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The Massachusetts Labor Movement:

**COLLECTIVE
VOICES**



Anthony Russo

The Textile Strike of 1912

A Joint Educational Project Sponsored By

Office of the Massachusetts Secretary of State
Michael Joseph Connolly, Secretary

The Massachusetts AFL-CIO
Arthur Osborn, President
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The Commonwealth Museum
Theodore Z. Penn, Director

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*Secondary Social Studies
Curriculum Guide*

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"Collective Voices," a joint educational project of the Office of the Secretary of State, the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, and the Commonwealth Museum, is composed of the following components: a focus exhibit, an interactive video, an audio cassette, and a curriculum guide. The focus exhibit (including photographs, documents and others graphics, and the interactive video) opened in September 1990 at the Commonwealth Museum. It will remain on display until June 1991, after which it will travel around the state. Copies of the video, audio cassette and this curriculum guide are available to educators as a supplement to the exhibit; they also stand alone. The teacher's guide is geared to the secondary level but can be adapted for younger students.

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**The Massachusetts Labor Movement:
"Collective Voices"
The Textile Strike of 1912**

**Curriculum Guide
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*"The story of the labor movement
needs to be taught in every school in this land...
America is a living testimonial to what free men and women
organized in free and democratic trade unions
can do to make a better life...we ought to be proud of it."*

U.S. Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
1977

Collective Voices, 1912

📌 Summary:

This lesson is an introduction to the unit and centers around the "Collective Voices" classroom video (20 min.) to "set the stage" for the material students will cover during the unit study.

The lesson also focuses on community and family life in the mill towns of 1912: ethnic diversity; language barriers; overcrowded tenement housing conditions; lack of subsistence wage; disease; inadequate diets; inadequate clothing for the climate; and limited education opportunity.

📌 Selected reading:

Instructor's Background Reading #1:
"Today's Workers Linked to Labor History"
by Paul Cowan (excerpted)

Instructor's Background Reading #2: Video script
"Massachusetts Labor History: Collective Voices,
The Textile Strike of 1912"

Supplemental Reading # 1:
"Names In the News: Textile Strike 1912"

📌 Objectives:

1. To introduce students to American lifestyles in 1912.
2. To introduce students to the problems of workers at the beginning of the last century.
3. To give students a general overview of the causes, events, and outcome of the Massachusetts Textile Strike of 1912.

📌 Vocabulary:

immigrant	skilled worker
mill town	unskilled worker
tenement	industry
labor	

📌 Teaching strategy:

The video presentation "Collective Voices" tells the story of the 1912 Textile Strike in Massachusetts. The strike itself lasted two months, but the impact of the strike lasted for many years and was a catalyst for many changes in the lives of working men, women and children, especially immigrant "unskilled" workers. The strike continued to influence workers for many years to follow. To help students understand why the events of 1912 occurred, draw points from the video presentation which illustrate the hardships of the workers' daily lives in 1912.

📌 Discussion questions:

1. In Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1912, there were 25 different immigrant groups living and working in the city. America was a "melting pot." How many different nationality group descendants are represented in the class? List nationalities. Today all but Native Americans are descended from people who once were immigrants on American shores.
2. Why was life hard for immigrants when they arrived in America?
3. Why did immigrant families go to mill towns like Lawrence?
4. America at the turn-of-the-century, was an exciting country. New inventions were changing the way people lived, such as automobiles, movies, airplanes, radios, factory machines. How do you think those inventions changed peoples lives?

📌 Hand-out materials for duplication:

Chart:

Hand-out #1: "Lawrence, Massachusetts:1912, Facts To Consider"

✎ Additional activities and assignment suggestions:

1. Have the students compile a one day diary which includes all activities and functions of their average day. Have students compile a list of all the machines, appliances, recreational appliances or devices, and products that they use in the course of an average day. Have students, then, write a short essay on how their lives would be different if they had been the son or daughter in an immigrant family who lived in 1912 America.

On the Job, In the Mills, 1912

Summary

This lesson will focus on working conditions in the mills: problems faced by men, women and children involving work hours, wages, "premiums," speed-ups and stretch-outs, health and safety; mill owner reactions to new labor laws shortening work hours for women and children; and machinery, crafts and skills. This lesson sets the stage for the study of the 1912 strike that follows.

Selected reading:

Student Reading #1

"Eyewitness: A Young Mill Girl Testifies"

Congressional Hearing Testimony of Camella Teoli

Student Reading #2

"Eyewitness: A Mill Boy Remembers"

Accounts of Fred Beal, mill boy

Objectives:

1. To introduce students to the difficulties and dangers encountered by factory and mill workers in 1912.
2. To introduce students to the hardships encountered by children working in the mills.

Vocabulary:

speed-up

premium system

labor

labor laws

child labor

stretch-out

trade/craft union

hourly wage

management

blacklisted

Teaching strategy:

Have members of the class role play the testimony of Camella Teoli, one reading the part of Camella and several others taking the parts of the Congressmen. Drawing from the

information presented in the video presentation, "Collective Voices," construct a list of worker "grievances." Lead the class in a discussion of each grievance pointing out why the mill owners operated the way they did and why the workers felt it was unfair.

↳ Discussion questions:

1. Why did mill owners prefer to hire women and children to work for them in the mills?
2. What were the mill owners doing to the workers that got them angry?
3. Why couldn't the workers get the mill owners to treat them fairly? Why were workers afraid to complain?
4. If you had been a worker in the mills in 1912, what do you think you could have done to change the conditions at work?

↳ Hand-out materials for duplication:

Student reading from primary sources:

1. "Eyewitness: A Young Mill Girl Testifies; Testimony of Camella Teoli"
2. "Eyewitness: A Mill Boy Remembers, 'Strike!' by Fred Beal"

↳ Additional activities and assignment suggestions:

1. Students should read "Eyewitness: A Mill Boy Remembers" as a home assignment. Each student should construct a "compare and contrast" list which draws distinctions between the mill boy's life and his/her own life.

Workers Organize, Workers Strike, 1912

Summary:

This lesson will focus mainly on the strike events in Lawrence, Massachusetts, in 1912: the role of the IWW, the AFL, the Bread and Roses March, the exodus of the children, the state militia, the mill owners, the violence against demonstrators, the murder and arrests, the national attention received, and the hardships of the 63-day strike. This lesson will use the audio tape "Collective Voices In Song." This collection of union songs used in demonstrations and marches will help transmit feelings of workers.

Selected reading:

Instructor's Reading #3: audio script
"Collective Voices In Song"

Student Readings:

Hand-out #2: "Bread and Roses" worksheet
Hand-out #3: "Songs of Labor" lyric sheets

Objectives:

1. To give students an understanding of the cultural and social role music has played in American history, in this instance, relative to the labor movement.
2. To reiterate the major events of the Textile Strike overviewed in the video presentation "Collective Voices," to give the students an understanding of what takes place during a strike, for what reasons, and the terms that have become synonymous with labor/strike activity.

Vocabulary:

IWW	AFL
strike	picket line
union	strike breaker
scab	grievance
solidarity	children's exodus

↳ Teaching strategy:

Create a timeline of strike events for the students on the chalkboard or on a poster board. Students may participate by recalling events from the video presentation. Discuss the reasons behind each labor union or management action and what they hoped to accomplish.

Using the "Collective Voices In Song" audio cassette, illustrate to the class the various uses of music during a strike/ union movement. Utilize hand-outs of song lyrics, "Songs of Labor," and discuss the significance of the lyrics and what the union hoped to accomplish with each song. Use the "Bread and Roses" lyric sheet as a home assignment or desk work piece.

↳ Discussion questions:

1. What is a union? Why did the mill workers need one?
2. What were the four main things the strikers wanted from the mill owners?
3. Why didn't the mill owners want to give them what they wanted?
4. In what specific ways did the strikers try to force the mill owners to grant their demands?
5. In what specific ways did the mill owners try to make the strikers give-up their strike and return to work without getting any of their demands?
6. The 1912 Textile Strike was known as the "singing strike." Why were songs important to the union's effort?
7. Why were the roles played by women and children so important in this strike?
8. How did public opinion effect the outcome of this strike?

↳ Hand-out materials for duplication:

Student readings:

Hand-out # 2: "Bread and Roses" discussion sheet

Hand-out # 3: "Songs of Labor" sheets

✎ Additional activities and assignment suggestions:

1. Distribute hand-out sheet "Bread and Roses" which the students have already heard performed on the audio cassette, "Collective Voices In Song." Ask the students to read the lyrics and answer the discussion questions at the bottom of the page.

Collective Voices Bring Change

Summary:

This lesson will deal with the outcome of the Lawrence strike and the effect it had on mill workers in Lowell (strike, lock-out), New Bedford, Fall River, Holyoke and East Longmeadow (contract wage settlements); and how organized workers changed working conditions and the legal protections for workers that followed over the next decades.

Selected reading:

Hand-out # 7:

"Rights Won for Workers by the Labor Movement since 1912"

Objectives:

1. To give students an understanding of the short- and long-term effects of the strike, how it affected other workers around the state and country, and how it changed the work lives of immigrant "unskilled" laborers.
2. To illustrate to students that the strike was not an isolated incident; it was part of a greater movement to secure rights and privileges for workers.
3. To give students an understanding of how unions continue to work today on behalf of workers in both skilled and unskilled jobs.

Vocabulary:

strike settlement	lock-out
negotiation	collective bargaining
shop floor democracy	minimum wage
benefits	safety regulations

📌 Teaching strategy:

Explain to the class that the Lawrence Strike was important not only because it helped the mill workers of Lawrence, Massachusetts, but also because it changed the relationship between the owners (management) and workers (labor) in other mill towns and other industries.

- a) It demonstrated to immigrant workers that by organizing and sticking together they could be as powerful as the company owners.
- b) It drew national attention to the plight of children, women, and men working in mills and factories across America and to the unfair living and working conditions that existed in America's booming industries.
- c) It made owners (management) aware of the power workers (labor) united could exert on their companies and businesses and forced them to recognize the workers' unions and pay attention to workers' demands and grievances.

📌 Discussion questions:

1. When the Lawrence workers won their strike, how do you think other workers from across the country felt? How do you think company owners around the country felt? Do you think it made them change the way they treated each other?
2. Looking at the list of rights and benefits fought for and won by workers since 1912, think of the ways in which your life today would be different if people never had formed unions and nothing had changed for workers since 1912.
3. What do you think they mean when people refer to the union organization as "shop floor democracy?" How does the structure of a union resemble a democratic government?

↳ Hand-out materials for duplication:

Charts:

Hand-out # 5: "Who is Labor?"

Hand-out # 6: "The Basic Structure of Unions"

Timeline:

Hand-out # 7:

"Rights Won for Workers by the Labor Movement
since 1912"

↳ Additional activities and assignment suggestions:

1. Distribute the Robert Frost poem (Hand-out # 4) about the mill workers and ask students to read and give their impressions on what Robert Frost was saying about the life of mill workers in America.
2. Ask students to take an inventory list of their family, and their neighbors to find out how many people they know who are members of unions today and to what union they belong.
3. Ask students to interview older family members or neighbors to find out what it was like for them to be workers many years ago before many of the benefits workers take for granted today had been won.

Collective Voices Today and Tomorrow

📌 Summary:

This lesson focuses on the differences that events of labor history have made to today's workplace, education, family and community life. It also concentrates on the unions and workplaces of today—how unions work for workers and how they deal with management—today's issues. It asks what we can predict for the workplaces of the 21st century and how unions will change to meet them.

📌 Selected reading:

Student and instructor reading:

Hand-out #8:

Boston Globe excerpts, "Children at Work: 1990"

📌 Objectives:

1. To demonstrate to students that although the labor movement has solved many problems, new problems have taken their place as American industry changes.
2. To give students an understanding of the continuing but changing roles of labor and management in the workplace today.
3. To give students an understanding of labor's challenges in the workplaces of the future.

📌 Vocabulary:

technology	robotics
computerization	foreign competition
prevailing wage	open shop
closed shop	Worker's Compensation
binding arbitration	child labor/sweat shop
National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)	
Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)	

↳ Teaching strategy:

With the students construct a list of all the jobs they can think of that were done in 1912 that do not exist today; then construct a similar list of all the jobs that exist today that did not exist then. To make another comparison, construct a list of worker's problems that have already been solved and a corresponding list of workers' problems that still need to be solved.

The passage of time, new inventions, and technology offers each new generation of workers different problems to overcome.

↳ Discussion questions:

1. How have new inventions played a part in changing the problems of workers?
2. How has public education changed the workplace over the years?
3. What effect did public education and child labor laws have on immigrant families?
4. With laws that restrict child labor today, why do you think there is still a problem with children working in sweatshops or working too many hours per week today? What should be done about it?

↳ Hand-out materials for duplication:

Newspaper excerpt:

Hand-out # 8: *Boston Globe*., "Children At Work: 1990 "

Chart:

Hand-out # 9: Child Labor Statistics

✎ Additional activities and assignment suggestions:

1. Ask students to look through the news and business sections of a daily newspaper and find articles that may affect workers and their workplaces today.
2. Ask students to imagine what the workplace of the year 2021 will be like, what kinds of jobs they imagine themselves doing, and what problems they may encounter as workers that would require a union's help to solve.

