



THE REPORTER

Spring Issue

Illinois Labor History Society

April 2019

430 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60605

www.IllinoisLaborHistory.org

MAY DAY

May Day at Haymarket Square and Mother Jones' Birthday celebration

THE EDGE OF ANARCHY

Jack Kelly's Book Launch

BOOK CLUB

Recap and the future

HAYMARKET REMEMBERED

A brief look back at the Martyrs Memorial

LABOR DAY 2019

Pullman: Women & Work

DO YOU KNOW YOUR LABOR HISTORY?

Labor History in 2:00



Circa 1893, Haymarket Martyrs Monument at Forest Home Cemetery

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT



I was delighted recently to meet up with two trade union visitors from Belgium who were looking to tour some of Chicago's notable labor history sites. I spent the better part of an hour with them at Forest Home Cemetery where the Martyrs are laid to rest. As is usually the case, visitors from other countries generally know the story of Haymarket better than most Americans, by far. I never cease to be amazed by this phenomenon and fact. When May Day approaches, it seems that people who know some of the history around the Haymarket story want to touch the hallowed ground on which the monument stands. This makes perfect sense to me. For many labor activists and socially conscious citizens, it is in an ironic way --sort of a religious experience similar to people that only go to church on Easter and Christmas or Synagogue on the High Holidays. At this time of the year, I always see a large increase in the flower bouquets, union buttons, and other numerous items and paraphernalia being left on and around the monument. In some ways, Haymarket is the Mecca of the labor movement.

For some folks, it may seem a bit overdone in all the attention we bring to the monument. But then today, as the news hit of the possible loss of the Cathedral at Notre Dame in Paris due to a tragic fire, it reminded me of the power of monuments and symbols in our society. They serve many purposes depending on one's vantage point. For those of us in the labor history community, there are so many events that deserve historical recognition. Yet the power to determine who gets a statue or a building named after them is usually relegated to those in power. For example, only recently has there been much notice paid to the fact that, in

Chicago's 580 parks, you won't find a single statue or bust of a historically significant woman! It is a rhetorical question to ask, "How can this be?"

Just so you know, the ILHS has been attempting to get a statue of Lucy Parsons in Lucy Parson's park on Chicago's northwest side, but the local alderman hasn't demonstrated much interest in this matter. Perhaps someone reading this will visit with the Alderman soon. My point is that Lucy Parsons is arguably one of the most important persons in American history. No Statue? Hmm.

So, as May 1st approaches, let us be

reminded that the working people of this country deserve to be honored by fair pay, safe working conditions, a voice on the job, and respect and dignity for creating all wealth. Perhaps one day, through the work of ILHS and its many supporters, the United States will officially celebrate the Martyrs of Chicago, as does the rest of the world. Happy May Day!

In Solidarity!

Larry Spivack



BELGIUM
LABOR
TOUR

A picture from the tour Larry Spivack gave last month. Photo courtesy of Larry Spivack.



WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2019

MAY DAY AT HAYMARKET SQUARE

2:45 pm at Haymarket Square,
175 N. Des Plaines St.
Chicago, IL 60661



2019 PLAQUE DEDICATIONS
MADE BY

SERVICES, INDUSTRIAL,
PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL
UNION, IRELAND'S LARGEST TRADE
UNION



CASA DEL OBRERO MUNDIAL,
MEXICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR



Donate today! Login on to illinoislaborhistory.org



This Year's Plaque Dedications: Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU) from Ireland and Casa del Obrero Mundial (House of the World Worker) from Mexico

History of Casa del Obrero Mundial

One of the worker federations that emerged during the Mexican Revolution, that brought together a number of important benefit societies, unions, centers and workers' leagues, was the Casa del Obrero Mundial (COM), founded on September 22, 1912.

It is within the COM where benefit societies, collectives and other worker groupings, were transformed into genuine trade unions. Hence, for example, the Stonemasons, the Tailors Union and the Carpenters' Guild, were transformed into the Stonecutters Union, the Trade Union of Tailor Operators and the Union of Carvers, Cabinetmakers and Carpenters, respectively.

The Casa del Obrero Mundial, in its beginnings, was just a unifying center of unions and workers leagues, at least until 1914. By 1915, its structure, its functions and its objectives, but mainly its rapprochement with leaders of the Revolution, are what gave it a degree of trade union association.

