

Highlights from 12 decades of labor journalism

For 120 years, the Labor Press has been chronicling the labor movement.

1900: U.S. Industrial Commission declares trade unions are good for democracy. 14 new international unions chartered by the AFL, 734 federal and trade locals affiliate. 112,000 miners walk off the job in Pennsylvania, the largest walkout in American history to that time. The average life expectancy is 49, and 63 percent of men over 65 are still in the labor force; pensions are extremely rare. There are 8,000 registered automobiles in the U.S. **1901:** 58,000 Machinists strike for 9-hour day. National Metal Trades Association announces "open shop" drive, establishes strikebreaking service. **1902:** G.Y. Harry of Sheet Metal Workers Local 16 is president of the Oregon Federation of Labor (OFL). Organized labor in Oregon has a political arm that plays a role in winning direct legislation (the initiative and referendum). **1903:** Women's Trade Union League organizes to aid unionization of women. AFL charters the Teamsters Union, with Local 162 chartered in Portland. C.H. Graham elected president of OFL. Wright brothers fly their first airplane. **1904:** AFL has membership of nearly 1.7 million. **1905:** Industrial Workers of the World founded in Chicago. Supreme Court holds that a maximum hour law for bakery workers

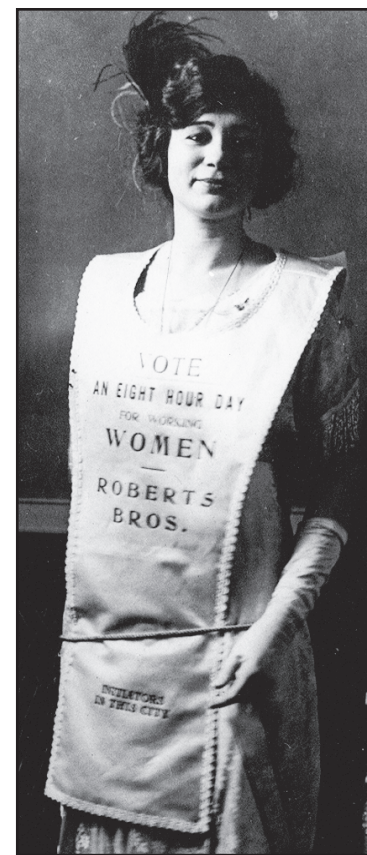


Portland trade unionists and other activists mass in the Park Blocks in 1912 in a sympathy demonstration for striking textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Oregon Historical Society file photo.

is unconstitutional under the due process clause of the 14th Amendment. **1906:** Citizens Alliance of Portland tries to "precipitate a bloody clash between white American workingmen and imported Asians," which is averted "through the tact and coolness of local officers of the Longshoremen's Union." Street Carmen strike Portland Street Railway Light & Power Co. for better work conditions. Estimated 30,000 attend Labor Day celebration at The Oaks. **1907:** Willamette Iron Works fires union men and hires strikebreakers to force showdown on open shop proposition. More than 5,000 union members walk in biggest Labor Day Parade on record in Portland. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports 2,077 strikes involving 176,337 workers, the fewest since 1892. Enthusiastic gathering of

union men and sympathizers assemble to ratify Labor Party's platform. 5,000 unionists demonstrate their sympathy for striking street carmen. **1908:** Central Labor Council of Portland & Vicinity affiliation certified. Danbury Hatters workers are prosecuted under Sherman Anti-Trust Act for strike-related actions; after years in court, strikers are found guilty of "conspiracy;" AFL runs national fundraiser to pay off fine and save strikers' homes from being seized. AFL President Sam Gompers, Vice President John Mitchell, and Secretary Frank Morrison receive jail sentences (one year, nine months and six months) for exercising their rights of free speech in boycott of Buck Stove and Range Co. Organized labor wants convict labor removed in the manufacturing of stoves at the Salem, Ore., peniten-

tiary. Work on the new Bull Run pipe line and the Madison Street Bridge starts. U.S. Supreme Court upholds constitutionality of Oregon's 10-hour workday for women. National Building Trades Department of the AFL is established. Portland Building Trades Council gets first charter. **1909:** "Union enthusiasm running high in Portland" with new Labor Temple on Alder Street. "Uprising of the 20,000" female shirtwaist makers in New York strike against sweatshop conditions. Portland Bartenders Union League rallies at its First Street hall, focusing on prohibition of liquor. Label Trades Section of Central Labor Council adopts constitution. Meatcutters of Portland form the International Meat Cutters Union. Building Trades Council passes a rule prohibiting any single affiliated union from



An employee of Roberts Brothers—a department store in downtown Portland later known as Lipman's—pickets for the 8-hour day for working women in the early 1900s.

boycotting or striking without first getting the consent of the council. 5,000 union members, led by the Musicians Union's brass band, parade through the streets of Portland to protest the jailing of Gompers, Mitchell and Morrison. Politics, strikes, boycotts and all other issues make way for labor's fight against tuberculosis. Will Daly of Multnomah Typographical

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