*Additional Activities
and Assignment Suggestions:*

Oral history project: Students interview grandparents or older neighbors on what it was like to be a young worker in the 1930's.

Research child labor and write a "diary report" as if the student were an 11-year-old factory worker in the early 1900's.

Write a report on what a student's life would be like today if no child labor or other labor protection laws had ever been passed.

Create a company and a union within the class and negotiate a contract utilizing collective bargaining.

Create a "classroom museum" exhibit with memorabilia, including old newspapers, flyers, union cards, buttons and records brought in by students.

Create a billboard display on "Jobs of the Future/Unions of the Future" utilizing newsclips from local newspapers and national magazines.

Facts to Consider
Lawrence, Massachusetts: 1912

The 1910 Federal Census for Lawrence counted 86% of the population whose parents were foreign, including:

600 Armenians	700 Portuguese	1,200 French-Belgians
2,100 Poles	2,500 Scots	2,700 Jews
3,000 Syrians	6,500 Lithuanians	8,000 Germans
9,000 Italians	12,000 English	12,000 French-Canadians
21,000 Irish		

The parents of 12,000 residents of Lawrence were born in the United States.



In Lawrence in 1911, 282 students withdrew from the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades of the public schools to go to work. In that same year 1,401 persons between the ages of 14 and 16 received certificates affirming that they "can read at sight and write legibly simple sentences in the English language." These certificates enabled them to work in the mills legally.



The usual price for a new cast iron stove in 1912 was \$35. The stove was heated with coal or wood. It took 3 to 5 weeks of an entire family's income to pay for a stove.



In studying conditions in Lawrence, agents of the Bureau of Labor visited 188 households, the greater part of them being of the races representing the unskilled workers in textile mills. Of the 188 households visited, 109 (58%) kept lodgers or boarders. In one case 17 persons occupied a 5-room apartment; another household of 16 persons occupied a 5-room apartment, and in another case a household of 15 persons occupied a 5-room apartment.



In Lawrence the average life span of:

doctors and lawyers was	65.4 years
factory owners was	58.5 years
textile mill workers was	39.5 years

Thirty-six out of 100 textile mill workers died before the age of 25.

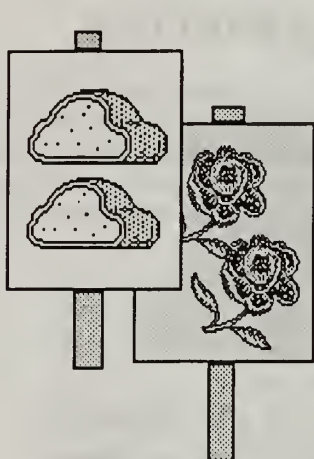
Half of all men and women who worked in the mill died of lung disease.



Textile workers in 1912 received no regular or "fringe benefits"

No paid sick leave	No paid vacation
No health insurance	No paid maternity leave
No old age pension or Social Security payments	No worker's compensation for on-the-job injury
No unemployment insurance	No extra hourly pay for overtime work
No paid holidays	

**All these rights, which workers enjoy today,
had to be fought for by organized labor.**



Bread and Roses

"Bread and Roses" is a poem written by James Oppenheim who was inspired by the 1912 Textile Strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts. He watched the women strikers march on the picket lines and in strike parades and reported seeing young women carrying a banner which read, "We want bread and roses, too!" Years later, Caroline Kohlsaar set the words of the poem to music. It has become a standard song for both union and women's rights in America.

As we come marching, marching, in the beauty of the day,
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill lofts gray,
Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses,
For the people hear us singing: "Bread and roses! Bread and roses!"

As we come marching, marching, we battle too for men,
For they are women's children, and we mother them again.
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes;
Hearts starve as well as bodies; give us bread, but give us roses!

As we come marching, marching, unnumbered women dead
Go crying through our singing their ancient cry for bread.
Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew.
Yes, it is bread we fight for—but we fight for roses, too.

As we come marching, marching, we bring the greater days.
The rising of the women means the rising of the race.
No more the drudge and idler—ten that toil where one reposes,
But a share of life's glories: Bread and roses! Bread and roses!

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the workers mean when they said "bread" in the song?
2. What did they mean by "roses?"
3. Give examples of specific "bread" and "roses" demands of the workers of 1912.
4. Give examples of specific "bread" and "roses" demands of workers today.
5. Does this song apply only to women?
6. What do the workers mean by the line "sharing of life's glories?"



Labor Songs In America

Throughout the history of the labor movement in America, songs have been used to unite the workers, to raise their spirits in difficult times, and to build support for their cause.

Solidarity Forever

"Solidarity Forever" is the most popular union song in the United States and Canada. It has become the anthem of the American labor movement. It was written by Ralph Chaplin, an artist, writer and organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World in 1915. Workers sang his words to the Civil War tune "John Brown's Body." Originally six verses were written, but today only these three are usually sung.

**When the union's inspiration through the workers blood shall run,
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun;
Yet no force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one,
But the union makes us strong.**

**CHORUS: Solidarity forever!
 Solidarity forever!
 Solidarity forever!
 For the union makes us strong.**

**They have taken untold millions that they never toiled to earn,
But without our brain and muscle not a single wheel could turn.
We can break their haughty power, gain our freedom when we learn
That the union makes us strong.**

**In our hands is placed the power greater than their hoarded gold,
Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand fold.
We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old,
For the union makes us strong.**

In The Good Old Picket Line

The 1912 Textile Strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts became known as the "singing strike." Workers of dozens of different nationalities were able to bridge the language barrier by using the international language of song. In this song "Mr. Lowe" refers to a mill owner, and "[Elizabeth] Gurley Flynn" was a popular I.W.W. union organizer.

**In the good old picket line, in the good old picket line,
The workers are from every place, from nearly every clime.
The Greeks and Poles are out so strong, and the Germans all the time,
But we want to see more Irish in the good old picket line.**

**In the good old picket line, in the good old picket line,
We'll put Mr. Lowe in overalls and swear off drinking wine,
Then Gurley Flynn will be the boss,
Oh Gee, won't that be fine,
The strikers will wear diamonds in the good old picket line.**

We Shall Not Be Moved

Next to "Solidarity Forever," "We Shall Not Be Moved" is the best known and most widely sung labor song in the United States and Canada. The song is a favorite on picket lines because it is easy to add dozens of verses telling the story of any particular strike. "We Shall Not Be Moved" is based on an old gospel hymn, "I Shall Not Be Moved." It was first sung in 1931 by members of the West Virginia Miners' Union. In the South it is sung like a hymn. In the North, it is sung with a powerful marching rhythm.

**The union is behind us; We shall not be moved.
The union is behind us; We shall not be moved.
Just like a tree that's planted near the water,
We shall not be moved.**

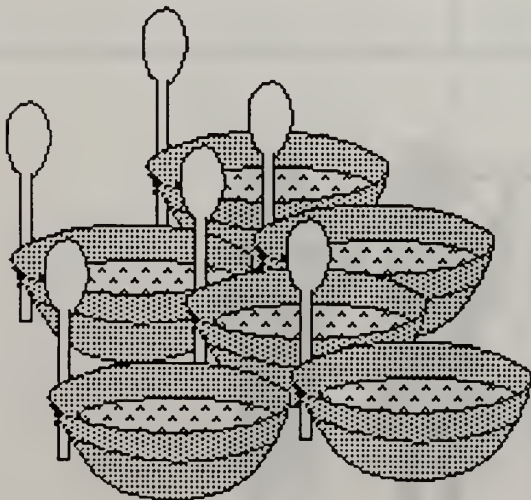
CHORUS:

**We shall not be, We shall not be moved.
We shall not be, We shall not be moved.
Just like a tree that's planted near the water,
We shall not be moved.**

2. **We're fighting for our freedom; we shall not be moved.
We're fighting for our freedom; we shall not be moved.
Just like a tree that's planted near the water,
We shall not be moved.**
3. **We're fighting for our children; we shall not be moved.**
4. **We'll build a mighty union; we shall not be moved.**
5. **.....is our leader; we shall not be moved.**

The Soup Song

The soup line has long been a symbol of hard times. During economic depressions, recessions and when strikes went on for long periods of time, unemployed and striking workers turned to "soup kitchens" for food. In 1945, Joe Glazer rewrote this depression "soup song" which was sung to the tune of "My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean." It represents the use of humor to ease the pain of hard times.



**'Way back in the days of depression,
I didn't have nothin' to eat,
But that didn't bother me, Mister,
I was fed from my head to my feet with-**
CHORUS:

**Soo-ooop, soo-ooop,
They gave me a bowl of soo-ooop;
Soo-ooop, soo-ooop,
They gave me a bowl of soup.**

**One day the depression was over,
I almost was back on my feet,
But quickly there came a recession,
So once more I started to eat- (CHORUS)**

**We're striking this mill for a living,
And one thing on which you can bet
Is that if we don't stick together
There's only one thing we will get- (CHORUS)**

Union Maids

The role of women—both as workers and as wives of union men—in building America's labor movement cannot be ignored. As early as 1834, women textile workers in Lowell, Massachusetts struck against wage cuts. Seventy-five years later, 20,000 shirt-waist makers—mostly women—struck for three months against intolerable conditions in New York City sweatshops. Mother Jones and others did noble work for the miners and for stopping child labor. In modern times, the telephone workers union made up of 80 percent women has taken on the gigantic telephone industry. The International Ladies Garment Workers Union is a powerful force today in the garment industry fighting for the rights of workers.

Folksinger Woody Guthrie wrote the song "Union Maid" after watching the courage of the women during a strike in Oklahoma in 1940. The song is sung to the tune of "Red Wing" and has become one of the best known songs about women in the labor movement.

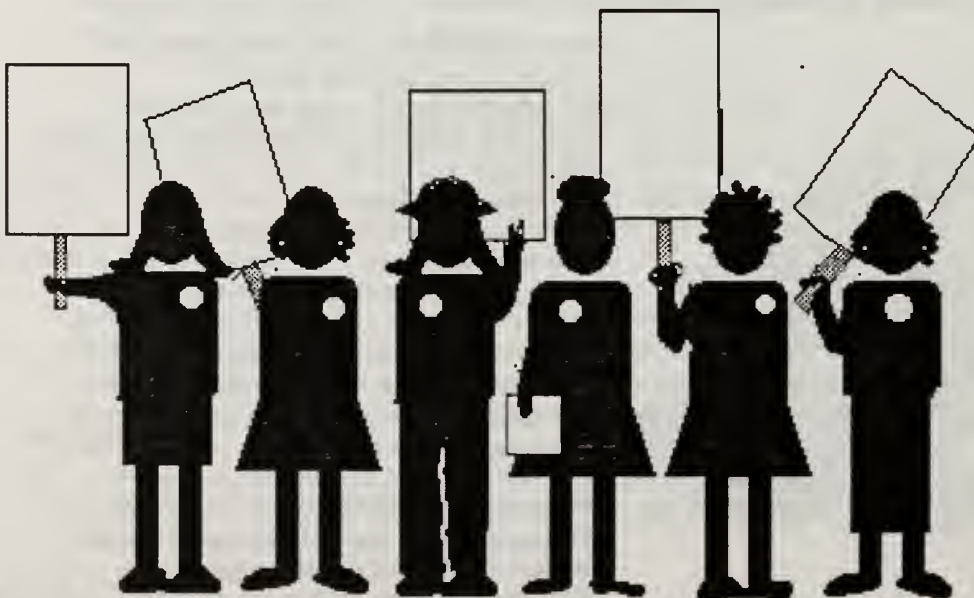
There once was a union maid;
She never was afraid
Of goons and ginks and company flinks
And the deputy sheriffs that made the raid.
She went to the union hall
When a meeting was called,
And when the company boys came 'round,
She always held her ground.

CHORUS:

Oh, you can't scare me,
I'm sticking to the union,
I'm sticking to the union,
I'm sticking to the union,
Oh, you can't scare me,
I'm sticking to the union,
I'm sticking to the union,
I'm sticking to the union till the day I die.

This union maid was wise
To the tricks of the company spies;
She couldn't be fooled by company stools;
She'd always organize the guys.
She'd always get her way
When she struck for higher pay;
She'd show her card to the National Guard,
And this is what she'd say:
(CHORUS)

You girls who want to be free,
Just take a tip from me!
Get you a man who's a union man
And join the Ladies' Auxillary.
Married life ain't hard
When you've got a union card.
A union man has a happy life
When he's got a union wife.
(CHORUS)





When the speed comes a-creeping overhead
And the belts begin to snap and shafts to creak,
And the sound dies away of them that speak,
And on the glassy floor the tapping tread;
When dusty globes on all a pallor shed,
And breaths of many wheels are on the cheek;
Unwilling is the flesh, the spirit weak,
All effort like arising from the dead.

