailing wage laws.

1932: St. Paul Trades & Labor Assembly President and Union Advocate editor William Mahoney is elected St. Paul mayor. He successfully lobbies the federal government to help the city's many unemployed workers during the Great Depression and calls for city ownership of the electric utility. Business interests and the media line up against him, leading to his defeat in the 1934 election.

1932: Farmers organize the Farm Holiday Association, which sponsors the only significant farm "strikes" in state history. John Bosch, the association's Minnesota leader, seeks a 10-day shutdown of produce deliveries in an effort to exhaust supplies so farmers could fix their own prices.

1932: The Seventh Street Club for Girls opens to provide temporary housing, food and counseling to unemployed women in Minneapolis. Serving an average of 50 women per day, the Club is sponsored in part by the Women's Occupational Bureau (which assists over 10,000 women that year) and the Federation of Labor.

1932: Franklin D. Roosevelt is elected president in the depths of the Great Depression. Spurred on by unions and other organizations agitating for change, he puts forth an ambitious program, "The New Deal." It includes collective bargaining rights, unemployment insurance, Social Security and jobs programs like the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

1933: Congress passes the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) with Section 7(a) granting employees the right to organize. The NIRA is later found unconstitutional and is replaced by the National Labor Relations Act.

1933: First union contract won on Twin Cities Rapid Transit Lines. Twenty years later, the last streetcar lines are ripped out and replaced with buses. Today, the Amalgamated Transit Union represents workers employed in Metro Transit's bus system and light rail lines.

1933: The first sit-down strike in American history takes place at the Hormel Plant in Austin. Hormel demands that Governor Olson call out the National Guard to oust the sitdown strikers, but Olson instead mediates an agreement.

1933: The Hospital and Nursing Home Employees Union begins in the Twin Cities with 100 members. Today, the union is known as SEIU Healthcare Minnesota, with more than 14,000 members statewide.

1933: Union organization efforts begin among Mississippi River workers, largely as a result of the National Industrial Recovery Act.

1934: Workers employed at the Pioneer Press and Dispatch in St. Paul and the Star, Journal and Tribune in Minneapolis form Local 2 of the American Newspaper Guild. In 1938, it takes a long strike — in which police use tear gas on pickets — before the Guild wins recognition at the Duluth daily newspapers.

1934: The Minneapolis Teamsters' Strike, the most significant single labor struggle in state history, is a showdown between Minneapolis employers and workers that divides the city and forces Minnesota's Farmer-Labor governor, Floyd B. Olson, to step in. The strikers use a new tactic — roving pickets — and publish their own daily newspaper to counter the corporate-dominated press. They enlist the support of farmers and the community as they ultimately break the back of the fiercely anti-labor Citizens Alliance. The victory comes at the cost of four lives — two strikers and two strikebreakers.



1935: The largely female workforce of the Strutwear Knitting Works in downtown Minneapolis stages a successful strike after eight workers are fired for trying to form a union.

1935: The Minneapolis Teamsters' strike, the San Francisco general strike and the Toledo Auto-Lite strike spur Congressional passage of the National Labor Relations Act. This landmark legislation declares that it is the policy of the United States to "encourage the practice and procedure of collective bargaining . . ." It also authorizes the use of project labor agreements - pre-hire collective bargaining agreements between unions and contractors - on construction projects.

1935: Led by Mine Workers President John L. Lewis, several unions come together to form the CIO, the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The new labor federation is dedicating to organizing workers in steel, auto and other mass industrial operations that have been ignored by the American Federation of Labor.



1936: The Steelworkers Organizing Committee launches its first successful organizing drive in Minnesota, winning representation for workers at the U.S. Steel plant in Duluth. The mines on the Iron Range soon follow.

1937: AFL President William Green, his federation challenged by the rival CIO, orders state and city central bodies to expel CIO unions. In Minnesota, many of the central bodies are reluctant to carry out the expulsion order handed down by the national officials. However, orders to these groups finally result in the dropping, one after another, of the CIO affiliates. That autumn, CIO unions in Minnesota form their own organization.

1937: Workers at Greyhound, the national bus line founded in Hibbing, unionize. In 1990, workers at the company engage in a three-year strike, with the company eventually seeking bankruptcy protections.

1937: Members of the Hotel & Restaurant Employees & Bartenders win a contract covering Twin Cities hotels.

1937: The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers achieves its first contract with Northern States Power Company (today Xcel Energy).

1937: Workers at Duluth's Woolworth stores strike for and win a \$16 minimum weekly wage.

1937: The Civil Service system is established for state employees in Minnesota.

1937: Members of the United Auto Workers take over General Motors factories in Flint, Michigan, in a struggle that eventually leads to the organization of the entire U.S. auto industry. They utilize the sit-down strategy that had been pioneered by Hormel workers in Minnesota.