Thus, it was established in the historic pact signed by Venustiano Carranza and the COM on February 17, 1915, in which the Casa del Obrero Mundial committed itself to hasten the triumph of the Revolution, by creating workers garrisons, known as "Red Battalions." In exchange for this support, the COM was able to extend its presence in several areas of the Republic, with Casas del Obrero Mundial turning up in León, Tampico, Guadalajara, Colima, Monterrey, Tabasco, Tlaxcala, Querétaro, Guanajuato, Aguascalientes and Torreón, among others.

History of Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU)

SIPTU was established in 1990 - with the merger of the country's two largest unions, the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union and the Federated Workers' Union of Ireland. Both were founded by 'Big' Jim Larkin in the early years of the twentieth century. Until then, most workers who wanted representation at work had to join a British-based union.

(continued on page 5)



PLAQUE

November 12, 2018 Casa del Obrero Mundial came to Chicago to donate the plaque above. It will be unveiled at this year's May Day event at Haymarket Square.

(continued from page 4)

Larkin founded the ITGWU in 1909 and it soon had branches in Dublin, Belfast, Cork and other centres, with Liberty Hall as its headquarters. By the summer of 1913, the union had secured pay rises of between 20% and 25% for members. This provoked a vicious backlash from employers. In 1913 ITGWU members in Dublin were locked out, along with workers in other unions who associated with them. The Lockout lasted six months, but the employers failed to smash the union.

When Larkin went on a speaking tour in the US to raise funds, James Connolly became Acting General Secretary of the Union. He also took over command of the Irish Citizen Army, set up to protect strikers from police brutality during the Lockout. Larkin was unable to return to Ireland until 1923. In the meantime, union members in the ICA participated in the 1916 Easter Rising under Connolly's command. He is credited with drafting the Proclamation of the Irish Republic with Padraic Pearse, and it was printed in Liberty Hall on the eve of the Rising.

Following Connolly's execution for his part in the Rising, the Union's premises and records were seized by the British military authorities, but ITGWU members refused to be intimidated.

General President Tom Foran and General Treasurer William O'Brien rebuilt the organization, which had 120,000 members by 1920, making it by far the largest union on this island. It played a leading role in the Anti-Conscription Campaign of 1918 that prevented young Irish workers being forced to fight for the British Empire in the First World War and also led the Motor Permits and Munitions strikes of 1920 against military occupation.

After Larkin's return from the U.S., friction arose between him and the new ITGWU leadership, resulting in a split and the formation of the Workers' Union of Ireland in 1924. Larkin led the new Union and both organizations played an important role in the economic and social development of the country, despite the difficult climate of the depressed 1920s, and in the war-torn 1930s and 1940s.

The Irish Trade Union Congress split in 1945, and the move to re-unite the movement in the 1950s was spearheaded by young Jim Larkin, who succeeded his father as General Secretary of the Workers' Union, and by John Conroy, General President of the ITGWU. They succeeded in creating the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and they brought the ITGWU and the WUI to the brink of merger in 1969. However, the untimely

deaths of both men - within weeks of each other - meant that the momentum towards amalgamation stalled, and it awaited the efforts of a new generation to cement the historic merger in 1990.

The two founding unions of SIPTU have since been joined by other Unions including – the Irish National Painters' and Decorators' Trade Union (INPDTU), the Marine, Port and General Workers' Union (MPGWU), the Irish Print Union (IPU), the Irish Writers' Union (IWU) and the Automotive, General Engineering and Mechanical Operatives' Union (AGEMOU), Musicians Union of Ireland (MUI), Irish Equity, MLSA.

Since its foundation, SIPTU has played a leading role in a number of campaigns to improve workers rights, including a quadrupling of minimum statutory redundancy payments for workers losing their jobs, the establishment of the National Employment Rights Authority, and the outlawing of mass redundancies by employers trying to replace existing workers with lower paid, non-union labour.

The Union remains committed to Larkin's dictum that 'An Injury to One is the Concern of All' and pursuing its twin objectives of Fairness at Work and Justice in Society.