But the task ne'er could wait the mood to come,
The music of the iron is law;
And as upon the heavy spools that pay
Their slow white thread, so ruthlessly the hum
Of countless whirling spindles seems to draw
Upon the soul, still sore from yesterday.

Robert Frost

Discussion Questions:

1. In Line 3, who is Robert Frost talking about? Whose sounds die away?
2. What has made the workers' flesh unwilling and spirit weak?
3. What does Robert Frost mean when he says "the music of the iron is law?"
4. How could the spools and spindles "draw upon the soul" of workers?
5. Do you think most workers in the mills and factories in 1912 would have agreed with Robert Frost's interpretation of what their work lives were like?

Who Is Labor?

Many different kinds of workers have become part of the labor union movement and have helped to change the American workplace through the years.

Iron Molders	Boot and Shoe Workers	Carpenters
Lasters	Sole Fasteners	Rough Rounders
Bakers	Street Railway Employees	Painters
Electrical Workers	Bottlers and Drivers	Waiters
Brewery Workers	Newspaper Writers	Teamsters
Horseshoers	Team Drivers	Bartenders
Milk Wagon Drivers	Retail Clerks	Saw Smiths
Federal Employees	Carriage & Wagon Workers	Slash Tenders
Telephone Operators	Street Carmen	Coopers
Newswagon Drivers	Musicians	Steamfitters
Carriage Workers	Asbestos Workers	Web Pressmen
Sheet Metal Workers	Moving Picture Operators	Plumbers
Cement Finishers	Municipal Women Employees	Paperworkers
Clothing Workers	Packing House Workers	Loom Fixers
Laborers	Machinists	Roofers
Airline Pilots	Glaziers	Joiners
Dining Car Employees	Ladies Garment Workers	Seamen
Steel Workers	Sleeping Car Porters	Hod Carriers
Iron Workers	Service Employees	Upholsterers
Auto Workers	Bricklayers	Hatters
Longshoremen	Postal Workers	Fire Fighters
Book Binders	Laundry Workers	Hat Trimmers
Tobacco Strippers	Overall & Sheepskin Workers	Factory Workers
Stenographers	Cigarette Makers	Tailors
Hotel Workers	Teachers	Actors
Hospital Workers	Communication Workers	Librarians
Meat Cutters	Professional Athletes	Tin Workers
Boilermakers	Rubber Workers	Shipbuilders
Chemical Workers	Operating Engineers	Police Officers
Elevator Workers	Graphics Workers	Plasterers
Glass Workers	Leather Workers	Printers
Furniture Workers	Aerospace Workers	Technicians
Letter Carriers	Marble & Tile Workers	Woodworkers
Clerical Workers	Utility Workers	Fishermen

The Basic Structure of Unions

(Source: *Directory of National and International Labor Unions in the U.S.*,
Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC.)

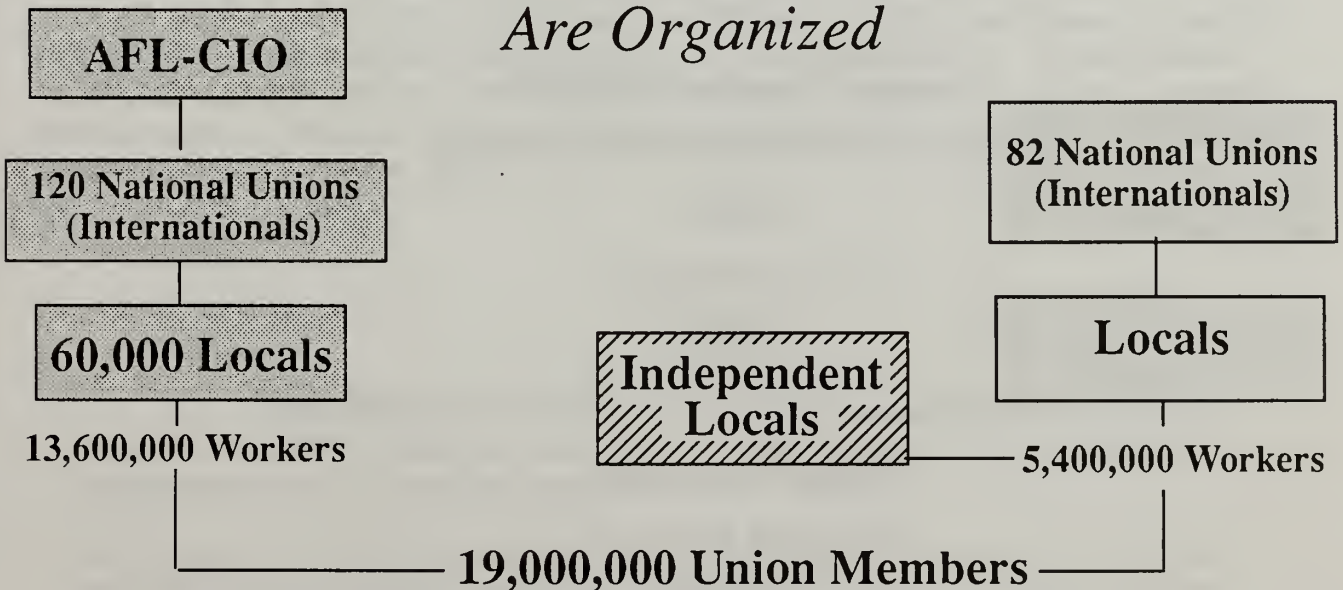
National unions are made up of many "locals" to which a charter is given. The charter specifies all the rights and obligations of the affiliation. The local union and its members must:

- 1) Pay dues to the national union
- 2) Abide by the national union's constitution, resolutions and policies.

In return, the national union performs the following functions:

- 1) Organizes new local and helps in negotiating new trade agreements
- 2) Provides leadership and funds during strikes
- 3) Resolves jurisdictional disputes between different unions over representation or working rights
- 4) Provides support to member locals when they become involved in costly legal disputes
- 5) Offers health/accident insurance, life insurance and other benefits.

How National Unions Are Organized



- * Every local elects its own officers and board of directors.
- * Union Agents and shop stewards are elected by local union members to represent them in negotiating contracts and presenting grievances to company management.
- * Every union member pays dues to belong to the union.

Rights Won By The Labor Movement Since 1912

1912-

54-Hour-Week Law

1913-

8-Hour-Day Law

Uniform Child Labor Law

Factory Safety Devices Law

1917-

Prevailing Wage Law

1919-

Right To Strike Law

1935-

Worker's Compensation Reform

National Labor Relations Board formed

1936-

Social Security Act

1983-

Secretary of Labor position added to Cabinet in Massachusetts

Right To Know Law

Prevailing Wage Law

1985-

Worker's Compensation Reform Act

Plant Closing Law

Minimum Wage Increase

Children at Work: 1990

Excerpted from the *Boston Globe* series "Children at Work" (4/22-26/1990)

by Bruce Butterfield, Globe staff

America's children are among the nation's most widely exploited workers. They live in poverty and neglect as they harvest our food, work in hundreds of dingy factories stitching "Made in America" labels on our clothes, assemble cheap jewelry in trailer homes and tenements, operate dangerous machines in restaurant kitchens and neighborhood stores. In town after town, they serve our fast-food meals late at night, prepare our muffins and coffee early in the morning.

Often they are scalded and burned, sliced up by food machines, exposed to pesticides in the field and choking fumes in the factory. They fall and fracture their backs, and break their arms and hands frequently delivering and picking things up for us.

Sometimes they are left badly maimed and disfigured for life.

Sometimes, they are killed.

Nearly all the time, they get tired, miss school and are ignored.

A half a century after child labor laws were enacted, millions of children are working long and frequently illegal hours across America. Records show tens of thousands are seriously injured and hundreds are killed every year as the nation's work force shrinks and young children and teen-agers are pressed into jobs that are often unsafe.

Case Studies:

An estimated 7,000 children work daily in New York's garment industry, and thousands more toil in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago.

Kem Shi, age 10, lives his days hunched over a sewing machine stitching pants in a dirty tenth floor loft factory in New York City. Chased away by investigators, he returns minutes after they leave and is immediately back to work. "My mother in China," he whispers, "I come here."

Maria Casarrubias, age 14, begs to be allowed to work 10 hour days beside her mother in a tenth floor garment factory and claims, "To be alone, I am afraid."

An estimated one million children of migrant farm workers toil in the fields from the grape and garlic fields of California to the strawberry and cabbage patches of cen-

Case Studies Continued

tral Florida. Migrant children work under the weakest labor laws in the country and are largely abandoned by state and federal support programs.

Guillermo Perez, age 8, wields a curved-blade knife day after day in a grape field, struggling to make himself a useful worker in a family that is being paid \$28 a ton to pick fruit. "Sometimes I want to stay home and play with my brother," he says as he leaves a labor camp at 5 a.m. to begin another day in the fields, "but I must help my family."

Alfredo Diaz, age 14, spends his days shuffling quickly along rows of squash. Like a half-dozen other young workers in the fields with him, Alfredo Diaz should be in school this October morning. But it has been nearly a year, he admits, since he has seen the inside of a classroom. And soon it will be time for winter strawberries.

Between 1.5 and 2 million children are working in American agriculture on family and commercial farms. The child labor death and injury rate has become a harvest of shame—300 children under 16-years-old are killed yearly in farm machinery -related accidents and another 23,500 suffer severe injuries.

Omar Schlabach, age 9, works on his family's 55 acre cow farm in Middlebury, Indiana. He lost his left arm in a grain auger accident three months ago.

Glen Nisley, age 11, lives a mile away from Omar and works on a family farm, too. He lost his right leg on a feed conveyer the same week Omar was injured.

Michael Yoder, a farmer and head of the County Farm Bureau said, "Most people would be amazed at the kind of equipment 9- and 10-year old kids operate routinely on our farms."

Child labor is even more widespread in America's backyard—the small cities and suburbs—where an explosion of service-sector jobs and a shortage of labor has pressed a wave of 12-17-year-old youths to work. In some cases conditions on those jobs are as bad as in urban sweatshops. An estimated 128,000 youths were injured and 48 killed on such jobs in 1987 and 1988.

Richie Ventura, age 15, who was working part-time for a contractor in Chicopee, Massachusetts, was sent down into a dirty cellar of a three story condemned building to salvage bricks for his boss. When he pulled at a loose brick, the support column let go and he was crushed by the collapsing ceiling.

Michelle Vanagel, age 15, of Londonderry, N.H., worked at the local Dunkin Donuts shop and was assigned to mix and bake muffins in the back room. Although it is illegal for a worker under 18 to work near the ovens, Michelle did so for up to 40 hours a week before and after school, nights and weekends. Not only did her school grades drop sharply, Michelle also received a serious burn on her left arm which became infected because no medical help was called for her by the manager of the shop.

Barry Dawson, age 17, worked after his classes at Medford High School in Massachusetts as a delivery boy. While driving a delivery truck which his boss had not trained him to drive, he struggled with the unfamiliar gear shifts, lost control of the van, and was killed in a tragic accident.

U.S. CHILD LABOR LAWS: 1990

----- **14- and 15-YEAR OLDS** -----

* **HOURS:** During school periods, no more than 3 hours a day, 18 hours a week. When school is not in session, 8 hours a day, 40 hours a week. Prohibited from working before 7 am and after 7 pm, except during summers when they can work until 9 pm.

* **TYPES OF WORK:** Tightly restricted. Work in manufacturing, mining, and all occupations declared hazardous are outlawed.

----- **16- and 17-YEAR OLDS** -----

* **HOURS:** No restrictions.

* **TYPE OF WORK:** Numerous jobs working with hazardous equipment prohibited. Work barred ranges from baking to operating slicing machines to driving commercially.

----- **FARMS** -----

* **FAMILY:** No restrictions

* **OTHER:** Minimum work age is 12 years old. Various regulations on school hours and hazardous equipment. No restrictions for minors 16 and older.

What Can Be Done To Solve America's Child Labor Problems?

1. Labor laws already on the books must be vigorously enforced. Increase the number of Labor Department investigators who target child labor violations.
2. Enforcement efforts should be linked with schools and social service agencies to help children and their parents.
3. Injuries to working minors need to be identified immediately through workers compensation records and tougher reporting laws.
4. Federal limitations on hours youths can work during school weeks should be extended to older minors.
5. A strong work permit system for all minors is needed, one that is strictly administered by school districts and monitored by labor officials. Meager federal farm safety programs must be expanded and funding allocated for a focus on children working on family farms.
6. Social programs cut by the previous administration in Washington, DC should be restored and expanded with emphasis on farm worker children, many of whom live in poverty and do not attend school.