1937: For much of human history, skills have been transferred from one generation to another through some form of apprenticeship. In 1937, Congress passed the National Apprenticeship Act to promote apprenticeship and set standards. In Minnesota, the Apprenticeship Advisory Council holds its first meeting in 1939. Since that time, the state has registered more than 110,000 apprentices, many in the Building Trades.

1938: Congress passes the Fair Labor Standards Act that creates a national minimum wage and requirement of overtime pay for work beyond 40 hours per week.

1938: An important step for many female clerical workers is reached when union organizer Florence Huber raises the membership of Stenographer, Bookkeeper and Tax Accountants Local 17661 from 23 in 1936 to more than 600. With so few women working as union organizers, Huber faces open hostility and sexism.

1939: The Minnesota Legislature passes a Minnesota Labor Relations Act, patterned after the National Labor Relations Act. It covers workers at small, private sector employers exempted from the federal legislation.

1940s

1940: Unionized workers in Minnesota represent nearly 25 percent of the state's non-agricultural workforce.

1940s: While women have always performed the majority of unpaid labor — and many have worked for wages for years — women's presence in the workforce really grows during World War II, when they fill jobs in the wartime industries and many other positions. The iconic poster of "Rosie the Riveter" captures their skillfulness and determination. Between 1940 and 1945, the number of female workers in the Minnesota workforce increases by 54%, or 60,000 workers.

1941: St. Louis County secures special legislation establishing Civil Service for county employees and paves the way for other Minnesota counties to establish Civil Service.



1946 St. Paul teachers' strike

1941: The United Auto Workers win the first contract covering workers at the St. Paul Ford assembly plant.

1942: Workers in Duluth's shipyards successfully organize with the Boilermakers and Iron Ship Builders and Helpers unions.

1942: Starting in 1942 and running through 1964, the "Bracero" program brings millions of contract workers from Mexico, Jamaica, British Honduras and Barbados to the United States to meet labor shortages created by World War II. Although the program ended decades ago, some of these "guest workers" are still fighting for wages owed to them.

1943: Years of organizing in the packinghouse industry led to the creation of the United Packinghouse Workers of America, a union that ultimately gained large-scale national contracts in the industry and brought African-American and white workers together to fight against all forms of discrimination.

1944: The Minnesota Democratic and Farmer-Labor parties merge to create the DFL. One of the new party's leaders, Hubert H. Humphrey, purges the organization of anyone suspected of being communist.

1945: Nellie Stone Johnson, a leader of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union, becomes the first African-American elected to a citywide office in Minneapolis, winning a seat on the Library Board. Throughout her life, she is active in the labor movement, civil rights and politics.

1946: Frank Thill, secretary of the St. Paul Building Trades Council, draws up the first successful contract between the council and construction contractors.

1946: St. Paul teachers engage in the first organized teachers' strike in the nation, winning improved conditions for themselves and their students. The "Strike for Better Schools," led by women, garners national media coverage.

1946: Two years of intense effort by the Gas, Coke & Chemical Workers finally succeeds in winning recognition and a union contract at Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing — 3M — in St. Paul.

1947: The Communication Workers win a long fight for union recognition and a contract for Upper Midwest employees of Northwestern Bell Telephone Company and Western Electric.

1947: Artists and performers on Twin Cities radio stations form a local of the American Federation of Radio Artists. By 1951, the local is expanded as part of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.

1947: After the largest strike wave in U.S. history occurs in 1946, Congress passes the Taft-Hartley Act to prohibit sympathy strikes and secondary boycotts and restrict many of the most effective tactics of unions.

1948: Minneapolis Mayor Hubert H. Humphrey delivers an electrifying speech at the Democratic national convention, challenging the forces of segregation within the party. "The time has arrived for the Democratic Party to get out of the shadow of state's rights and walk forthrightly into the bright sunshine of human rights," he declares. The Minneapolis *Labor Review* praises the speech in a front-page article, noting that Humphrey "reached an audience of millions, telling the story of tolerance and liberty with an effectiveness that should unify the forces of progress throughout the nation."



Workers repair the roof of Minneapolis City Hall, 1950.

1949: The United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers Union — which represents workers at Minneapolis Honeywell — is expelled from the CIO for being communist-dominated.

1949: Toni Stone, an African-American woman from St. Paul, becomes the first woman to play professional baseball when she signs with the Indianapolis Clowns. Years later, in the 1990s, pitcher Ila Borders also makes history playing for the St. Paul Saints and Duluth Dukes.