SIPTU

Services Industrial Professional
and Technical Union

SIPTU Head Office Liberty Hall Dublin 1

Tel: 01-8586300 Fax: 01-6865567

Remembering Haymarket

By Tom Suhrbur

The catalyst that led to ILHS's founding was the dynamiting of the nine-foot statue of a policeman at Haymarket Square following the turmoil associated with the 1968 Democratic National Convention. Erected by the Union League Club of Chicago in 1889, this bronze statue stood as a tribute to the police who died during the Haymarket Tragedy of May 3, 1886. The Weather Underground, a revolutionary offshoot of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), took credit for the explosion.

When Bill Garvey, editor of Midwest Steel Labor, announced at an informal gathering of labor editors, organizers, and educators at the Blackstone Hotel that a Chicago union had contributed to the restoration fund for the police statue, the group was aghast. There was no plaque or other memorial to the workers who died at Haymarket—only the police statue. According to Les Orear of the United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA):

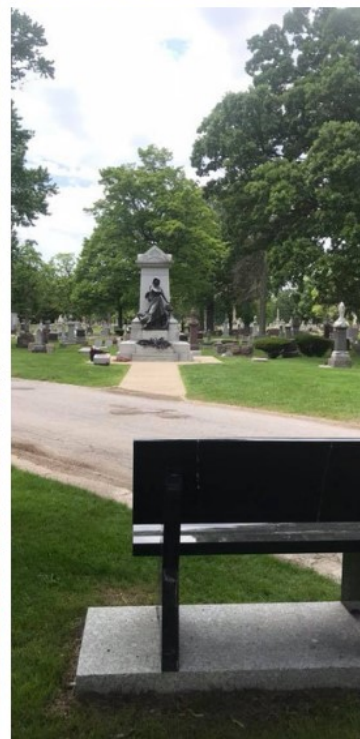
“We agreed that we must respond by having a demonstration at Haymarket Square the following May Day [1969] to educate the public on what really happened there in 1886. We needed a memorial to the workers who were killed there. Their story must be told. We decided to call ourselves the Haymarket Workers Memorial Committee.”

The May Day event was a huge success. Orear organized the demonstration, publicizing the gathering via a flyer modeled after the original Haymarket one.

Noted Pulitzer Prize-winning author Studs Terkel chaired the event, while Lillian Herstein of the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) and Charlie Hayes of the UPWA delivered speeches from a hay wagon that doubled as the speaker's podium. Members of the Old Town School of Folk Music entertained the crowd of about 100 with

past.

Accordingly, in August 1969, 25 activists attended a meeting at the office of labor attorney Joe Jacobs. A constitution and bylaws were adopted. Dues were set at \$5 per year. Les Orear was elected president and Bill Adelman vice-president.



labor songs, and a wreath honoring the workers was laid at the site. The event was so successful that there was agreement to organize some type of group to continue the important work of remembering the

Top Left: The monument circa 1893. Top Right: A tour given at the monument for the UAW retirees from Region 4. Bottom Left: A Haymarket Centennial celebration at the Haymarket Martyrs Monument. Bottom Right: A new bench was dedicated May 1, 2018 at the Forest Home Cemetery.

Mother Jones MAY DAY Birthday Party

May 1, 2019



Irish American Heritage Center

4626 N Knox Ave, Chicago, IL

May 1, 5-8 pm

5-7: Birthday Party

Fifth Province Pub

7:30pm: New Mother Jones

Exhibit Unveiling

Come celebrate

the Most Dangerous Woman in America
Join us as we unveil a new exhibit including
a major work by artist Lindsay Hand
Exhibit funded by Government of Ireland

**Sponsored by Mother Jones Heritage Project,
Working Women's History Project, and Illinois Labor History Society**
Contact 815-754-4750 & motherjoneslives@gmail.com



125 YEARS LATER, COMMEMORATING
THE 1894 PULLMAN STRIKE
**FEATURING ALLISON DUERK,
DEBS FOUNDATION
MUSEUM DIRECTOR**

FOLLOWED BY A WALKING TOUR OF PULLMAN
BY THE ILLINOIS LABOR HISTORY SOCIETY

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER
11141 S. COTTAGE GROVE AVE.,
CHICAGO, IL 60628