THE HIGH COSTS OF CHILD LABOR IN AMERICA: 1990

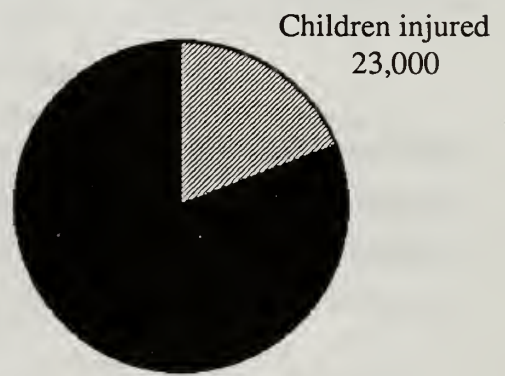
FARM WORK CAN BE DANGEROUS TO WORKING CHILDREN

The High Cost of Farming

TOTAL DEATHS: 1,500

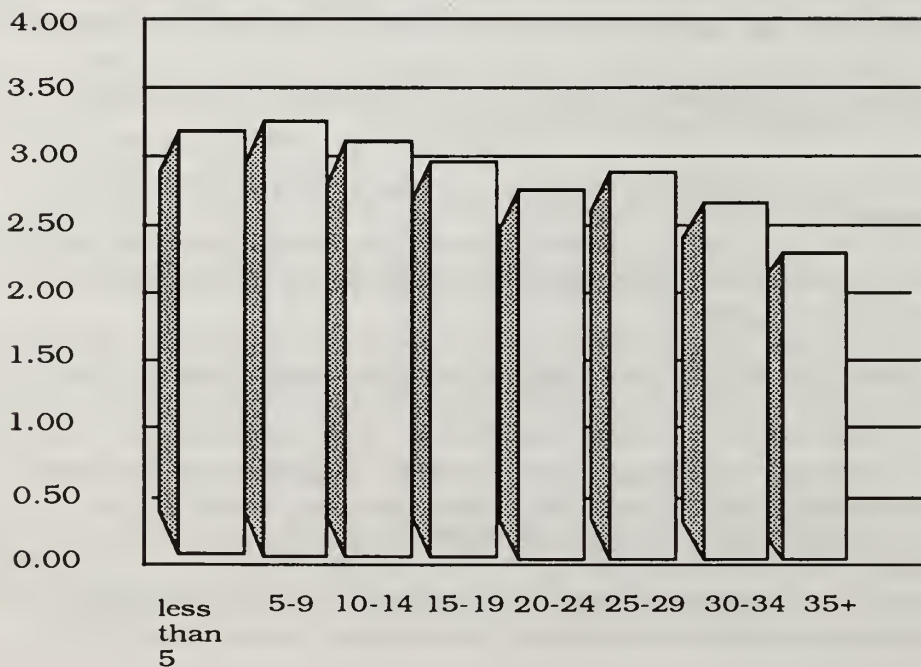


TOTAL INJURIES: 140,000



How Work Affects Student Grades

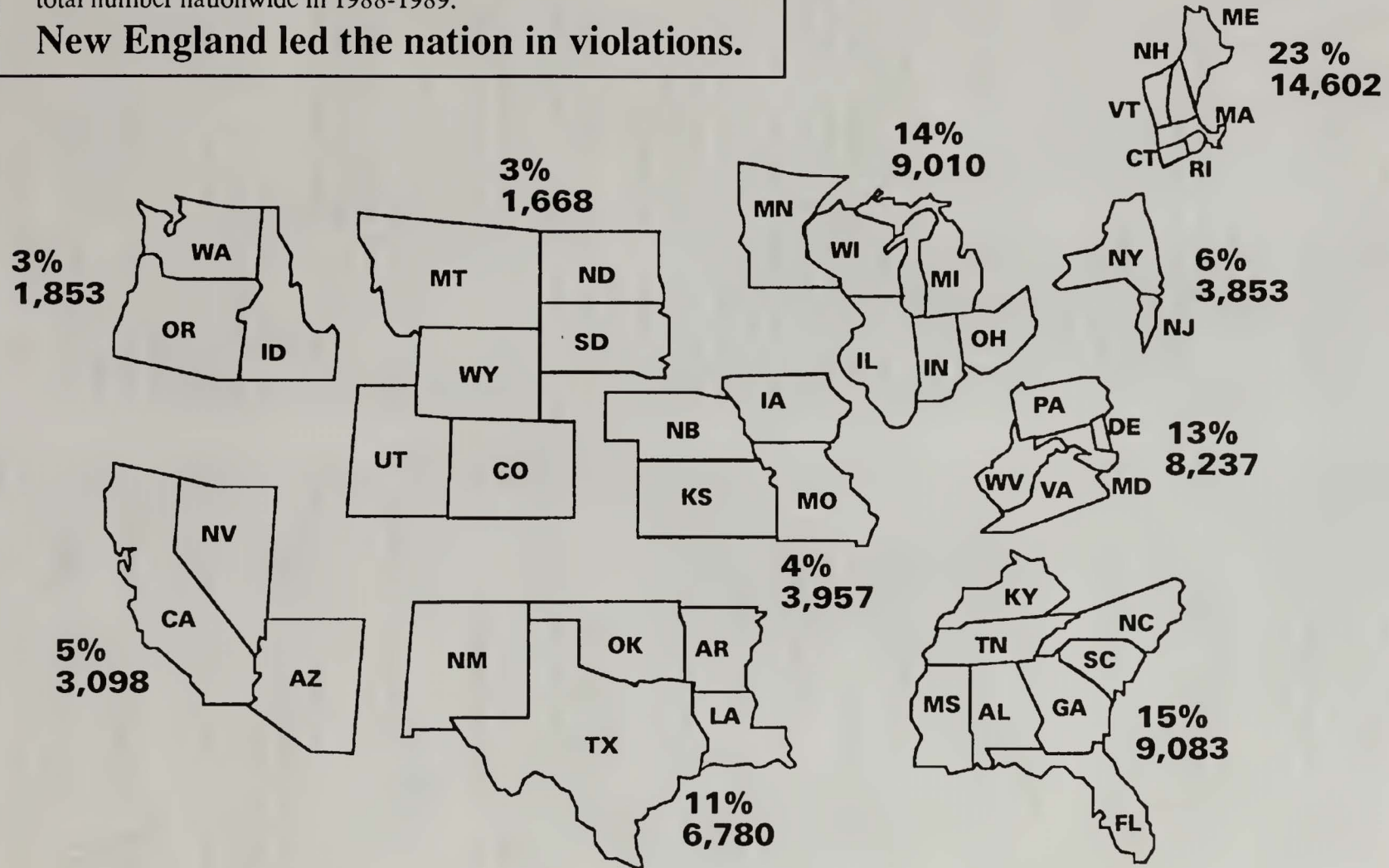
Grade point averages for English courses taken



CHILD LABOR LAW VIOLATIONS

The percentage and the number of violations per region are shown in proportion to the total number nationwide in 1988-1989.

New England led the nation in violations.



SOURCE: U. S. Department of Labor
General Accounting Office, 1988-1989

Eyewitness: A Young Mill Girl Testifies

Testimony of Camella Teoli

House Document No. 671, 62nd Congress, 2nd Session

Camella Teoli was one of 16 children from Lawrence, Massachusetts who testified before the Congressional Hearing investigating the Lawrence Textile Strike of 1912. The hearings took place March 2-7, 1912 in Washington, D.C.. The hearings received national attention in newspapers around the country and resulted in public demands for change in the working conditions in American factories and mills.

THE CHAIRMAN: Camella, how old are you?

MISS TEOLI: Fourteen years and eight months.

THE CHAIRMAN: Fourteen years and eight months?

MISS TEOLI: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: How many children are there in your family?

MISS TEOLI: Five.

THE CHAIRMAN: Where do you work?

MISS TEOLI: In the woolen mill.

THE CHAIRMAN: For the American Woolen Company?

MISS TEOLI: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: What sort of work do you do?

MISS TEOLI: Twisting.

THE CHAIRMAN: You do twisting?

MISS TEOLI: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: How much do you get a week?

MISS TEOLI: \$6.55.

THE CHAIRMAN: What is the smallest pay?

MISS TEOLI: \$2.64.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you have to pay anything for water?

MISS TEOLI: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: How much?

MISS TEOLI: 10 cents every two weeks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do they hold back any of your pay?

MISS TEOLI: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Have they ever held back any of your pay?

MISS TEOLI: One week's pay.

THE CHAIRMAN: They have held back one week's pay?

MISS TEOLI: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does your father work, and where?

MISS TEOLI: My father works in the Washington.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Washington Woolen Mill?

MISS TEOLI: Yes, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: How much does he get for a week's work?

MISS TEOLI: \$7.70.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does he always work a full week?

MISS TEOLI: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, how often does it happen

that he does not work a full week?

MISS TEOLI: He works in winter a full week, and usually he don't work in the summer.

THE CHAIRMAN: In the winter he works a full week, and in the summer how much?

MISS TEOLI: Two or three days a week.

THE CHAIRMAN: What sort of work does he do?

MISS TEOLI: He is a comber.

THE CHAIRMAN: Now, did you ever get hurt in the mill?

MISS TEOLI: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can you tell us about it now in your own way?

MISS TEOLI: Well, I used to go to school, and then a man came up to my house and asked my father why I didn't go to work, so my father says I don't know whether she is 13 or 14 years old. So, the man say you give me \$4.00 and I will make the papers come from the old country saying you are 14. So, my father gave him \$4.00, and in one month came the papers that I was 14. I went to work, and after about two weeks got hurt in my head.

THE CHAIRMAN: Now, how did you get hurt, and where were you hurt in the head; explain that to the committee.

MISS TEOLI: I got hurt in the Washington Mill.

THE CHAIRMAN: In the Washington Mill?

MISS TEOLI: Yes, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: What part of your head?

MISS TEOLI: My head.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, how were you hurt?

MISS TEOLI: The machine pulled the scalp off.

THE CHAIRMAN: The machine pulled your scalp off?

MISS TEOLI: Yes, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: How long ago was that?

MISS TEOLI: A year ago, or about a year ago.

THE CHAIRMAN: Were you in the hospital after that?

MISS TEOLI: I was in the hospital seven months.

THE CHAIRMAN: Seven months?

MISS TEOLI: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did the company pay your hospital bills while you were in the hospital?

MISS TEOLI: Yes, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: The company took care of you?

MISS TEOLI: The company only paid my bills; they didn't give me anything else.

THE CHAIRMAN: They only paid your hospital bills; they did not give you any pay?

MISS TEOLI: No, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: But paid the doctors' bills and hospital fees?

MISS TEOLI: Yes, sir.

MR. LENROOT: They did not pay your wages?

MISS TEOLI: No, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did they arrest your father for having sent you to work for 14?

MISS TEOLI: Yes, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: What did they do with him after they arrested him?

MISS TEOLI: My father told about the man he gave \$4 to, and then they put him on again.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you still being treated by the doctors for your scalp wound?

MISS TEOLI: Yes, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: How much longer do they tell you you will have to be treated?

MISS TEOLI: They don't know.

THE CHAIRMAN: They don't know?

MISS TEOLI: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you working now?

MISS TEOLI: Yes, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: How much are you getting?

MISS TEOLI: \$6.55.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you working in the same place where you were before you were hurt?

MISS TEOLI: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: In another mill?

MISS TEOLI: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: What mill?

MISS TEOLI: The Wood Mill.

THE CHAIRMAN: Were you down at the station on Saturday, the 24th of February?

MISS TEOLI: I work in a town in Massachusetts and I don't know nothing about that.

THE CHAIRMAN: You do not know anything about that?

MISS TEOLI: No, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: How long did you go to school?

MISS TEOLI: I left when I was in the sixth grade.

THE CHAIRMAN: You left when you were in the sixth grade?

MISS TEOLI: Yes, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: And have you been working

ever since except while you were in the hospital?

MISS TEOLI: Yes, sir.

MR. CAMPBELL: Do you know the man who came to your father and offered to get a certificate that you were 14 years of age?

MISS TEOLI: I know the man, but I have forgot him now.

MR. CAMPBELL: You know him but you don't remember his name now?

MISS TEOLI: Yes.

MR. CAMPBELL: Do you know what he did, what his work was?

MISS TEOLI: No.

MR. CAMPBELL: Was he connected with any of the mills?

MISS TEOLI: I don't know.

MR. CAMPBELL: Is he an Italian?

MISS TEOLI: Yes, sir.

MR. CAMPBELL: He knew your father well?

MISS TEOLI: Yes, sir.

MR. CAMPBELL: Was he a friend of your father?

MISS TEOLI: No.

MR. CAMPBELL: Did he ever come about your house visiting there?

MISS TEOLI: I don't know.

MR. CAMPBELL: I mean before he asked about your going to work in the mills?

MISS TEOLI: Yes, sir.

MR. CAMPBELL: He used to come to your house and was a friend of your family?

MISS TEOLI: Yes.

MR. CAMPBELL: You are sure he was connected or employed by some of the mills?

MISS TEOLI: I don't know, I don't think so.

MR. CAMPBELL: Do they go around in Lawrence there and find little girls and boys in schools over 14 years of age and urge them to quit school and go to work in the mills?

MISS TEOLI: No.

MR. CAMPBELL: Do you know any little girls besides yourself, who were asked to go to work as soon as they were 14?

MISS TEOLI: No, I don't know.

MR. HARDWICK: Are you one of the strikers?

MISS TEOLI: Yes, sir.