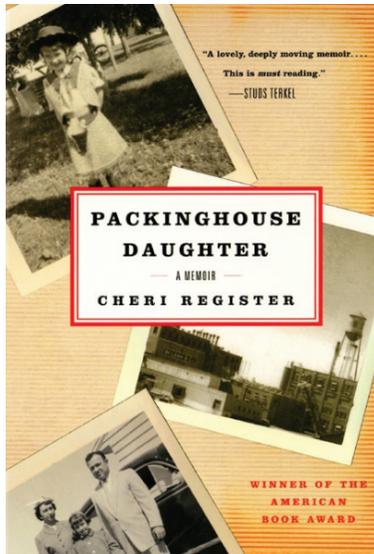
1950s

1950s: Starting in the 1950s, the three decades after World War II see the emergence of many movements in American society for equal rights, most notably the civil rights movement, feminism and organizing among people with disabilities, American Indians and the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender community. One milestone for these movements is passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

1950: The Minnesota Council of Churches issues a report on the miserable conditions facing migrant workers in the state. Some 16,000 migrant workers settled in the farming communities of the Red River Valley and southern Minnesota after the war. Sugar beet farms required appx. 6,000 workers for a successful harvest. Today, technology has replaced most of these workers.

1951: The University of Minnesota Labor Education Service is established, with a focus on quality, noncredit training for workers and unions. In later years, it also builds an award-winning video and communications program.

1954: Duluth Building Trades negotiate one of the nation's first health care programs in the construction industry.



1955: The Minnesota Legislature passes the Human Rights Act, prohibiting discrimination in employment based on race, gender, religion or national origin.

1955: Retail Clerks Local 2 engages in a six-week strike of St. Paul department stores. They win a small wage increase, but not the union shop they had sought.

1955: Once rivals, the AFL and CIO vote to merge at the national level. A year later, the Minnesota organizations do the same, forming the Minnesota AFL-CIO. Robert Olson, a Duluth Motion Picture Operator, is elected president. Robert Hess, leader of the Gas, Coke & Chemical Workers union at 3M, is elected vice president.

1959: Congress passes the Landrum-Griffin Act to prevent union racketeering along with further limiting picketing rights and completely outlawing secondary boycotts.

1959: The United Packinghouse Workers strike the Wilson Company meatpacking plant in Albert Lea. Workers from throughout Minnesota donate food and money to the striking meatpackers. The strike is successful when Governor Orville Freeman orders the National Guard to shut down the plant, rather than allow the company to hire strikebreakers. Years later, Cheri Register documents the struggle in her book, "Packinghouse Daughter."

1960s

1962: President Kennedy signs Executive Order 10988 allowing federal employees to collectively bargain, although it remains illegal for them to strike.

1962: Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta co-found the United Farm Workers Union to improve conditions for migrant workers, who are excluded from the protections of the National Labor Relations Act and many other federal labor laws. Using nonviolent tactics, they organize a successful boycott of California lettuce and table grapes and lobby for the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act, the first law of its kind to grant farm workers the right to collectively organize and bargain for better wages and conditions.

1963: Due in large part to pressure from the women's movement, Congress passes the Equal Pay Act. The law makes it illegal to pay women less than men for doing the same job. Yet systemic discrimination continues. Women earn an average of 77 cents for every dollar a man earns, in part because traditionally female occupations still pay less than male-dominated jobs and women are penalized if they drop out of the workforce to raise families.

1964: With many iron mines depleted, passage of the Minnesota Taconite Amendment paves the way for creation of the taconite industry in northeastern Minnesota. Eight taconite plants are built over the next 15 years.

1965: Minnesota's Commission on the Status of Women uncovers a general pattern of discrimination against women in the waged workforce, including discrimination in wages, promotions, titles and job categories.

1966: Nearly 150 City of Duluth Public Works employees stage an illegal — and successful — three-day sitdown strike to protest civil service reclassifications.

1968: In February, African-American sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, represented by AFSCME, strike for better wages and safety on the job, winning major contract gains. The strike escalates into one of the climactic struggles of the 1960s and initiates a wave of public employee union organizing in other parts of the south. The strike's most influential supporter, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., is assassinated on April 4 as he leaves his hotel room to address the striking workers.

1970s

1970: Minnesota can boast one of the most active labor movements in the United States, with almost 375,000 union members in the state.

1970: More than 200,000 U.S. Post Office workers in 15 states, including Minnesota, engage in a wildcat strike to force Congress to raise wages. It is the first major strike by federal employees, for whom striking is illegal and a felony, and eventually leads to formal collective bargaining for postal employees.

1970: A landmark strike by Minneapolis teachers leads to the passage, in 1971, of the Public Employment Labor Relations Act (PELRA), granting collective bargaining rights to public employees in Minnesota.



The Willmar 8's struggle for equal rights made ripples around the globe.

