



ILLINOIS LABOR HISTORY SOCIETY

# REPORTER

Issue 1 –2016

## Dear ILHS Members,

During 2015, as I traveled around Illinois, I was asked one question over and over again. People wanted to know if I thought that we will have to re-fight the historic battles for fair wages and safe working conditions that were won by the generations that came before us. As attacks against working families mount this is a very real worry for many. The past struggles seem all-the-more present, as attempts are made to roll back union rights, erode benefits, and jeopardize the safety of the places where we work.

In these challenging times I find myself turning again and again to the examples of past labor heroes for inspiration. I am more convinced than ever that we must build our efforts to inform people about our shared labor past, as it is the bedrock of what we are fighting for today.

The ILHS took that charge seriously over the past year. Our consistent goal was to provide expanded opportunities to connect to our labor history. Here are just a few of the ways we renewed our commitment by engaging more people in this history:

We spent the year **honoring the memory of labor leader and musician Joe Hill**, commemorating the 100th anniversary of his death. Throughout the year we welcomed guests from Sweden to celebrate May Day, supported the release of a new CD of Joe Hill songs from ILHS board member Bucky Halker, developed an exhibit on Joe Hill in partnership with Uri-Eichen Gallery, and participated in the reenactment of the historic Joe Hill memorial service in Chicago.

We partnered with the Rick Smith Show to produce a **daily labor history 2:00 minute podcast**. In its first year these podcasts were downloaded more than half a million times.

We established the ILHS Woody Guthrie fund. This fund started by a \$5,000 donation from the Woody Guthrie Foundation is dedicated to **supporting labor music programs and events**, because this music is the heart of our labor movement.

We launched a **new effort to provide labor education opportunities for K-12 teachers**, supported by donations from the Champaign County Labor Council and Graduate Employees Organization (IFT). Our first full-day workshop reached 25 teachers, and we are excited about opportunities to expand on this program in 2016.

We worked to **protect important sites of labor history throughout our state**, joining in the effort to restore the Mother Jones Monument at the Union Miners Cemetery. We also realized a long-time dream as Pullman became part of the National Park system. Throughout the year we worked closely with other organizations at Pullman to bring labor history tours to the site, to hold our annual labor day celebration, and to create "Journey to Inclusion," an exhibit on Pullman labor history for the annual Train Day event at Union Station.

We also continued the programming and traditions that are an essential to ILHS. We gathered with 300 people to **induct Elizabeth Maloney, Ruben Ramirez, Sr., Olga Sierra Sandman into the Union Hall of Honor**.

These are just some of the many programs, events and activities that were made possible by your generous support. I cannot begin to thank you enough for your commitment to making sure the 'voice of the people' is heard.

*Larry Spivack*  
ILHS President



## Volunteer Spotlight

Bleue Benton has been a librarian for 35 years. She was collection manager at Oak Park Public Library for ten years, and adjunct professor in Dominican University's graduate library school. Semi-retired, Bleue loves volunteering at ILHS, and is also working with Mark Rogovin to research the history of the Haymarket Martyrs Monument.

Bleue's librarian expertise has helped ILHS organize its records and improve the ability to access our own organizational history. Thank you Bleue!

**Would YOU like to volunteer with ILHS?  
Visit our website at [illinoislaborhistory.org](http://illinoislaborhistory.org) or call 312-341-2247**

## 2016 Board Members and Staff

### Executive Committee

Larry Spivack, President  
Mike Matejka, Vice President  
Tom Suhrbur, Vice President  
Debby Pope, Secretary  
Nick Christen, Treasurer  
Bucky Halker  
Lisa Oppenheim  
Bill Pelz  
Alma Washington

### Staff

Stephanie Seawell-Fortado, Director

### Board

Julia Berkowitz  
Caleen Carter-Patton  
Tim Drea  
Mike Elliot  
Peter Fosco  
Erik Gellman  
Angela Harkless  
Katie Jordan  
Ken Munz  
Liesl Orenic  
Robert Reiter  
Keith Richardson  
Judy Simpson



Follow ILHS on twitter @ILLaborHistory



Follow the ILHS at [www.facebook.com/ILLaborHistory](http://www.facebook.com/ILLaborHistory)

[illinoislaborhistory.org](http://illinoislaborhistory.org)

# **An Update on the ILHS Archive Collection**

## ***an interview with Laura Mills, Roosevelt University Archivist***

### **Can you describe the process of cataloging the ILHS archives?**

First I inventory the collection and determine series – large categories like “Photos,” “Artifacts,” “Packinghouse Workers,” “Haymarket,” etc. and enter information about each series in the online catalog. Then I go through and do a more in-depth inventory of each folder and weed out duplicates and things that cause preservation problems like paper clips and 3-ring binders. I put the materials in acid-free folders to keep them from deteriorating and update the inventory. Once everything is inventoried, I start entering information about each folder in the online catalog. Some items, like photographs, moving images, and sound recordings will be cataloged at the item level. Photos are being scanned and the digital version is linked to the information about each photo in the online catalog.