MR. HARDWICK: Did you agree to strike before it was ordered; did they ask you anything about striking before you quit?

MISS TEOLI: No.

MR. HARDWICK: But you joined them after they quit?

MISS TEOLI: Yes.

MR. HARDWICK: Why did you do that?

MISS TEOLI: Because I didn't get enough to eat at home.

Eyewitness: A Mill Boy Remembers

"Strike!" by Fred Beal

In 1912, Fred Beal was a 15 year old boy who worked in the Pacific Mill in Lawrence, Massachusetts. He was at his job the day the Textile Strike broke out and later wrote this account of his experiences. In later years, Fred Beal became a union organizer. This selection is taken from Mr. Beal's book, Proletarian Journey (New York, 1937).

I suddenly discovered that I did not want to be a textile worker. I was fifteen...Mill work was dreary... One day, at noon-time, a lecturer addressed the crowd in front of our mill gate...He urged us to organize into a union, to join the Industrial Workers of the World, and to demand from the bosses more wages and shorter hours. He declared with emphasis that we, the textile workers, were wage slaves and that all the mill owners were slave drivers, as bad and as brutal as Simon Legree of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

This was news to me. I had always thought that only coloured people could be slaves and that they had been freed long ago by us Yankees who fought in the Civil War. Yet there was something convincing about his talk although I could not quite understand just who were the bosses who, according to the speaker, were enjoying the Florida sunshine while we slaved in the mills for their profit. All the subordinate bosses I had ever known were working in the mill, like "Slim Jim the Burglar" and Paddy Parker.

The Irish workers did not like the speaker; the Italians did. The Irish cupped their hands to their mouths, made noises every time the Italians applauded, and yelled: "Ef ye don't loike this countr-r-y, go back where ye come fr-r-om!"

The speaker ignored these remarks and continued, "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery of production, and abolish the wage system."

Then rudely as if by prearrangement, the ten-minutes-to-one bells, high up in the mill's belfry, began tolling their dismal warning to us workers that it was time for us to get back to work. "The slave bells are calling!" yelled the IWW speaker. "The masters wants you back at the bench and machine. Go, slaves! But, remember, these bells will some day toll the death-knell of the slave drivers!"

The bells tolled on defiantly.

That afternoon, during rest period, we doffers talked about the IWW speaker and the union he was organizing. We had good reason to talk. Things were about to happen. The State Legislature had just passed a law reducing the hours of labour from 56 to 54 per week, and there was rumour that our pay would be reduced accordingly. Our next pay day was Friday, January 12, and the grown-up workers were talking about going on strike if wages were cut. We young people thought it would be fun to strike and made plans to go skating and sleigh-riding ...all but Little Eva. She and her mother were the breadwinners of the family. Her father had lost an arm at Pingree's Box Shop two weeks after they came from Canada. They sorely needed Little Eva's weekly wage of five dollars and four cents.

Old man Dwyer, the empty rovings collector, had worked in the Pacific Mills over thirty years. There was a strike in the Pacific Mills in 1882, said Dwyer, against wage reduction. He took part in that and lost.

"Them's that runs things gets the best of us every time," he shook his head dejectedly. "Let well enough alone." He was against going on strike. " 'Tain't right to be loafin'," he would say. "Them that comes to this country and takes the vittels right out of our mouths by workin' for nothin' only wants more money to send back."

While discussion was on, two Italian spinners came to me with a long white paper. They wanted me to be among the first to sign a petition against the threatened wage cut because, they said, I was American. The idea was to present Paddy Parker with a long list of those opposed to any reduction. I read the words at the top of the paper:

THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE WORKING IN THE SPINNING ROOM WILL GO ON STRIKE
FRIDAY, JANUARY 12, IF WAGES ARE CUT—

Queenie read it over my shoulder. "Don't sign it...You'll be put on the black list if you sign

that paper!"

But I signed it. So did Gyp and Leftie Louie.
And January 12 was only two days away.

On this Friday morning the atmosphere at the mill was tense with suppressed excitement. We were not sure that the company would cut our wages. We would know when the paymaster came around at eleven o'clock. The shop was full of rumours. One of these was that the big Wood Mill of eight thousand workers had already gone on strike. This almost started an immediate walk-out in our spinning room. Dwyer had it on "good authority" that we would get an increase if we stayed at work. Queenie said the priest told her not to strike.

Paddy Parker, petition in hand, called me to one side. "Young man," he said blandly, "I see your name heads this list. Did you put it there?"

"Yes, I did, because I don't think we should get a wage cut."

"You shouldn't have your name with these foreigners."

"I work with them, don't I?"

"Yes, but you want to get a better position soon, don't you? Stand by the company. I'll cross off your name."

"I'm going on strike if the others do," I said firmly.

"All right, young man, if you do, you will never get work again in the Pacific Mills, and I will see to it that you are blacklisted at other mills, and every other name on this list."

The threat of not being able to get work again in any of the mills made me feel miserable. Where else could I get a job? All Lawrence to me was mills, mills, mills. Perhaps the best thing would be to leave Lawrence and go West, to be a cowboy like those in the movies. For the first time in my life I felt fear tugging at my heart. Hadn't I promised to help out the family? And now, if I went out on strike, I would never get another job in the mills of Lawrence and perhaps Paddy Parker could stop me from getting a job anywhere. I had to make a decision in thirty minutes before the paymaster came around.

There was a sharp whistle. It was the call that said: "Come and get you pay!"

Just like any other Friday, the paymaster, with the usual armed guard, wheeled a truck containing hundreds of pay envelopes to the head of a long line of anxiously waiting people. There was much chattering in different languages, and much gesticulation. I stood with Gyp halfway along the line. When the great moment came, the first ones nervously opened their envelopes and found that the company had deducted two hours pay. They looked silly, embarrassed and uncertain what to do. Milling around, they waited for someone to start something. They didn't have long to wait, for one lively young Italian had his mind thoroughly made up and swung into action without even looking into his pay envelope.

"Strike! Strike!" he yelled. To lend strength to his words, he threw his hands in the air like a cheer-leader.

"Strike! Strike! Strike!"

He yelled the words as he ran past our line, then down the room between spinning frames. The shop was alive with cries, "Strike!" after the paymaster left. A few French-Canadian spinners went back to work. A tall Syrian worker pulled a switch and the powerful speed belts that gave life to the bobbins slackened to a stop.

There were cries, "All Out!"

And then hell broke loose in the spinning room. The silent, mute frames became the object of intense hatred, something against which to vent our stored-up feelings. Gears were smashed and belts cut. The Italians had long sharp knives and with one zip the belts dangled helplessly on the pulleys. Leftie Louie and I went from frame to frame, breaking "ends," while Tony smashed windows. Queenie barricaded herself behind trucks and let loose a barrage of bobbins on Gyp, who seemed determined to get hold of her tongue. It was a madhouse, a thrilling one, nevertheless.

More cries, "Strike! All Out! Strike!"

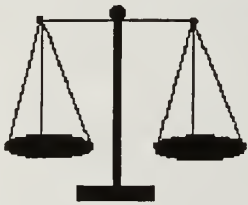
Old man Dwyer hugged his truck of rovings and Paddy Parker was at the door when we stampeded for the street. How ineffectual he looked, standing there with the petition. It was 11:45. The company wanted to keep us in until twelve, when the bells in the belfry would again ring out the noon hour, so the gates were closed. Three workers grabbed the watchman and forced him to open up. We wanted to get out before the bells rang, and we did.

We piled out into Canal Street, singing and shouting.

It was snowing.

About the Children: 1912

The Law: 1912



"No child under the age of 14 years, and no child who is over 14 and under 16 who does not have a certificate...certifying to the child's ability to read at sight and to write legibly simple sentences in the English language shall be employed in any factory, workshop or mercantile establishment."

Chapter 514, section 56, *Massachusetts Acts of 1909*

(Note: leaves out agricultural work)

Children In The Mill: 1912



" I can still see myself now, racing down the alley between the spinning frames. Carrying the bobbin box bigger than I was. Day after day I had to face the thousands of bobbins I had in charge and keep them moving. A machine never sleeps. It never tires. There was always a task ahead. Sometimes a dozen tasks. Sometimes I see threads everywhere. Sometimes the threads seem to be cutting into my eyes. A flash, a snap, a snarl of broken thread. Up in the left hand bobbin...And down over the buzzing point of steel settles the empty bobbin thrust there by the right hand. It is all done in two quick movements, for missing a thread-breadth would send a spindle blade through the hand. Snap-bang! Snap-bang! A hundred and twenty times and back again."

Mill Boy: 1912

Labor Fights to Protect Children

We
Support
Public
Education
for All
Children

"The damnable system which permits young and innocent children to have their lives worked out of them in factories, mills, workshops, and stores, is one of the very worst of labor's grievances. We shall never cease our agitation until we have rescued them, and placed them where they should be, in the schoolroom and the playground."

Samuel Gompers,
Founder of the
American Federation of Labor

Today's Workers Linked To Labor History

Introductory Essay by Paul Cowan, excerpted from William Cahn,
Lawrence 1912: The Bread and Roses Strike, Pilgrim Press, New York, 1980.

(In 1980, journalist Paul Cowan revisited his previous study of the 1912 textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts and wrote a new introduction to Cahn's book which drew parallels and contrasts between the 1912 events in Lawrence and the present-day struggle of textile workers in American mills.)

In 1912, it was possible for Americans to believe that economic democracy was a goal that could be achieved. In those days, the country was still in a state of flux, still trying to define itself. As part of the process, a panoply of political parties—the populists, the socialists, the single taxers—had elected Mayors, Congressmen and Senators who possessed an unflinching belief in the importance of redistributing income.

Of course the labor movement was the lynchpin of that belief. The story of the labor movement in Massachusetts and the events of the 1912 textile strike in particular provide an important chapter in labor's saga.

For, that year, it seemed as if the tumultuous, two-month-long strike in Lawrence might be the Appomattox of the battle for economic justice. The strike involved 20,000 people in a textile mill town of 90,000. It included immigrants from at least 30 different nations who spoke 45 different languages: Italians, Irish, Syrians, Armenians, Turks, Jews, Belgians, French-Canadians, Germans, Scandinavians all marched on the same picket lines. Some of those people—like Turks and Armenians, like Lithuanian Christians and Jews—had been bitter enemies in the Old World. Now, in America, they had united to fight a common enemy—the poverty, the indignities, that came from working in the mills.

It all began on January 12, 1912, when the mill owners, who had been ordered by the Massachusetts State Legislature to reduce the working week from 56 hours to 54 hours, forced the laborers to take a cut in pay—a cut from the \$8.76 they made each week. That day, thousands of workers surged through the city's biggest factory, The American Woolen Mill, sabotaging machinery to show their rage.

That night, Angelo Rocco, a 28-year-old Italian immigrant who had been a weaver in the mills, who was now attending Lawrence high school with the dream of someday becoming a lawyer, telegraphed the Industrial Workers of the World in New York to ask for help from outside organizers. (Joseph Ettor of the IWW had already established contact with millhands in Lawrence.) Soon, an all-star cast of activists came to town. It included people like the great stump speaker Big Bill Haywood, the cool-headed Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, the poet and orator Arturo Giovannitti, Ettor, and a young socialist named Margaret Sanger whose advocacy of birth control methods would soon make her controversial and famous.

It was the first great industrial strike in America. Soon, it prompted nationally known journalists like Lincoln Steffens and Ray Stannard Baker to come to Lawrence and investigate working conditions in the mills, living conditions in the tenements.

Meanwhile, Yankee aristocracy which owned and ran the mills was enraged at the immigrants who had overcome the barriers of language and culture to fight together for social justice. The public relations organ, *New England Magazine*, warned its readers that the town was

Southern Europe have been pouring into the city and working for wages Americans could not compete with. They will not be assimilated and have no sympathy for our institutions."

The readers of *New England Magazine* were right to be worried. For the strikers won a stunning first triumph in American industrial history. And the truth was that many of the workers, whom their bosses saw as "offscourings," had received excellent academic and political educations through their affiliations with socialist parties back in Europe. They knew the value of careful strategic planning, of effective nationwide publicity campaigns, of soup kitchens for hungry workers, of non-violent tactics like mobile picket lines. They were more skilled than their adversaries. Their ingenuity caused the mill owners to overreact.

Their most effective strategy was the children's exodus from Lawrence. The strike took place in January and February, bitterly cold months, and the organizers decided to find secure housing outside town for some of the activists' offspring. It was not only a thoughtful humanitarian measure; it was also an immensely effective public relations technique.

In Lawrence, the kids and their parents would go to the railroad station, bearing signs with slogans like "We Shall Never Forget Our Exile," and board trains for New York, Providence, Philadelphia, Barre, VT or elsewhere. Wherever they went, they got a friendly reception in the press. They were always met by large groups of supporters who sometimes placed them in the front of torchlight parades. Reporters invariably questioned the children about working conditions in the mills. Soon, for much of the nation, the Lawrence mills were a symbol of shame.