Early 1970s: The Minnesota Legislature passes a host of labor legislation, including a state minimum wage law, an occupational safety and health act and a state prevailing wage law.

1973: Significant changes are made to PELRA, allowing state, local and school district employees a limited ability to strike.

1973: Minnesota ratifies the Equal Rights Amendment with the support of organized labor. But the ERA fails to receive the state ratifications necessary to become part of the U.S. constitution.

1977: Eight women in the small Minnesota town of Willmar initiate the first bank strike in American history, seeking fair treatment in pay and promotions. Though the "Willmar 8" fail to gain union recognition and most lose their jobs, their walkout is a milestone in the history of women's and workers' rights.

1979: A grain millers' strike at the port of Duluth-Superior idles dozens of ships on the Great Lakes.

1979: Machinists Lodge 459 member Donald Pilla is killed when a truck plows through a picketline outside the Plastics, Inc., factory in Coon Rapids. His death leads to landmark state legislation requiring all vehicles to stop before attempting to pass through a picketline.

1979: Hourly wages for the vast majority of American workers have either stagnated or dropped since 1979, with the exception of a period of strong across-the-board wage growth in the late 1990s. Workers of color, particularly African-Americans and Latinos, have faced greater wage stagnation than white workers. Researchers have found a correlation between the decline of unions and lower wages — and between lower wages and a growth in economic and social inequality.

1980s

1981: The newly-elected Reagan administration signals its hostile intent to organized labor when it fires thousands of striking Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) members. Minnesotans join more than 400,000 unionists in a Solidarity Day protest in Washington, D.C., against Reagan administration policies and the firings.

1981: AFSCME members engage in the first strike by state government employees in Minnesota history.

PROTEST
USE of NAT'L GUARD
TO BREAK P-9 STRIKE

The Minnesota state National Guard are being used as traffic cops to escort scabs and strikebreakers through the normal picket lines in Austin, Minnesota. Under orders from Gov. Perpich the Guard and state police are being directly used in attempting to break a strike and smash a union. If this is allowed to continue the effects can be the same as Reagan's notorious strike-breaking of PATCO. The working conditions and wages of all working people in Minnesota, union and non-union, will be adversely affected. Please join with other people of good will to demand that the National Guard stop being used to break the P-9 strike.

GOVERNOR'S MANSION ONE BLOCK FROM
1006 SUMMIT AVENUE LEXINGTON AVE.
STATE CAPITOL ST. PAUL
SAT., JAN. 25, 12:00 PM
METRO P-9 SUPPORT COMMITTEE

1982: After receiving \$10 million in tax-free bonds, the company that purchased Diamond Tool begins moving work from the Duluth plant to a non-union operation in South Carolina. This action spurs a lawsuit and fight by local union members to prevent the move. Though unsuccessful in keeping the Duluth plant open, the effort lays the foundation for Duluth's living wage and corporate accountability movements.

1983: Taconite production plummets to 25 million tons on the Mesabi Iron Range (from 60 million tons just four years earlier), and thousands of steelworkers lose their jobs. The Minnesota AFL-CIO publicizes the plight of unemployed Minnesotans by organizing a "jobs train" to a mass rally at the Duluth Arena.

1984: Some 6,000 members of the Minnesota Nurses Association go on strike against 15 hospitals to protest low wages and unfavorable working conditions. The nurses win their strike and bring national attention to the issues facing workers in health care and women workers in particular.

1984: Minnesota becomes the first state in the nation to implement pay equity, also referred to as comparable pay for comparable work, for all local and state government jobs.

1985: Workers at the Hormel meatpacking plant in Austin walk off the job in a dispute over wages and working conditions. The strike pits Hormel workers against both their company and their international union in one of the most complex labor-management struggles in state history. Local P-9 receives nationwide support, but DFL Governor Rudy Perpich sends in the National Guard to enable scabs to enter the plant, helping to break the strike.

1986: Congress passes the Immigration Reform and Control Act, which establishes sanctions against employers who violate immigration laws. The Act makes it illegal for an employer to knowingly hire undocumented workers.

1987: Workers at American Linen Supply Co. in Hibbing, St. Cloud, and Bemidji strike over dangerous working conditions, pension plans, and unfair labor practices. Those in St. Cloud and Bemidji are unsuccessful in their efforts and go back to work without a contract or a union. The seven female strikers in Hibbing, known as the "Hibbing 7," hold out and win their case after five years of protesting. The women are awarded almost a half million dollars of back-pay and benefits and reinstated in their jobs.