Saturday, May 11, 2019

Discussion 11:00 am to 12:30 pm

Walking Tour at 12:30 pm

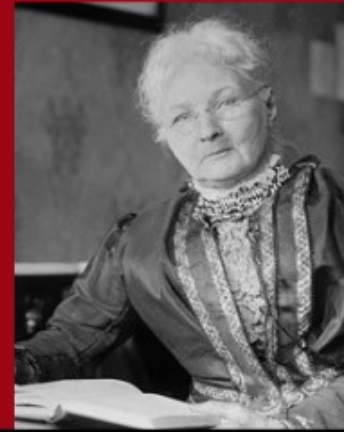


Illinois Labor
History Society

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL (773) 264-7431 OR EMAIL ILABORHISTORYS@GMAIL.COM

LABOR DAY
MONDAY
SEPTEMBER 2, 2019
1:00 PM TO 4:00 PM

**SAVE
THE
DATE!!**



PULLMAN: WOMEN & WORK



11111 S FORRESTVILLE AVE,
CHICAGO, IL 60628
773 / 264 - 7431

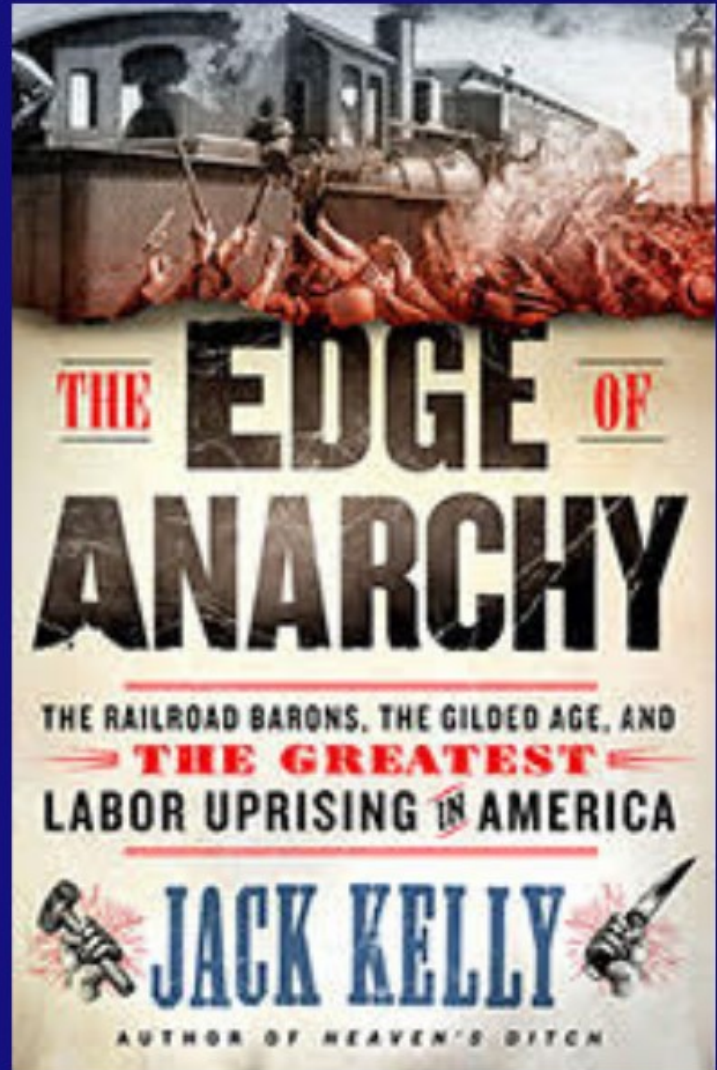


Follow Us on Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/ilaborhistorys>



Meet the author,
Jack Kelly
SUNDAY,
JUNE 16,
2019
3:00 PM

VISITORS CENTER
1141 S COTTAGE
GROVE AVE.,
CHICAGO, IL 60628



The Edge of Anarchy: The Railroad Barons, the Gilded Age, and the Greatest Labor Uprising in America?

In The Edge of Anarchy, Kelly offers a vivid account of the greatest uprising of working people in American history. At the pinnacle of the Gilded Age, a boycott of Pullman sleeping cars by hundreds of thousands of railroad employees brought commerce to a standstill across much of the country. Famine threatened, riots broke out along the rail lines. Soon the U.S. Army was on the march and gunfire rang from the streets of major cities. In today's turbulent times, many of the book's themes could be taken from today's headlines. With the country now in a New Gilded Age, this look back at the violent conflict of an earlier era offers illuminating perspectives along with a breathtaking story of a nation on the edge.