The mill owners and the city government decided to use intimidation as the main weapon in their counter-offensive. One February morning they dispatched a squadron of policemen to the railroad station. The police surrounded a train bound for Philadelphia and beat up some of the children—and their parents—as they attempted to board it.

That attack became a nationwide scandal. Shortly after it, Margaret Sanger, always a shrewd strategist, arranged for about 20 strikers and their children to testify before the House Committee on Rules in Washington, DC.

Camella Teoli, the daughter of Italian immigrants, once a millhand, was the strikers' most effective witness. For her short story condensed all the exploitations and all the random dangers that triggered the strike in the first place.

"I used to go to school," the girl began, "and then a man, a factory agent, came up to my house and asked my father why I didn't go to work. So my father says, 'I don't know whether she is 13 or 14.' [Under child labor laws, 14 was the minimum working age.] So my father gave him \$4.00, and in a month came the papers that I was 14."

Two weeks after she had started work at the Washington Mills, Camella Teoli was scalped; her hair got caught in a machine for twisting cotton. She was hospitalized for the next seven months. The company paid her doctors' bills, but not her lost wages. Of course, no one tried to restore the educational possibilities she had lost when the factory agent first came to her door.

Camella Teoli's story became front page news all over America—especially because Mrs. William Howard Taft, the President's wife, was in the audience the day the immigrant child told her story to the House Committee on Rules. The details Camella described were grisly enough to help prompt a government investigation of working conditions throughout America. And the publicity helped the strikers win their unprecedented victories: a 10 percent pay hike, the right to overtime pay, and amnesty from arrest.

In Lawrence, though, the successful strike was followed by a period of intense reaction, which affected Camella Teoli among others.

The Protestant mill owners, and the Irish and Italian Catholic churches, which were im-

mensely powerful in those days, sought to brand the most visible strikers as radicals and unsavory immigrants. They were helped by some of the insurgents' tactical mistakes. For example, at a rally in September, 1912—six months after the strike ended—a small group of people (some old timers say Pole, others say Italian anarchists) carried a banner which read "No God, No Master." Soon afterwards—on Columbus Day, 1912—a priest named Father James O'Reilly persuaded 50,000 people to demonstrate visible opposition to that kind of atheistic defiance by attending a "For God, For Country" parade. Soon the insurgents, not the working conditions in the mills, became the main issue in Lawrence.

Many of the activists grew bitter—or scared. Some of the 1912 generation of strikers grew discouraged when the IWW organizers left town to fight their next labor war. Others developed the bleak certainty that most workers had become passive—that they cared more about job security than about repeated fights for economic justice. Others were intimidated by the post-World War I Palmer Raids, where thousands of foreign-born radicals were rounded up and hundreds were deported. The Italians particularly saw the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti as an example of what could happen to any immigrant who remained committed to fighting for sweeping political change.

Nevertheless, Lawrence remained a pro-union town. Throughout the 1930's and 1940's the Textile Clothing Workers Union of America waged successful organizing drives. In a way, those drives threatened the mill owners as much as the 1912 strike had, for the workers kept winning higher wages.

So, soon most textile mills moved— South, to Georgia and the Carolinas, where they could increase their profits by hiring cheap, non-union labor. Lawrence became a desolate place, forgotten by a nation that had once heralded it as a symbol of social change. The relatively few people who remembered the 1912 strike were reluctant to discuss it, for fear that they would once again be branded as subversives. For decades, the town's proud past was a buried memory. It took courage simply to remember.

In those years, even the dream of economic democracy seemed distant indeed.

But what if Lawrence hadn't been enveloped in an atmosphere of intimidation? What if children like Camella Teoli had been able to grow up in the political world that seemed so promising in 1912? She—and dozens like her—would have been able to take advantage of the Italian culture that strike leaders like Joseph Ettor and Arturo Giovannitti were so eager to transmit—to retain their Italian language so that they would have access to writers like Dante, composers like Verdi, political thinkers like Gramsci—to feel that they weren't illiterate peasants but heirs to a culture that was even finer than that of the Yankees who defined them as brutes.

Most of the immigrant strikers of the 1912 Lawrence strike would have had access to similar cultures.

The situation has improved in recent years. Most people complain that the late 1970's was a time of reaction in America. But, during that period, mill towns in general, and Lawrence in particular, held promises of new progress. Because the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union campaign against J.P. Stevens, America's second largest textile company, the North Carolina and Georgia towns to which the mill owners had fled were no longer safe havens. A new, progressive city government in Lawrence encouraged the ex-strikers who had been silent for decades to speak out. The vein of radical history—and immigrant history which had been hidden for so long is now being tapped.

Plainly, the union drive that is spreading through the 83 J.P. Stevens factories in the South can become a second Lawrence. For there, too, people who have been enemies for centuries are begin-

ning to band together against a common economic enemy. It's clear that most Stevens managers chose to move South because they assumed that black and white employees would never form an alliance—and because they assumed that few people of either race would gamble the wages they were earning in the dangerous struggle for a union. But they were wrong—in great part because the danger of brown lung disease, which comes from inhaling cotton dust, is at least as great a danger as machine-related injuries were in Camella Teoli's day. Unions—which mean workers' safety committees—can literally mean the difference between life and death.

Louis Harell is a modern-day Camella Teoli, who has died of cancer since he was interviewed by Mimi Conway for her powerful book *Rise Gonna Rise*. Listen to him describe the ailment the union is trying to combat.

"My chest feels like it's gonna bust. And you know how your arm feels when they take your blood pressure? Well, mine feels exactly like that.

"You know, until I got that hospital bed over yonder, I used to just go to sleep sitting in my chair, when I got so bad I couldn't lie down.

"The first time I started having lung trouble other than for shortness of breath on a bad day was about seven or eight years ago. Then every time I caught a cold or bronchitis I couldn't get no breath. Then I started to have heart trouble. Then they said I was having a breathing problem and that's what was giving me the heart.

"The mostest thing that bothers me is walking. I've got where I can't walk far. Yesterday I walked from the parking lot to my job and I had to halt..."

.Geographically the Stevens struggle is far more complex than the campaign in Lawrence was. For the 83 plants are scattered throughout three states, and they employ 44,000 people. In the 1970's six of those plants won the right to have union bargaining agents, either through elections or through court orders. In October, 1979, the union won a major election at the Stevens plant in High Point, North Carolina—a victory which, organizers hope, will speed the entire campaign.

It will be a time consuming battle, though— as was Cesar Chavez' fight to organize the Farmworkers. It can't be dramatized by a single episode, like the children's exodus in Lawrence. It involves town-by-town organizing, a nationwide boycott of J.P. Stevens products, and a complex series of court cases to establish—quite simply—the right to campaign for a union in a Southern mill. It will probably end when J.P. Stevens executives decide that the company is too economically and politically embattled to keep fighting.

Right now, the campaign is an important reminder that the labor union is reviving. And, in this time of ethnic tension, it is an important reminder that when people share a common need, they don't decide integration: they display it.

For as people in Lawrence are beginning to insist, the mill town has a great deal to share with the rest of America—as the Southern towns in the J.P.Stevens campaign will one day. At a time when America is becoming increasingly polarized, by race and by ethnic groups, the strike shows that people can overcome age-old cultural differences if they share a common goal. It shows that bosses (those who own textile mills and those who own multi-national corporations) are not all powerful. Will power and sophisticated tactics can defeat them. Finally, it shows that heroic protest movements must not be relegated to the past, for they contain legacies of memory, of hope, of idealism, that can enrich everyone whose lives have been touched by their gains. Movements like the 1912 textile workers' strike intertwine with the present.

Taken together, the new political activities in the mill town—the J.P. Stevens campaign and Lawrence's renewal of self-esteem—are signs that in the 1980's (and 1990's), as in 1912, it may be possible for America to believe, once again, that economic justice is a goal that can be achieved.

Massachusetts Labor History: Collective Voices:
The Textile Strike of 1912
Classroom Video Script

(Narrator)

AMERICA BURST INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY! NEW INVENTIONS APPEARED ONE AFTER ANOTHER—THE AUTOMOBILE, THE AIRPLANE, REFRIGERATORS, RADIO AND MOVIES—NEW MACHINERY AND TECHNOLOGY. LIFE IN AMERICA WAS CHANGING VERY FAST. SMALL WORKSHOPS WERE REPLACED BY HUGE FACTORIES, AND MASS PRODUCTION OF GOODS BECAME THE CORNERSTONE OF BOOMING PROSPERITY.

IN MASSACHUSETTS, BIG COMPANIES BUILT ENORMOUS FACTORIES TO PRODUCE SHOES AND LEATHER GOODS, WOOLEN CLOTH AND COTTON MATERIALS. IT WAS AN ERA OF BIG BUSINESS, GROWING CITIES AND PROGRESS—BUT WHAT WAS THE PRICE OF PROGRESS?

MASSACHUSETTS HAD BECOME A MAJOR CENTER FOR THE AMERICAN TEXTILE INDUSTRY. YET DESPITE THE OUTWARD PROSPERITY, AMERICA WAS STILL SHAMEFULLY DIVIDED BETWEEN THE HAVES AND THE HAVE-NOTS.

HUGE FACTORIES REQUIRED THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF WORKERS AT LOW WAGES TO KEEP THE MACHINES RUNNING AND THE PROFITS HIGH. WHOLE FAMILIES CAME TO MILL CITIES LIKE LAWRENCE, LOWELL, NEW BEDFORD, AND FALL RIVER TO GET JOBS IN THE TEXTILE MILLS.

(Male textile worker):

"WE WORKED FROM 10 TO 13 HOURS A DAY. A MAN COULD MAKE ABOUT \$6.00 FOR A SIX DAY WEEK. IT WAS NOT ENOUGH FOR A FAMILY TO LIVE."

(Narrator):

WOMEN AND CHILDREN WENT TO WORK IN THE MILLS TO HELP. THE MILL OWNERS PAID THEM EVEN LESS THAN THE MEN. TO ATTRACT MORE WORKERS FOR LOWER PAY, COMPANIES ADVERTISED IN EUROPE WITH PICTURES AND POSTCARDS SHOWING AMERICAN MILL WORKERS LEAVING THE FACTORIES WITH BASKETS FULL OF MONEY.

(Male immigrant):

"I TOOK MY FAMILY ACROSS THE ATLANTIC OCEAN TO AMERICA. I WAS GOING TO GET A GOOD MILL JOB AND GOOD PAY FOR A GOOD LIFE."

(Female immigrant):

"THEY TOLD US AMERICA WOULD BE BETTER —BETTER HOMES AND FOOD AND SCHOOLS FOR OUR CHILDREN...BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT WE FOUND.

(Male immigrant):

"THE IRISH AND FRENCH CANADIANS WERE ALREADY THERE WORKING IN THE MILL TOWNS...WHEN MY PEOPLE CAME IN FROM RUSSIA IN 1900, SO DID THOUSANDS OF ITALIANS, FRENCH, BELGIANS, POLISH, LITHUANIANS, JEWS, AND PORTUGUESE.. WE ALL CAME TO WORK AND HAVE A GOOD LIFE."

(Narrator):

BY 1912, LAWRENCE OUTRANKED ALL OTHER MILL CITIES IN THE PRODUCTION OF WOOL AND WORSTED GOODS. IT'S PRINCIPAL MILLS BUILT ALONG THE MERRIMAC RIVER WERE OWNED BY THE AMERICAN WOOLEN COMPANY.

IN 1905, THE WOOD MILL, NAMED AFTER WILLIAM M. WOOD, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN WOOLEN COMPANY HAD BEEN BUILT IN LAWRENCE. IT WAS THE LARGEST CLOTH PRODUCING FACTORY IN THE WORLD.

THE LAWRENCE MILLS EMPLOYED 40,000 PEOPLE. HALF OF ALL THE PEOPLE IN THE CITY OVER THE AGE OF FOURTEEN WORKED IN THE MILLS. MOST OF THEM WERE UNSKILLED WORKERS, AND OVER HALF WERE WOMEN AND CHILDREN. LIFE FOR MILL WORKERS WAS HARD AND DANGEROUS. DESPITE THE ENORMOUS PROFITS EARNED BY THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY, THE LIVING STANDARDS AND WAGES OF WORKERS HAD BEEN STEADILY DECLINING.

(Male textile worker):

"WE LIVED IN RICKETY TENEMENTS. THE AMERICAN WOOLEN COMPANY OWNED MOST OF THEM. THE RENTS WE PAID EVERY WEEK WERE TOO HIGH, SO MANY OF US HAD TO TAKE IN BOARDERS TO HELP TO PAY THE BILLS."

(Child textile worker):

THE ROOMS WERE SO SMALL AND DARK AND DAMP—TOO HOT IN SUMMER, AND TOO COLD IN WINTER. THE BUILDINGS WERE SO CLOSE TOGETHER THE SUN COULDN'T GET TO OUR WINDOWS—AND THE HALLS AND ALLEYS WERE PILED WITH GARBAGE."

(Female textile worker):

"MILL FAMILIES LIKE US LIVED ON BREAD, MOLASSES AND BEANS. MILK WAS SOMETIMES NOT SAFE TO DRINK, AND THE WATER FROM THE RIVER WAS DIRTY."