1987: Delegates to the Minnesota AFL-CIO convention approve resolutions challenging the national AFL-CIO's foreign policy positions, specifically its support of the Reagan administration's aid to the contras in Nicaragua. In ensuing years, unions successfully push the AFL-CIO to move beyond a Cold War mentality and embrace a broader approach to international solidarity. Today the AFL-CIO sponsors "Solidarity Centers" in many countries.

1988: Boise Cascade of International Falls announces a major expansion of its pulp and paper mill and selects BE&K, a nonunion firm, as its general contractor. BE&K attempts to build the mill on an "open shop" basis, sparking fierce resistance by Building Trades unions, including a mass rally at the state Capitol.

1989: Twelve Hmong immigrant workers are among the 28 members of IUE Local 1140 who conduct an eight-month strike against Quality Tool, Inc., in St. Paul. They are among the first members of the city's Hmong community — now one of the largest in the nation — to become active in organized labor.



The Minnesota Fair Trade Coalition unites labor, farm, faith, environmental and community groups.

1990s

1990: Congress passes the Americans with Disabilities Act, prohibiting discrimination in the workplace and elsewhere against people with disabilities.

1990: Paul Wellstone, Minnesota's self-declared "labor senator," is elected to the U.S. Senate. His election revitalizes the DFL Party and its ties to the labor movement. He serves until his death in a plane crash in 2002.

1991: More than 3,000 University of Minnesota clerical workers join AFSCME.

1991: Minnesotans join more than 350,000 union members marching in sweltering weather in Washington, D.C., to demand workplace fairness and health care reform. The event is the second Solidarity Day demonstration (the first took place 10 years before, following the PATCO firings).

1992: After hotel workers at the Normandy Inn in downtown Minneapolis are terminated from their jobs, their union, HERE Local 17, fights back with picketing that continues even when a blizzard halts traffic. The struggle culminates in a sit-down occupation of the lobby, harkening back to the 1930s, that wins back the workers' jobs.

1992: Unions join with environmental, farm, faith and community organizations to form the Minnesota Fair Trade Coalition. Its immediate goal is to stop Congressional passage of NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement. Its long-term vision is to seek alternatives to corporate globalization. The Minnesota organization is the oldest continuously operating, statewide fair trade coalition in the country.

1993: Organized labor is part of a broad-based coalition that successfully advocates for passage of an amendment to the state Human Rights Act, guaranteeing fair treatment of workers regardless of sexual orientation.

1993: Congress passes the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) which allows workers up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave — without fear of losing their job — to deal with serious illness or to care for a child or spouse with serious illness. Still, the United States remains one of only a handful of countries without guaranteed, paid maternity leave.

1993: To see for himself the effects of the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone visits the maquila zone along the U.S.-Mexican border. At a news conference, he shows a paycheck stub for a worker at Honeywell's Mexican operations. For a six-day work week, the worker earns \$47 — about 98 cents an hour.

1994: NAFTA takes effect and proves to be a wake-up call for American workers. The free trade deal was touted as a measure which would, raise living standards in all countries, increase democracy in Mexico and create 200,000 U.S. jobs per year. None of those things happened.

1995: Eight years of struggle finally result in a contract for members of HERE Local 17 at the Radisson Plaza Hotel. The long-time union hotel was rebuilt with public subsidy on the assurance it would continue with the same employees and a union contract. When it reopened in 1987, management reneged on the deal. The workers' campaign literally spans continents — from the hotel itself in downtown Minneapolis to the palatial home of Radisson owner Curt Carlson, City Council chambers in Minneapolis and federal offices in Washington, D.C. Demonstrations even take place at Radisson hotels in several countries, including Russia.

1995: On a "New Voice" platform, Service Employees International Union President John Sweeney is elected president of the national AFL-CIO. He promises the labor federation will put new emphasis on organizing.

1997: The St. Paul *Union Advocate* celebrates its centennial with a year-long series of articles about workers and unions (available at www.workdayminnesota.org).

1997: While 70% of Minnesota women are employed in the waged workforce, only 1 in 10 of the top corporate positions are filled by women, and women hold a mere 6.25% of the seats on corporate boards of directors.

1997: Thousands of Minnesota Teamsters are among 180,000 who launch a successful 15-day strike at United Parcel Service over the company's effort to replace full-time jobs with part-time positions. It is the largest strike in the United States in 20 years.

1998: The Minnesota Education Association and the Minnesota Federation of Teachers merge to form one, statewide educators' union, Education Minnesota. Education Minnesota led the nation in bringing the two state education unions together. Since then, educators in Florida, Montana and New York have followed.

1998: Lois Jensen and her colleagues win the first class action sexual harassment lawsuit in American history. The \$3.5 million settlement addresses the brutal harassment faced by women working in the Eveleth iron mines in Northern Minnesota. Jensen's story becomes the basis for the movie "North Country."