Sponsored by Historic Pullman Foundation, National Parks Service, and Illinois Labor History Society

THE ILLUSTRIOUS LIFE of ADDIE WYATT

By Debby Pope

Women Empowered for Civic Engagement (WECE) and the Working Women's History Project (WWHP) co-sponsored an event on Saturday, April 13, 2019 celebrating the life and work of Reverend Addie Wyatt. The event took place at George Corliss High School and approximately 50 people were in attendance.

Wyatt, who began working in the meatpacking industry as a 16-year-old in 1940, rose to the presidency of her local and later to the post of International Vice President and founding chair of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workman of North America Women's Affairs Division. She was also a founder of both the Coalition of Labor Union Women in and the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

A panel was held with speakers including ILHS Board member Katie Jordan, Joan Morris, oral historian of Wyatt's life and ILHS Board member, Alma Washington who authored a play about Wyatt's life which was performed reader's theater-style by members of WECE. Jordan and Washington shared reminiscences of their work in the movement with Reverend Wyatt.



PANAL DISCUSSION

Top: The panel discussion. *Photo courtesy of Debby Pope.* Middle: Second from left, Addie Wyatt marching in 1980 in support of the Equal Rights Amendment. *Photo courtesy of APWU.* Bottom: Playwrite Alma Washington (center) answering questions during the panel. *Photo courtesy of Debby Pope.*

ILHS Book Club

Our quarterly book club met recently at the Harold Washington Library in downtown Chicago. For the March 3 meeting, we read Marcia Walker-McWilliams book, *Reverend Addie Wyatt: Faith and the Fight for Labor, Gender, and Racial Equality*. This book centers on the life work of packinghouse organizer and civil rights leader, Addie Wyatt. Walker-McWilliams demonstrates the decades-long struggles Addie led for integrated, industrially organized unions, women's rights and civil rights more broadly.

We had quite a nice crowd. Those who joined us included trade unionists, veteran board members Katie Jordan and Alma Washington, parishioners from Addie's Vernon Park Church and retired steelworker leader, Scott Marshall. Everyone had warm memories of Addie, found the book to be a wonderful history of all the movements going on in Chicago at the time, and remembered Addie as firmly committed to racial and gender equality. It is clear that Addie Wyatt mentored so many trade union leaders in the city. It is no coincidence that she helped to found important organizations like Coalition of Labor Union Women and Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, and was centrally involved in so many other organizations as well.

Scott shared that he and his wife, Bobbie Wood, were married by Addie and noted that she was key in mentoring Bobbie when she was District 31 USWA Women's Caucus secretary. Katie pointed out that she introduced Walker-McWilliams to Addie, touching off the years-long process of interviews and research that culminated in the book. Addie would always say, "keep telling the

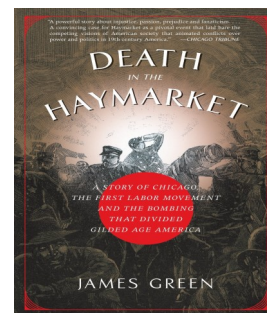
story." Thanks Katie! Alma remembered Addie as instrumental in working with Dr. King, that even as her car was set afire while marching in Marquette Park in the summer of '66, Addie took it in stride and kept marching. Both remembered feeling enlightened and inspired after hearing Addie's remarks at annual CLUW conventions. The Vernon Park parishioners noted her legacy in their community; one which emphasized respect, mentoring and promotion of women. Both credited Addie's influence at their church as determinant in their life accomplishments and in the successes of their daughters. They added that with faith like Addie's, the possibilities are endless.

We all remarked in awe at the responsibilities and mentoring Addie took on, early in her life, while living at Altgeld Gardens and the real impact her efforts had on young people living there. As well, her work in the UPWA in the 40s was exceptional. It was also critical to the success of the union, both locally and nationwide. Well before the Second Wave women's rights movement hit in the late '60s, Addie Wyatt was one of the leaders in what Dorothy Sue Cobble refers to as the other women's movement. That movement centered on economic justice at the workplace, as women began flooding defense industries during World War II. Already in the 40s and 50s, Addie was leading the way in demanding contract language that ensured equal pay for equal work. She would continue to aggressively pursue contract language on a wide range of issues including discrimination, training and promotional programs, pregnancy leave and child care.