(Narrator):

UNHEALTHY CONDITIONS AND MALNUTRITION SPREAD DISEASE AND DEATH. AND AT THEIR JOBS IN THE MILLS, WORKERS FACED MORE HARDSHIPS.

(Male worker):

"THEY LOCKED THE GATES WHEN THE FACTORY WHISTLES BLEW. IF YOU WERE LATE YOU LOST YOUR PAY. THEY GAVE US A HALF HOUR BREAK FOR LUNCH. WE HAD TO PAY THE FOREMEN 10 CENTS A WEEK TO GET CLEAN WATER TO DRINK."

(Male mill worker):

"THE MILLS WERE DAMP AND HOT AND NOISY. THE LOOMS AND MACHINES WERE LINED UP ROW AFTER ROW. THE MILL OWNERS WOULD SPEED-UP THE MACHINES. WE HAD TO WORK AT TWO OR MORE MACHINES AT A TIME. WE WERE UNDER PRESSURE TO WORK FASTER AND FASTER...WE KNEW WE COULD BE FIRED FOR ANY REASON AND WE WERE ALWAYS AFRAID OF BEING PUT OUT OF WORK."

(Female mill worker):

"WE HAD TO MOVE AS FAST AS THE MACHINES, AND THEY WEREN'T SAFE. ACCIDENTS HAPPENED ALL THE TIME. A LOT OF PEOPLE LOST FINGERS AND ARMS. OUR HAIR GOT CAUGHT IN THE WHIRLING BOBBINS. THE AIR IN THE MILL WAS FILLED WITH DUST AND BITS OF THREAD. IT WAS HARD TO BREATHE—MADE US SICK."

(Child male worker):

"ME AND MY FRIENDS STOPPED GOING TO SCHOOL TO WORK IN THE MILL... SOME OF US NEVER LEARNED TO READ OR WRITE... I KNEW BOYS AND GIRLS AS LITTLE AS SEVEN AND EIGHT YEARS OLD WHO WERE WORKING 12 HOURS A DAY IN THE MILLS, JUST LIKE ME."

(Narrator):

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST IMMIGRANT WORKERS IN THE MILLS WAS WIDESPREAD. ONE NATIONALITY WAS PITTED AGAINST ANOTHER TO KEEP WORKERS FROM UNITING. OWNERS KEPT WORKERS SEPARATED ACCORDING TO ETHNIC BACKGROUND.

(Male worker):

"WE IMMIGRANTS WERE CALLED UNSKILLED LABORERS AND THEY GAVE US THE HARDEST AND

MOST DANGEROUS JOBS. MOST UNSKILLED WORKERS HAD NO UNION TO SPEAK UP FOR THEM. A SMALL NUMBER OF THE OTHERS—THE SKILLED WORKERS—GOT BETTER PAY, AND BELONGED TO CRAFT UNIONS. BUT, CRAFT UNIONS WERE NOT RECOGNIZED BY THE MILL OWNER."

(Male worker):

"IF WE PRODUCED MORE THAN A CERTAIN AMOUNT SET BY THE SUPERVISOR, THEY GAVE US EXTRA PAY. THAT WAS CALLED A PREMIUM. BUT WE HATED THE PREMIUM SYSTEM. IF YOU DIDN'T MEET THE QUOTA BECAUSE YOUR MACHINE BROKE DOWN, OR YOU WERE SICK ONE DAY. YOU GOT NO PREMIUM FOR THE MONTH. IT WASN'T FAIR."

(Narrator):

WORKERS CAME TO REALIZE THAT THEY NEEDED TO UNITE TO GET CHANGES MADE. AND IN 1912, THE MILL WORKERS IN LAWRENCE TOOK ACTION. FEELING SOME PUBLIC PRESSURE, THE MASSACHUSETTS LEGISLATURE PASSED A LAW REDUCING THE NUMBER OF HOURS WOMEN AND CHILDREN COULD WORK FROM 56 TO 54 HOURS A WEEK. (SIX DAYS A WEEK, 9 HOURS A DAY).

(Male mill worker):

"THE LAW DIDN'T MATTER MUCH TO US...THE OWNERS JUST STARTED SPEEDING-UP THE MACHINES AGAIN SO WE WOULD PRODUCE THE SAME AMOUNT OF CLOTH IN 54 HOURS AS WE HAD PRODUCED IN 56. WE WONDERED IF OUR PAY WOULD ALSO BE CUT. RENTS WEREN'T GOING DOWN, SO LESS PAY MEANT LESS TO EAT."

(Narrator):

WORRIED ENGLISH SPEAKING WORKERS SENT A LETTER TO THE OWNER, MR. WOOD ASKING IF THE PAY WOULD BE CUT. THERE WAS NO REPLY TO REPORTERS, MR. WOOD SAID.

(Mr. Wood):

"TO PAY FOR 54 HOURS WORK THE WAGES OF 56 WOULD BE EQUIVALENT TO A PAY INCREASE AND THE MILLS CANNOT AFFORD TO PAY."

(Narrator):

ON JANUARY 12, WORKERS OPENED THEIR PAY ENVELOPES TO FIND—A PAY CUT! IN THE EVERETT MILL THE FRUSTRATED WORKERS IGNITED THE STRIKE.

(Female worker):

"ONE OF THE ITALIAN MEN BEGAN TO YELL "SHORT PAY! ALL OUT!" THEN CALLS FOR "STRIKE" FILLED THE SPINNING ROOMS. MACHINES WERE SHUT DOWN AND WE BEGAN RUSHING INTO THE STREET...WE WERE JOINED BY OTHER WORKERS—MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN—FROM THE WOOD MILL, THE AYER MILL, AND THE ARLINGTON MILL. THEY SAY OVER 25,000 OF US FROM 11 MILLS WALKED OUT."

(Male child worker):

"IT WAS SNOWING AND FREEZING COLD WHEN WE GOT OUTSIDE IN THE STREETS. WHEN WE TRIED TO LINE UP IN A PICKET LINE IN FRONT OF THE MILLS, THE COMPANY SPRAYED US WITH ICE COLD WATER FROM FIRE HOSES. THE BELLS ON TOP OF CITY HALL WERE RINGING. THEY SAID IT WAS A RIOT ALARM. ALL THE POLICE WERE CALLED IN TO CONTROL ALL THE STRIKERS."

(Male mill worker):

"THE MAYOR TOLD US TO GO BACK TO WORK. MR. WOOD REFUSED TO MEET WITH US TO LISTEN TO OUR GRIEVANCES. SO WE MET THAT NIGHT AND DECIDED TO ASK THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD, A UNION KNOWN FOR ORGANIZING UNSKILLED WORKERS, FOR HELP. THE IWW SENT ONE OF ITS BEST ORGANIZERS NAMED JOSEPH ETTOR."

(Joseph Ettor):

"TO SUCCEED, THE WORKERS NEEDED TO GET ORGANIZED. I HELPED THEM SET UP A 10 MEMBER STRIKE COMMITTEE, AND A GENERAL STRIKE COMMITTEE MADE UP OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM

SMALLER STRIKE COMMITTEES FROM EACH OF 27 NATIONALITY GROUPS."

(Female striker):

"AT AN OPEN OUTDOOR MEETING THOUSANDS OF STRIKERS MET AND DECIDED WE WOULD NOT RETURN TO WORK UNTIL FOUR CONDITIONS WERE MET. WE WANTED A WAGE INCREASE; EXTRA PAY FOR WORKING OVERTIME; AN END TO THE PREMIUM SYSTEM AND THE PRESSURES IT CREATED; AND NO PENALTIES OR DISCRIMINATION AGAINST STRIKERS AFTER THE STRIKE WAS OVER."

(Male striker):

"EVERY DAY THERE WERE MASS PICKETING LINES SET UP AT THE MILL GATES. WE HAD 6,000 WORKERS ON THE MARCH. EVERY SATURDAY AND SUNDAY HUGE MEETINGS BROUGHT EVERYONE TOGETHER, TENS OF THOUSANDS OF STRIKERS AND OUR FAMILIES. THERE WAS ENTERTAINMENT AND SPEECHES. PEOPLE SANG AND DANCED AND HELPED EACH OTHER. WE WEREN'T JUST GERMANS, OR ITALIANS, OR LITHUANIANS, OR POLES. WE WERE UNITED AS AMERICAN WORKERS."

(Narrator):

THE LAWRENCE TEXTILE STRIKE BECAME KNOWN AS THE SINGING STRIKE BECAUSE THE STRIKERS WHO SPOKE SOME 25 DIFFERENT LANGUAGES BRIDGED THEIR COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS THROUGH STRIKE SONGS THAT LIFTED THEIR SPIRITS AND UNIFIED THEIR EFFORT AS THEY MARCHED IN PARADES AND PICKET LINES. OTHER IWW ORGANIZERS NAMED ARTURO GIOVANNITTI AND ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN CAME TO LAWRENCE TO HELP SET UP RELIEF EFFORTS FOR STRIKERS WHO WOULD BE WITHOUT PAYCHECKS TO SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES.

(Male Strike organizer):

"SIX STORES WERE SET UP BY STRIKERS, 11 SOUP KITCHENS AND A COMMITTEE TO RAISE FUNDS TO HELP THE STRIKERS SURVIVE. EACH FAMILY WAS GIVEN A SMALL ALLOWANCE FOR FOOD, FUEL AND CLOTHING AND TWO DOCTORS VOLUNTEERED TO GIVE MEDICAL AID THROUGHOUT THE STRIKE."

(Narrator):

WHEN THE STRIKERS APPEALED TO THE MILL OWNERS FOR A SETTLEMENT OF THE STRIKE, THE ANSWER THEY RECEIVED WAS THE CALLING OUT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS MILITIA. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME IN MASSACHUSETTS' HISTORY THAT THE MILITIA HAD BEEN USED IN A LABOR DISPUTE. MORE THAN 50 MILITIA COMPANIES WERE CALLED INTO SERVICE DURING THE STRIKE.

THE IWW NATIONAL UNION PRESIDENT, BILL HAYWOOD TRAVELLED TO LAWRENCE AND WAS GREETED AT THE TRAIN STATION BY 15,000 STRIKERS. ON JANUARY 15, 36 STRIKERS WERE ARRESTED AND SENTENCED TO JAIL FOR ONE YEAR—FOR THROWING SNOWBALLS!

(Judge):

"THE ONLY WAY WE CAN TEACH THEM IS TO DEAL OUT THE SEVEREST SENTENCES."

(Narrator):

THE STRIKERS RESPONDED:

(Joseph Ettor):

"THE GRIEVANCE OF ONE IS THE GRIEVANCE OF ALL. THE VERY COURTS THAT ARE SUPPOSED TO BE IMPARTIAL ARE BEING USED BY MILLIONAIRE MILL OWNERS TO BREAK THE STRIKE—AND THE PICKET LINES GREW LARGER. MASSACHUSETTS' GOVERNOR FOSS, WHO WAS ALSO A MILL OWNER, TOLD THE STRIKERS TO GO BACK TO WORK AND THEN THEIR GRIEVANCES COULD BE TALKED ABOUT. HE ATTACKED THE STRIKERS AND THEIR LEADERS FOR CREATING ANARCHY AND SAID IT WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED.

THE STRIKERS REFUSED TO BUDGE UNTIL THEIR GRIEVANCES HAD BEEN SETTLED.

THE MILL OWNERS WHO WERE LOSING MONEY WHILE THE MILLS WERE NOT OPERATING, TRIED NEW WAYS TO BREAK THE STRIKE AND FORCE THE WORKERS BACK TO WORK.

(Female striker):

"THE MILL OWNERS PAID THUGS DISGUISED AS WORKERS TO COME TO LAWRENCE AND START TROUBLE...THEY BEAT UP PEOPLE AND DESTROYED PUBLIC PROPERTY SO THE PUBLIC WOULD BLAME THE STRIKERS AND TAKE THE OWNERS' SIDE."

(Narrator):

ON JANUARY 20, DYNAMITE WAS DISCOVERED IN THREE LAWRENCE LOCATIONS. EIGHT STRIKERS WERE ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH THE CRIME. FINDING THE DYNAMITE WAS USED AS AN EXCUSE TO CLOSE THE STREETS TO PICKETING NEAR THE MILLS.

BUT A FEW DAYS LATER THE NEWSPAPERS ADMITTED THAT THE WHOLE DYNAMITE THREAT WAS A HOAX TO DISCREDIT THE STRIKERS. ON JANUARY 30, THE POLICE ARRESTED A PROMINENT LAWRENCE CITIZEN WHO HAD BEEN HIRED BY THE AMERICAN WOOL COMPANY PRESIDENT, MR. WOOD, TO PLANT THE DYNAMITE. HE WAS LATER TRIED AND FOUND GUILTY.

THE MILL OWNERS TRIED TO SPLIT THE STRIKERS BY PROPOSING SEPARATE SETTLEMENTS WITH EACH GROUP OF WORKERS. THE STRIKERS REFUSED.