Once everything has been gone through it’s arranged alphabetically by series, moved to acid-free boxes, and the boxes labeled. When all the information about the entire collection is in the catalog, we will make an announcement letting people know the information is available online. We’d also like to have some kind of exhibit or event to celebrate when the collection is completely processed.

In the meantime, people can still access the collection by contacting me in the archives. You don’t have to wait until it’s all online to use the collection.

### **What has been the most interesting thing that you have discovered in working with the collection?**

Finding out about people I wasn’t familiar with before like Joe Hill and Lucy Parsons. Learning more about their stories and their contributions to labor history.

### **What is the status of the collection cataloging now?**

Over 60% of the collection is inventoried at the folder level. The series are entered into the online database but not the folders at this point. Over 1,300 photos have been individually cataloged. Of those, over 540 are scanned and can be viewed online.

### **If someone wanted to research in the collection could they do so, and how would they go about it?**

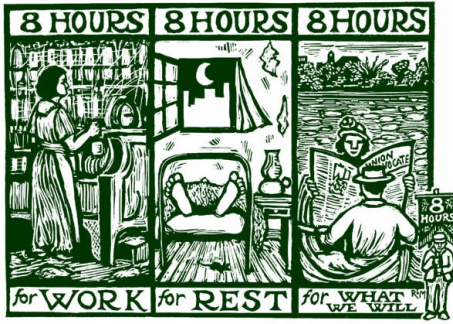
Absolutely. The collection is open to researchers even if it isn’t fully processed. Researchers can check the online catalogue at <http://www.roosevelt.edu/Library/Locations/UniversityArchives.aspx> to see what’s available online. To access the material that’s not online yet, or find out more about what is online, they can contact me at [lmills@roosevelt.edu](mailto:lmills@roosevelt.edu) or 312-341-2280 and I’d be happy to help them find what they need.

### **What is your hope or vision for the collection in the future?**

The Roosevelt University Archives made a decision a few years ago to broaden our scope of collection to include labor history. I see the ILHS materials as the cornerstone of the labor history collections. The collection has already drawn the attention of History Day students and other researchers and I hope it will draw many more labor history researchers into the archives.

I’d also love to see the collection used in classes here at Roosevelt. I can see students doing class projects that involve materials from the collection. Eventually, it would be great to do exhibits and programs based on material in the collection. There’s such a wealth of information there.

# Battle for the 40 Hour Week



On February 20, more than fifty people gathered at Roosevelt University for our Battle for the Forty-Hour Week: Fighting Unpredictable Schedules & Hours program. It was an inspiring morning of conversation, connecting the Chicago labor movement's historic struggle for the eight-hour day to current campaigns to fight overwork and underwork.

The morning began with an introduction from Professor Stephanie Farmer, of Roosevelt University, who came up with the idea for the program. We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to our panelists who represented seven different local campaigns including Chicago Teachers Union, Warehouse Workers for Justice, Arise Chicago, Worker Center for Racial Justice, Latinos Unidos, Faculty Forward Chicago/SEIU 73, and Fight for \$15. We also welcomed representatives from Ain't I a Woman?, a campaign that organizes around issues faced by low-wage women workers in New York City.



*Workers Share their stories at Roosevelt University*

## ***Did you Know?***

Illinois was the first state to pass a law for the eight hour day. The law was signed way back in March of 1867, and was supposed to go into effect on the first day of May of that year. The law read: "eight hours of labor between the rising and the setting of the sun, in all mechanical trades, arts and employments, and other cases of labor and service by the day, except farm employments, shall constitute and be a legal day's work, where there is no special contract or agreement to the contrary." But the law lacked adequate enforcement mechanisms, and many of the State's big employers simply ignored it.

As the panelists shared their stories, they described very different job-sites: a Chicago Public School, a McDonalds counter, a college classroom, a warehouse floor. But the thread that was consistent throughout was the many anxieties and difficulties of not having a steady forty-hour job. Some panelists shared how mandatory over-work takes a toll on their families. Others shared how they had to navigate the pitfalls of not having a consistent work schedule. Their testimony was a powerful reminder that the history of the struggle for the forty-hour week is by no means complete—and that there are activists who continue to write that history with their work every day.