1999: After the Holiday Inn Express in downtown Minneapolis calls in immigration authorities to intimidate workers trying to organize with the Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees, the union goes to bat for them. HERE Local 17 successfully fights the deportation of eight undocumented workers and ultimately convinces the national AFL-CIO to change its policy and champion the rights of immigrant workers.



H.E.R.E. Local 17 wins big victory for Holiday Inn undocumented workers

Settlement sets new legal precedent for organizing undocumented workers

MINNEAPOLIS — At a press conference held Thursday, January 6th, at Holy Rosary Church in south Minneapolis, the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 17 announced that a settlement had been reached between the union, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the management of the Holiday Inn Express Hotel in downtown Minneapolis.

Under the terms of the agreement, the Holiday Inn Express agreed to a union contract covering all workers at the Holiday Inn Express downtown and agreed to pay a \$75,000.00 settlement to the nine workers whom they had reported to the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) when they attempted to form a union at the hotel.



1999: About 150 workers represented by the United Steelworkers of America strike M.E. International Foundry in Duluth over unfair labor practices and safety concerns. After six months on the picketline, they offer to return to work but are locked out. Thousands of community members rally in support of the workers, who finally win a fair contract and return to work in July 2000, ending one of Duluth's longest strikes/lockouts.

1999: Hundreds of Minnesota union members participate in massive, weeklong protests at the World Trade Organization summit in Seattle. Dubbed "The Battle in Seattle," it marks a turning point for the U.S. labor movement's involvement in challenging the corporate global agenda.

2000s

2000: A study by the Minnesota Budget Project finds that income inequality is increasing in Minnesota. The incomes of the poorest 20% of families did not grow since the late 1970s relative to inflation, while the incomes of the middle 20% of families grew 16.6%, and the incomes of the top 20% of families grew 42.6%.

2000: By an overwhelming margin, Minnesota court reporters vote to join Teamsters Local 320, becoming the first statewide bargaining unit of court reporters in the nation.

2000: A landmark strike by members of HERE Local 17, many of them immigrants, shuts Twin Cities hotels.

2000: The new millenium brings the growth of many new forms of worker organizing, including activism among Walmart and other retail workers, walkouts by fast food workers and the formation worker centers such as CTUL.

2000: The University of Minnesota Labor Education Service launches a labor news and resources website, Workday Minnesota, www.workdayminnesota.org, at the Minnesota AFL-CIO convention.

2001: Some 1,400 workers, most of them members of the United Steelworkers of America, lose their jobs when LTV Steel Corp. closes its iron mine and taconite pellet plant. The company also reneges on its health care and pension commitments to retirees.

2001: More than 1,300 registered nurses strike Fairview Health Systems in the Twin Cities. Their key issue is understaffing and their focus on patient safety wins broad popular support.

2001: Just two weeks after the 9/11 attacks, nearly 30,000 state workers — members of AFSCME and the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees — engage in a two-week strike for a better contract. They win a successful settlement with the administration of Governor Jesse Ventura.

2002: St. Paul's Main St., which borders the Labor Centre, is dedicated as Mahoney Street to honor the former mayor and labor leader.

2003: Members of Twin Cities Labor Against the War are among more than 7,500 people who march to protest the start of the U.S. war in Iraq.

2003: Service Employees International Union members participate in a series of "rolling strikes" to achieve a fair contract with 14 Twin Cities hospitals.

2003: Minnesotans take part in the national Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride to support workers' rights and comprehensive immigration reform.

2003: University of Minnesota clericals, members of AFSCME, picket in the first walkout at the university in 50 years.

2003: Three hundred Minnesota union members, environmentalists and students are among the thousands of people who march in Miami to protest the secret negotiations for a "Free Trade Area of the Americas."

2004: Hundreds of Building Trades volunteers spend thousands of hours erecting a frame, cutting and shipping ice and building a massive ice palace — the largest in the history of the St. Paul Winter Carnival.

2004: Minnesota legislators learn some state services that have been outsourced are being performed by workers in India, prompting them to call for new legislation to stop the practice.

2004: More than 2,000 members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005 go on strike, shutting down Metro Transit bus service. As in many struggles, health care costs are a key issue.

2004: The United Food & Commercial Workers union steps up its campaign against Wal-Mart when the giant retailer opens its first store in St. Paul.



Health care was a key issue in the 2004 Twin Cities transit strike.



With 40,000 participants, the 2006 march for comprehensive immigration reform was probably the largest march of any kind in state history.

2004: Longtime American Postal Workers Union leader Greg Poferl serves a 90-day sentence in federal prison for protesting at the U.S. Army's School of the Americas. The School, located at Fort Benning, Georgia, trains troops from other countries that are used to suppress strikes and enforce the policies of dictatorial regimes.