As Walker-McWilliams highlights, her struggles didn't end there. Addie became a

key leader in Chicago for the Civil Rights movement, marched with Dr. King in Selma and worked with him during the open housing campaign in the city. She continued to excel in her work as a union leader, eventually becoming the first African-American woman to lead a union at the international level when in 1979, she became international vice-president of the United Food and Commercial Workers. At every step, she championed racial and gender equality and economic justice through the power of the labor movement, always fighting for labor solidarity and organizing the unorganized. She often remarked that in Chicago, the labor movement was the civil rights movement.

You can read more of her amazing life's work in the service of black and white working men and women, in Marcia's book, which is available in our bookstore. Our next book club will be held Saturday, May 18 at 2 p.m. at Harold Washington Library. In honor of May Day, we will be reading James Green's *Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement and the Bombing that Divided Gilded Age America*.



ILHS BOOK CLUB

Saturday,

May 18, 2019

at 2 p.m.

at Harold Washington Library

400 S. State Street

Chicago, IL 60605



Wisconsin Labor History Society's (WLHS) 38th Annual Conference

By Julia Berkowitz

Last month, I attended the Wisconsin Labor History Society's (WLHS) 38th Annual Conference at Madison's Labor Temple. This year's theme was, "How Labor Can Win Again: 'Direct Action' Strategies of History Can Offer Promise for the Future." The event drew a nice cross section of the labor movement from across the state of Wisconsin.

The event was divided into three segments: the Keynote Address, given by Dan Kaufman, journalist and author of *The Fall of Wisconsin: The Conservative Conquest of a Progressive Bastion and the Future of American Politics*. This was followed by two panels and discussion, "Direct Action Events, Past and Present," in the morning and "Strategies for the Future," in the afternoon. I caught the last half of Kaufman's talk. As I walked in, he was giving a detailed timeline history of Wisconsin labor militancy, with a specific focus on the 11 year Kohler strike. He tied this in with the attacks from ALEC, the now former governor Scott Walker, and the consequences of Act 10, the law that all but ended public sector collective bargaining rights in Wisconsin. He ended his talk with the direct action of the Abraham Lincoln Brigades in the Spanish Civil War. Discussion included comments about lessons from the massive 2011 protests at the state Capitol, the limits of elections and direct action, difficulties in calling and running a general strike (a popular call early on in 2011 events and then dropped), a nostalgia for the kind of electoral sweep led by 'sewer socialists' in 1910 and accolades to the WLHS for resurrecting and popularizing the history of the Bay View Massacre, often overshadowed by Chicago's Haymarket incident.

The Bay View Massacre, commemorated every May 5, occurred at the same moment as Haymarket in Chicago-May 1886. Some 12,000 building trades workers and laborers struck in Milwaukee for the Eight-Hour Day. According to the WLHS, "some 1,500

workers marched toward the Bay View Rolling Mills urging workers there to join the march.. and were fired upon by the State Militia, killing seven." For more information on this year's commemoration, go to:

<http://www.wisconsinlaborhistory.org/resources/bay-view/>

The morning panel that followed, featured Jaclyn Kelly, Milwaukee Area Labor Council/Young Workers Committee and president of AFSCME 526, Mario Garcia Sierra, Voces de la Frontera, and Alex Brower, Milwaukee Substitute Teachers Association.

—Kelly spoke about the challenges of organizing youth who have no understanding of what unions are or what they do, but who are overwhelmingly favorable to unions once they learn. She noted the success of recent campaigns including, "No Nazis in the House of Labor," joining protests fighting privatization at the Post Office and organizing workers at Stone Creek Coffee.

—Sierra detailed the current campaign to allow the undocumented in Wisconsin to acquire drivers' licenses, which is tied into this year's Mayday event in Madison, and includes the theme, "A Day Without Latinx & Immigrants." Given that many of the undocumented are farm workers in the state, Voces de la Frontera approached and won the support of the Wisconsin Farmers Union, who are scrambling to figure out how they are going to cover the work usually done by the undocumented on May 1.