*Mary Hood, a worker who is part of Fight for \$15 in Chicago shares how the lack of forty consistent hours impacts her family.*

We would also like to thank Professor Emily Twarog-Miller from the University of Illinois, Labor Education Program and Professor Marc Doussard from the University of Illinois, Urban and Regional Planning our moderators for the panels. Thank you too to Susan Hurley, from Chicago Jobs with Justice, who ended the day by calling us all to support the important work being done by these campaigns. One of the most exciting aspects of this program, was that many in the audience were university students. It is an example of the type of education opportunities that have opened up because of ILHS's partnership with Roosevelt University.

## Eight Hour Song

We mean to make things over, we are tired  
of toil for naught,  
With but bare enough to live upon, and never  
an hour for thought;  
We want to feel the sunshine, and we want  
to smell the flowers,  
We are sure that God has will'd it, and we  
mean to have eight hours.

We're summoning our forces from the ship-  
yard, shop, and mill:

Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest,  
eight hours for what we will!  
Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest,  
eight hours for what we will!

From factories and workshops, in long and  
weary lines,

From all the sweltering forges, and from out  
the sunless mines,

Wherever toil is wasting the force of life to  
live,

There the bent and battered armies come to  
claim what God doth give,

And the blazon on their banner doth with  
hope the nations fill:

Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest,  
eight hours for what we will!

Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest,  
eight hours for what we will!

Hurrah, hurrah for labor! for it shall arise in  
might;

It has filled the world with plenty, it shall fill  
the world with light;

Hurrah, hurrah for labor! it is mustering all  
its powers,

And shall march along to victory with the  
banner of Eight Hours!

Shout, shout the echoing rally till all the  
welkin thrill:

Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest,  
eight hours for what we will!

Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest,  
eight hours for what we will!

*Selected lyrics from a song often sung at  
Knights of Labor Meetings in the 1880s,  
lyrics by Isaac G. Blanchard*

# 2015

## ILHS By the Numbers



**750**

ILHS workshops and presentations attendees

**300**

Union Hall of Honor attendees

**500+**

at May Day and Labor Day

**8**

ILHS Book Tables at Events



**450+**

Participants in ILHS Labor History Tours

All day labor history workshop

**25**

Teachers

**600,000**

Downloads of Labor History in 2:00 daily podcast

*Just some of the*

### 2015 ILHS Bus Tour Groups



United Methodist Women  
Northern Illinois University, Young South East Asian Leaders

Chicagoland Laborers Apprentice Training

**Sweden LO ZENROREN JAPAN St Xavier**

**QUAD CITIES CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL College**

Midwest School for Women Workers **AFL-CIO "Next Up" Young Workers**

United Food and Commercial Workers-International Union of Food Workers



# Illinois Labor History Society

## Membership Form

Renew your membership in the Illinois Labor History Society. Membership dues are \$30 per year for individuals and \$200 for unions (\$100 for those with less than 200 members). 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](http://www.illinoislaborhistory.org).

**You can also become a recurring member. To become a recurring member you MUST sign and return this form.** Once you become a recurring member, we will automatically renew your membership each year. by charging the credit card provided. This means we will not have to ask you to update your membership.

To support ILHS, I want to:

\_\_\_\_\_ Become a member (\$30 annually)

\_\_\_\_\_ Affiliate my union (\$200 annually, or \$100 for locals under 200 members)

\_\_\_\_\_ Become a recurring member. (\$30, billed annually. Cancel any time )

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Union Local \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Payment (please check one):

- Check is enclosed
- Credit Card (we will call you for credit card information)

Yes! I want to become a recurring member of ILHS

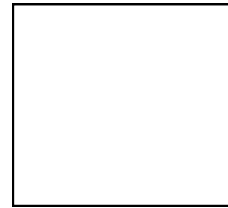
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact me with more information about

- Scheduling a Labor History program for my union/organization
- Scheduling a Labor History Tour
- Volunteering with ILHS

**Return this Form To:**  
**430 South Michigan Ave. Room AUD 1851, Chicago, IL 60605**

**Illinois Labor History Society  
430 South Michigan Ave.  
Room AUD 1851  
Chicago, IL 60605**



**It's time to renew your Illinois Labor History Society  
membership for 2016!**



Your membership allows ILHS to bring labor history to life through historical re-enactments, tours and music programs. But we can't do it without your support. Please take a moment today to fill out and return the membership form in this newsletter or visit [illinoislaborhistory.org](http://illinoislaborhistory.org).