2004: Members of the Grain Millers union, BCTGM Local 369-G, are locked out at the Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative in Renville. Community pressure helps bring an end to the lockout and a fair contract settlement after four weeks.

2004: Northland Poster Collective in Minneapolis, which provides art to many unions and social justice organizations, celebrates its 25th anniversary. The Collective disbands in 2009.

2004: Standing on the shores of Lake Superior at the foot of the historic Aerial Lift Bridge in Duluth, labor and environmental leaders launch the Minnesota Blue Green Alliance, a grassroots coalition to promote the creation of good jobs while protecting the air, water, and land. Two years later, the national Blue Green Alliance is formed.

2004: AFSCME Councils 6, 14 and 96 merge to create AFSCME Council 5, representing 75 percent of the AFSCME members in the state, including workers in state and local government and higher education. Council 65, which represents several thousand workers in Greater Minnesota, decides not to merge.

2005: Organized labor joins in coalition with other groups to pressure the Minnesota Legislature to raise the minimum wage to \$6.15 an hour — the first increase since 1997.

2005: Union leaders blast Governor Tim Pawlenty and legislative leaders for causing a partial government shutdown that throws more than 9,200 state employees out of work and jeopardizes state and local services.

2005: The SEIU, Teamsters, UNITE-HERE, UFCW, Laborers and Carpenters split from the national AFL-CIO to form their own federation, Change to Win. Debates continue over why the split occurred and what's best for the labor movement.



The Interstate 35W bridge collapse took the lives of 13 people, including Operating Engineer Greg Jolstad.

2005: Major strikes in Minnesota include walkouts by teachers in the Crosby-Ironton School District and by mechanics at Northwest Airlines.

2005: More than 300 people pack the Carpenters hall in St. Paul to hear two Iraqi union leaders call for a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq and pledge solidarity with workers in the United States and around the globe.

2005: Machinists Local 1956 member Sue Eichstadt garners headlines when she walks from her home in Windom to the state Capitol — a 154-mile, seven-day trip — to demand action on health care reform.

2006: More than 40,000 people march to the state Capitol in the largest pro-immigrant mobilization in state history.

2006: Hope of maintaining 1,800 good-paying jobs at Ford's Twin Cities Assembly Plant are dashed when the company announces the facility will be closed as part of its national restructuring plan.

2006: Starting in October, Twin Cities janitors represented by Service Employees International Union Local 26 launch a six-month, landmark "Justice for Janitors" contract campaign.

2006: United Food & Commercial Workers Local 1161, the union representing 1,700 workers at the Swift packing plant in Worthington, condemns a massive worksite raid by immigration authorities that splits families and spreads fear in the community.

2007: Hotel workers, known as "The Rochester 19," post a win when the National Labor Relations Board rules that management of the Holiday Inn Express must recognize their union.

2007: The Interstate 35W bridge collapses into the Mississippi River in downtown Minneapolis, killing 13 people — including Operating Engineer Local 49 member Greg Jolstad, who was working on the bridge — and injuring scores of others. The Aug. 1 collapse renews calls for reinvestment in public infrastructure.

2007: University of Minnesota clerical, health care and technical workers represented by AFSCME strike for 3 weeks.

2007: Building on the success of the 2006-2007 "Justice for Janitors" campaign, private security officers represented by SEIU Local 26 launch "Stand for Security," ultimately winning better wages, health care and job safety. The security officers' tactics include engaging in civil disobedience.

2008: Minnesota unions win landmark legislation to address the problem of employee misclassification. More than 17,500 employers — one in seven — illegally misclassify workers as "independent contractors," according to the Legislative Auditor.

2008: Workers at Walker Methodist Health Center in Minneapolis, members of AFSCME, vote on their first union contract, a milestone in a nearly five-year struggle for union recognition.

2008: For the first time in 25 years, union membership rises when measured as a percentage of the workforce, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports. Membership reaches 12.1 percent nationally and 16.3 percent in Minnesota.

2008: Thousands protest the policies and the "police state" atmosphere at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul.



Security officers and supporters engage in civil disobedience in their effort to get a fair contract.

Eight people, including union activists, are arrested on alleged terrorism charges. Eventually the charges against the “RNC 8” are reduced or dropped altogether.

2009: Unions in Cloquet hold their 90th annual Labor Day Celebration.

2009: Shar Knutson is elected president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO, becoming the first woman to head the statewide labor federation in its 120-year history.

2010s

2010: Workers at Jimmy Johns sandwich shops in the Twin Cities organize under the banner of the IWW, the Industrial Workers of the World. These contemporary “Wobblies” mix a variety of new and old techniques — from picketing to performances by hip hop artists — to reach out to their fellow workers and the public.