—Browder, president of Milwaukee Teachers Education Association, detailed the struggle to gain recognition, rights and benefits for substitute teachers and support staff, including health care.

The afternoon panel featured Dennis Delie, Secretary-Treasurer for the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO, Kevin Gundlach, President of the South Central Federation of Labor, and Sheila Cochran, retired COO, Milwaukee Area Labor Council and former president, UAW 438 at

Delphi in Oak Creek. This panel was chaired by labor historian and WLHS board member, Jon Shelton, author of *Teacher Strike! Education and the Making of a New Political Order*. Speakers tended to speak broadly about the historic 2011 protests that drew hundreds of thousands to the Capitol, developments good and bad since then, and the need to acknowledge, confront and take on the growth of right wing and racist attitudes among union members.

An awards ceremony was held between the two panels. The WLHS has a few monetary awards they give out every year, at the high school, undergrad and graduate level. These awards are funded through their 'Ziedler Roll of 100,' named after Frank Zeidler, former SP mayor of Milwaukee, in which the WLHS asks 100 members to donate an additional \$15 a year. This ceremony presented monetary awards to two high schoolers who wrote on how the events of 2011 impacted them. One paper was of particular interest: the teenage girl stated that her father, a bluegrass musician, took her to events at the Capitol many times that spring, where they engaged in solidarity sing alongs, her father leading the crowd in Joe Hill's 'There is Power in a Union.' In the process of researching for her paper, she learned that her great grandparents were miners in Westmoreland County, PA and at one point Mother Jones arrived to support their strike and organized miners's wives, who were arrested. Mother Jones proceeded to lead the women in song, to sing their way out of jail. This is often referred to as the 1911 Slovak Strike. It was a brutal strike in which many who were unknowingly brought in to scab, tried to leave and were beaten into compulsory work. There were congressional investigations about whether miners were being forced into peonage.

It was a great opportunity to talk with labor activists and historians about common work and strategies for the future, locally, regionally and nationwide. Hopefully, we can get regional labor history societies and labor education programs in the same room soon.



DO YOU KNOW YOUR LABOR HISTORY?

[HTTPS://LABORHISTORYIN2.PODBEAN.COM/](https://laborhistoryin2.podbean.com/)

April 28, 1971

Today in Labor History, April 28, the year was 1971. That was the day that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration was founded. Since then OSHA rules have become a powerful tool for the protection of workers health and safety. Before OSHA, 38 people died on the job each day in the United States. The AFL-CIO declared April 28, "Workers' Memorial Day." It is a day to remember all of those who have been injured or lost their lives on the job. It is also a day to renew our commitment to the enforcement and strengthening of workplace safety standards. In 2012, Secretary of Labor, Hilda L. Solis spoke at a Workers' Memorial Day commemoration in Los Angeles. In her speech, she recalled working conditions before OSHA. "If you worked in a factory, you might lose your life or limbs in a piece of heavy machinery. There was no federal law requiring safety shields to prevent amputations. If you didn't like it, they told you to quit." But Secretary Solis also discussed the work still left to do for worker safety. "Every day in America, 12 people go to work and never come home. Every year in America, nearly 4 million people suffer a workplace injury from which some may never recover. These are preventable tragedies that disable our workers, devastate our families, and damage our economy. American workers are not looking for a handout or a free lunch. They are looking for a good day's pay for a hard day's work. They just want to go to work, provide for their families, and get home in one piece."

May 4, 1886

Today in Labor History, May 4, the year was 1886. It was one of the most significant days in US labor history. In Chicago a mass meeting was called for that night in the city's Haymarket. The purpose

of the meeting was to protest the police who had killed injured strikers at McCormick Reaper Works the day before. The organizers were also part of the movement for the eight hour day. The rally was much smaller than expected. Rain began to fall. The last speaker was concluding when a large force of 200 police arrived with a demand that the meeting disperse. Someone, unknown to this day, then threw a dynamite bomb into the ranks of the advancing police. In their confusion, the police began firing their weapons in the dark. The police killed at least four in the crowd and wounded many more. A total of seven police men were killed, most felled likely by their own gunfire. In the aftermath of the event, unions were raided all across the country. The Eight-Hour Movement was effectively derailed. Eight men were put on trial in Chicago. Some were not even present at the time the bomb was thrown. They were put on trial for their ideas. Four of the men, Albert Parsons, August Spies, George Engel, and Adolph Fischer were sentenced to death by hanging. A fifth man, Louis Lingg died under mysterious circumstances in prison. The remaining three went to prison, and were eventually pardoned by Illinois Governor Altgeld in 1893. Before he was hung, August Spies declared, "The day will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today." His words proved true. The Haymarket Martyrs inspired and continue to inspire labor activists throughout the world.

June 4, 1912

In the past few years, you may have seen news stories about efforts to raise the minimum wage. From the "Fight for Fifteen," to various state-based campaigns, raising the minimum wage has become an important campaign for workers. But do you know where the minimum wage started

in the United States? It all began, Today in Labor History, June 4, more than 100 years ago. The year was 1912. Massachusetts passed the very first US minimum wage law. Earlier that year, the Bread and Roses strike had brought national attention to the deplorable working conditions of women and children in the textile industry. This served as one of the motivations for the legislation. Massachusetts' new law only applied to women and child labor under the age of eighteen. In fact, it did not even set a minimum wage. Instead it set up a commission to investigate the wages paid to employees in different industries. The job of the commission was to determine whether "the wages paid to a substantial number of such employees are inadequate to supply the necessary cost of living and to maintain the worker in health." From this beginning, the call for a minimum wage grew. Seventeen different states and cities followed Massachusetts' lead, passing their own minimum wage legislation. But these early laws were often challenged in the courts. It was not until more than a quarter of a century later, with the 1938 passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act, that a national minimum wage became a reality. The first national minimum wage was 25 cents. The minimum wage reached its maximum buying power in 1968. Since then the value of the minimum wage has steadily declined.



Follow ILHS on twitter @ILLaborHistory #ILLaborHistory





Illinois Labor History Society

Membership Form



Renew your membership in the Illinois Labor History Society. The **Standard ILHS membership** (\$30 annually) includes: *The Reporter* newsletter, invitations to special events throughout the year and email updates about ILHS activities and programs. Your **Silver ILHS membership** includes: standard membership, an exclusive ILHS Magnet and an exclusive ILHS car decal. Your **Gold ILHS membership** includes: standard and silver membership packages plus a 50th anniversary commemorative t-shirt.

To join as an individual or to affiliate your local union, complete this form and send it with a check to our office, or renew online at www.illinoislaborhistory.org.

To support ILHS, I want to:

_____ Renew my membership Standard Silver Gold (please check one)

_____ Become an individual standard member (\$30 annually)

_____ Become an individual silver member (\$60 annually)

_____ Become an individual gold member (\$100 annually)

_____ Tshirt Size (2XL, XL, Large or Medium available)

_____ Affiliate my union (\$250 annually)

_____ 50th Anniversary Commemorative Booklet (\$1,000.00)
Includes Full Page Ad in our 50th Commemorative Book

Your Name _____ Name of Union Local _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____@_____

Payment (please check one):

- Check is enclosed
- Will make payment online at illinoislaborhistory.org
- Email full page ad to ilaborhistorys@gmail.com (size is 5.5 inches wide, 8.5 inches tall)

Return this Form To:
430 South Michigan Ave. Room WB 1806, Chicago, IL 60605
Also available for purchase at our bookstore online at www.illinoislaborhistory.org

Since 1969



Illinois Labor
History Society

www.IllinoisLaborHistory.org

430 S. Michigan Ave. WB 1806,
Chicago, IL 60605

(312) 341-2247

ILaborHistoryS@gmail.com

#ILHLives

Our Mission Statement

It shall be the Purpose of the Illinois Labor History Society to encourage the preservation and study of labor history materials of the Illinois Region, and to arouse public interest in the profound significance of the past to the present.



Printing by [Baxter Printing](http://www.baxterprint.com/), 3837 Ridge Road, Highland IN 46322.

(219) 923-1999, <http://www.baxterprint.com/>



Illinois Labor History Society
430 S. Michigan Ave.
WB 1806
Chicago, IL 60605

Or Current Resident