2010: Minnesota nurses stage the largest nurses’ strike in U.S. history and garner widespread community support in their demands for safe staffing levels.



2010: The U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark “Citizens United” decision opens the floodgates to massive corporate spending in politics. The decision also allows contributors to remain anonymous, denying citizens the right to know who is influencing elections and lawmaking.

2010: A Workers’ Memorial is dedicated on the grounds of the state Capitol in St. Paul. It is the vision of Minnesota AFL-CIO President Emeritus Dave Roe, who worked tirelessly to create a monument honoring the state’s workers.

2011: Hundreds of thousands of people demonstrate at the state Capitol in Madison, Wisconsin, and hundreds more occupy the building for weeks after Governor Scott Walker pushes through draconian measures to eliminate collective bargaining for public workers. The protests draw attention to the growing attacks on worker rights and the increasing power of money in politics.

2011: More than 1,300 members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco & Grain Millers union are locked out of their jobs by American Crystal Sugar at seven facilities in Minnesota, North Dakota and Iowa. The lockout, which continues into 2013, ends decades of cooperation among workers and farmers in the Red River Valley.

2011: Young people spawn a national movement — and change the terms of the debate — when they occupy a park near Wall Street to protest the bailout of the big banks. Occupy Wall Street spreads to hundreds of communities. The slogan, “We Are the 99%” calls attention to growing economic and social inequality in the United States.

2012: Some 3,000 union members rally at the state Capitol to oppose so-called “Right to Work” legislation, which would limit their collective bargaining rights. The measure is stopped in Minnesota, but passes later that year in Michigan, making it the 24th “Right to Work” state.

2012: Labor joins in a successful effort to stop state constitutional amendments that would have banned same-sex marriage and limited voting rights. The next spring, the Legislature legalizes same-sex marriage in Minnesota.

2012: In an unprecedented move, both the Minnesota Orchestra and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra lock out musicians after the union members refuse to accept major concessions in wages and working conditions.

2012: #BlackLivesMatter was formed in 2012 after the murder in Florida of a young African-American man, Trayvon Martin, whose killer was acquitted. In several communities, unions have built ties with #BlackLivesMatter chapters to address chronic issues of dehumanization, inequality and exploitation.

2013: The Minnesota Legislature passes a measure allowing child care workers and home health care workers to organize. In 2014, in the largest union election in Minnesota history, 26,000 home health care workers vote to join SEIU Healthcare Minnesota.

2013: At its national convention, the AFL-CIO calls for greater engagement with community groups and new types of worker organizations.

2013: Workers around the world whose activism helped topple the brutal system of apartheid mourn the death of South African leader Nelson Mandela.

2014: After 16 months, the longest lockout in the history of U.S. symphonies ends and Minnesota Orchestra musicians achieve a new contract.



The Occupy Wall Street movement changed the terms of the public debate.

2014: The Minnesota Legislature passes the Women's Economic Security Act to improve the lives of working women.

2014: Workers who clean Target stores, organized through CTUL - a Minneapolis-based worker center - win a huge victory when they successfully pressure the giant retailer to adopt a code of conduct for its subcontractors, guaranteeing decent wages, working conditions and the right to unionize.

2015: Workers at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport get a voice on the facility's governing body, the Metropolitan Airports Commission, when Governor Mark Dayton appointed Ibrahim Mohamed, a cart driver at MSP, and Dixie Hoard, a former flight attendant. Their presence on the MAC is a symbol of the growing power of workers who mounted successful campaigns for an airport minimum wage, paid sick and safe time and the right to a union.



Construct Tomorrow is enabling more young people to enter the Building Trades.

2015: Following a three-year campaign by MAPE, the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees, the State of Minnesota rolled out new rules designed to prevent bullying on the job for the state's nearly 40,000 employees.

2015: Wage inequality worsens, as a new report by Executive Paywatch finds CEOs in Minnesota make 305 times what the average worker in the state earns.

2016: Construct Tomorrow, a Minnesota program to recruit more people into the Building Trades, reaches a milestone when it reaches more than 15,000 students.

2016: After the death of Justice Antonin Scalia, the U.S. Supreme Court deadlocks in the case of Friedrichs v. California State Teachers Association, a lawsuit seeking to allow public employee "free riders" to enjoy the benefits of a union contract without having to pay dues for the cost of representation. While the outcome preserves public employees' collective strength for now, similar cases are expected to bring this issue back before the court.

2016: Some 40 percent of Minnesotans lack access to paid time off when they are sick. To address that problem, unions and other progressive groups, along with responsible businesses, successfully campaign for passage of ordinances in both Minneapolis and St. Paul requiring all employers to provide earned safe and sick time.