(Joseph Ettor):

"THEY HAVE LAWS, THE ARMY, EVERYTHING! IN SPITE OF ALL THAT, THE WORKERS HAVE SOMETHING STILL MORE POWERFUL. THE WORKERS' POWER IS THE COMMON BOND OF SOLIDARITY."

THE MILL OWNERS ALSO STARTED RUMORS THAT THE STRIKE HAD BEEN SETTLED AND EVERYONE WAS RETURNING TO WORK. THE STRIKERS RESPONDED WITH A SPECIAL "NO WORK MONDAY" DEMONSTRATION THROUGH THE STREETS. AND IT DREW HUGE CROWDS OF STRIKERS. THE MILLS REMAINED SHUT.

(Female striker):

"THE OWNERS KEPT ALL THE MACHINES IN THE MILLS RUNNING. NO CLOTH WAS BEING PRODUCED. THEY WANTED TO DECEIVE THE STRIKERS INTO BELIEVING OTHER PEOPLE WERE TAKING OUR PLACE INSIDE, BUT IT WAS A TRICK."

(Narrator):

THE MILL OWNERS USED THE NEWSPAPERS TO DESCRIBE THE STRIKE LEADERS AS DANGEROUS OUTSIDERS WHO WERE THREATENING AND VIOLENT ANARCHISTS. THEY WANTED TO BREAK THE STRIKE BY GETTING RID OF ITS LEADERS.

ON THE EVENING OF JANUARY 29 POLICE AND MILITIA CLASHED WITH A GROUP OF STRIKERS—A SHOT RANG OUT AND A YOUNG WOMAN STRIKER, ANNA LO PIZZA FELL DEAD.

(Male striker):

"NEXT DAY ETTOR AND GIOVANNITTI WERE ARRESTED, JAILED, AND CHARGED WITH BEING ACCESSORIES TO THE MURDER. NEITHER ONE HAD BEEN PRESENT AT THE SHOOTING!! WE WERE ANGRY AND ADDED A NEW DEMAND TO OUR LIST. "FREE ETTOR AND GIOVANNITTI!!!" BILL HAYWOOD RETURNED TO LAWRENCE AND TOOK OVER LEADERSHIP OF THE STRIKE.

(Bill Haywood):

"THEY CANNOT BREAK OUR RANKS AS LONG AS WE RETAIN OUR UNITY."

(Narrator):

HAYWOOD MET WITH EACH OF THE STRIKE GROUPS, ESPECIALLY THE WOMEN AND THE CHILDREN.

(Female striker):

"THE POLICE AND MILITIA HAD BEEN ATTACKING THE MEN ON THE PICKET LINES. WE ASKED HAYWOOD IF THE WOMEN COULD LEAD THE PICKET LINES. WE THOUGHT THE POLICE WOULD NOT BEAT OR ATTACK WOMEN, SO WE DID TAKE THE LEAD—AND WE WERE ALSO BEATEN AND ATTACKED!"

(Male Striker):

"THEY CALLED IN MORE STATE MILITIA MEN. HARVARD COLLEGE STUDENTS WERE EVEN GIVEN EXAM CREDITS IF THEY VOLUNTEERED TO SERVE IN THE MILITIA IN LAWRENCE."

(Narrator):

WHILE GOVERNOR FOSS CONTINUED TO SEND MILITIA FROM THE NEARBY TOWNS, LIKE SALEM, LYNN AND LOWELL, THE WORKING PEOPLE OF THOSE COMMUNITIES SENT FOOD, CLOTHING AND MONEY TO HELP THE STRIKERS.

AS WORD SPREAD, AID AND DONATIONS FOR THE STRIKERS BEGAN TO COME IN FROM INDUSTRIAL CITIES AROUND THE UNITED STATES—FROM SCHENECTADY, NY; ERIE, PA; DETROIT, MICHIGAN; AND CHICAGO, ILLINOIS—THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR VOTED TO JOIN IN SUPPORT OF THE STRIKE. WORKING PEOPLE FROM ACROSS AMERICA WERE SHOWING THEIR SOLIDARITY WITH THE MILL WORKERS OF LAWRENCE.

(Female striker):

"TO PROTECT THE HEALTH OF OUR CHILDREN, WE DECIDED IT WAS BEST TO SEND OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS TO LIVE WITH RELATIVES, FRIENDS AND OTHER UNION FAMILIES IN OTHER CITIES."

(Narrator):

THE EXODUS OF THE CHILDREN, WHO WERE IN MOST CASES ILL-CLOTHED AND SUFFERING FROM MALNUTRITION IN SOME FORM, DREW NATIONAL ATTENTION IN NEWS REPORTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. IT WAS BAD PUBLICITY FOR THE MILL OWNERS AND SUPPORT FOR THE STRIKERS GREW.

(Colonel Sweetzer):

"I WILL NOT PERMIT THE SHIPPING OFF OF LITTLE CHILDREN!"

(Narrator):

ON FEBRUARY 24, THE STRIKE WAS IN ITS 43RD DAY. CHILDREN WERE WAITING AT THE LAWRENCE TRAIN DEPOT TO BE TAKEN TO PHILADELPHIA.

(Female striker):

"WITH NO WARNING, THE CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS WERE ATTACKED BY THE MILITIA AND POLICE, BEATEN AND THROWN INTO POLICE WAGONS. THEN THEY WERE TAKEN TO JAIL AND LOCKED UP."

(Narrator):

THE NATION WAS OUTRAGED. LEADING AMERICANS SPOKE OUT AGAINST THE TACTICS AND BEHAVIOR OF THE MILL OWNERS AND THE MILITARY POLICE. AS A RESULT OF THE PUBLIC OUTCRY, THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS CALLED FOR A SPECIAL INVESTIGATION TO GET THE FACTS. A DELEGATION OF 16 LAWRENCE CHILDREN APPEARED BEFORE THE COMMITTEE TO TELL THEIR STORIES.

(14 yr. old mill worker):

"I GOT HURT IN THE WASHINGTON (MILL)—ON MY HEAD—THE MACHINE PULLED MY SCALP OFF. I WAS IN THE HOSPITAL SEVEN MONTHS"

(15 yr. old mill worker):

"THEY MADE US GO QUICKER AND QUICKER ALL THE TIME. IF YOU ARE LATE TWO MINUTES THEY CLOSE THE DOOR. FOR SEVEN MINUTES THEY TAKE OFF AN HOUR'S PAY."

(14 yr. old mill worker):

"AS SOON AS I CAME HOME I HAD TO GO TO SLEEP, I WAS SO TIRED."

(15 yr. old mill worker):

"I AM A BOBBIN BOY—\$4.00 SOMETIMES \$3.00 I GET. SATURDAYS WE HAVE TO SWEEP THE ROOM UP, AND THEY DON'T PAY YOU FOR THAT."

(Narrator):

PUBLIC PRESSURE WAS SO AROUSED BY THE CHILDREN'S TESTIMONY, PRESIDENT WILLIAM TAFT ORDERED AN INVESTIGATION OF CONDITIONS IN MILLS AND INDUSTRY ACROSS THE NATION.

BACK IN LAWRENCE, THE STRIKERS CONTINUED MARCHING AND MEETING AND PICKETING... ALTHOUGH THE STRIKE HAD ALREADY GONE ON ALMOST TWO MONTHS, MORE THAN 10,000 MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN STRIKERS BRAVED THE COLD, THE HUNGER AND THE DANGER OF THE PICKET LINES EVERY DAY. ON MARCH 12, 63 DAYS AFTER THE WORKERS HAD WALKED OFF THEIR JOBS, THE POWERFUL AMERICAN WOOLEN COMPANY, SPEAKING FOR ALL OF THE MILLS IN LAWRENCE, GAVE IN.

THE MILL OWNERS AGREED TO THE STRIKERS DEMANDS TO RAISE THEIR PAY, TO GIVE EXTRA PAY FOR OVERTIME WORK, TO CHANGE THE PREMIUM SYSTEM AND NOT TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST THE STRIKERS WHEN THEY RETURNED TO THEIR JOBS.

ON MARCH 14, 25,000 STRIKERS GATHERED ON LAWRENCE COMMON AND VOTED TO ACCEPT THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT. THE STRIKE IN LAWRENCE WAS OVER. THE WORKERS HAD WON.

SOON AFTER, THE CHILDREN BEGAN RETURNING HOME FROM VERMONT, PENNSYLVANIA, NEW YORK AND ELSEWHERE AND HUGE CROWDS TURNED OUT TO CELEBRATE THEIR RETURN.

BUT THE LAWRENCE STRIKE WAS NOT REALLY OVER UNTIL THE FALL OF 1912, WHEN ETTOR, GIOVANNITTI AND JOSEPH CARUSO WHO HAD BEEN ARRESTED IN JANUARY WERE FINALLY PUT ON TRIAL FOR THE MURDER OF ANNA LO PIZZA. WORKERS CALLED FOR THEIR RELEASE. FINALLY, ON NOV. 23, THE JURY RETURNED ITS VERDICT—NOT GUILTY!

THE EVENTS OF THE LAWRENCE STRIKE WERE ENDED, BUT THE VICTORY WON BY THE WORKERS OF LAWRENCE WAS JUST THE BEGINNING OF MANY CHANGES AND IMPROVEMENTS BROUGHT ABOUT BY WORKERS UNITED TOGETHER.

THE LAWRENCE VICTORY ENCOURAGED MILL AND FACTORY WORKERS IN LOWELL, NEW BEDFORD, FALL RIVER, HOLYOKE AND COMMUNITIES ACROSS MASSACHUSETTS TO UNITE FOR BETTER PAY AND BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS. AND THE EVENTS IN LAWRENCE, MASSACHUSETTS ENCOURAGED MILL OWNERS IN OTHER CITIES TO SETTLE THEIR DISPUTES WITH LABOR THROUGH COLLECTIVE BARGAINING.

SINCE 1912 AND THE FEDERAL INVESTIGATIONS BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE LAWRENCE STRIKE, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS HAVE PASSED LAWS TO PROTECT WORKERS, TO MAKE THE WORKPLACE SAFER, TO SHORTEN THE WORK HOURS, TO RESTRICT USE OF CHILD LABOR, AND TO INSURE A WORKER'S RIGHT TO ORGANIZE AND TO STRIKE.

THE COURAGE AND SACRIFICE OF THE MILL WORKERS OF LAWRENCE, MASSACHUSETTS AND THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF UNION WORKERS WHO CARRIED ON THE LONG STRUGGLE TO SECURE AND PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS IN EVERY AMERICAN INDUSTRY HAVE ALL PLAYED A MAJOR PART IN SHAPING THE WORLD WE LIVE IN TODAY.

The End

Collective Voices: Songs of Labor

Classroom Audio-Cassette Script:

(Narrator):

AMERICA'S LABOR MOVEMENT HAS A RICH AND DRAMATIC HISTORY—
A HISTORY WE CAN READ ABOUT AND LISTEN TO. LABORERS AND UNION MEMBERS
HAVE OFTEN TOLD THEIR STORIES THROUGH SONGS.

WORKERS FIGHTING FOR FAIR PAY, FOR SAFER WORKPLACES, AND A BETTER WAY OF
LIFE...HAVE USED MUSIC AS A COMMON LANGUAGE THAT ALL WORKERS COULD SHARE
AND ALL PEOPLE COULD UNDERSTAND.

THE SONGS OF LABOR WERE POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE TOOLS USED TO UNITE
WORKERS IN UNION CAUSES—TO GAIN PUBLIC ATTENTION AND SYMPATHY,
TO BUILD A SENSE OF PRIDE IN THEIR SKILLS AND THE JOBS THEY DID,
AND TO LIFT THEIR SPIRITS DURING STRIKES AND HARD TIMES.

LABOR SONGS HAVE BEEN SUNG DURING MARCHES, STRIKES, MEETINGS AND RALLIES,
IN MOMENTS OF VICTORY AND DEFEAT. THEY HAVE BECOME A DYNAMIC PART OF
AMERICA'S HISTORY AND CULTURE.

"SOLIDARITY FOREVER" WAS WRITTEN IN 1915 BY RALPH CHAPLIN TO THE TUNE OF
"JOHN BROWN'S BODY." IT QUICKLY BECAME THE LABOR ANTHEM FOR UNION WORKERS ON
THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT.

THE SENSE OF POWER AND UNITY IN "SOLIDARITY FOREVER" REMAINS TODAY.
IT IS THE MOST POPULAR LABOR SONG OF AMERICAN UNION MEMBERS. BOBBI MCGEE
OFFERS THIS CONTEMPORARY VERSION.

("SOLIDARITY FOREVER" /Bobbi McGee)

When the union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall run,
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun,
Yet no force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one,
But the union makes us strong.

Solidarity forever!
Solidarity forever!
Solidarity forever!
For the union makes us strong!

They have taken untold millions that they never toiled to earn,
But without the brain and muscle not a single wheel could turn.
We can break their haughty power, gain our freedom when we learn,
That the union makes us strong!

Solidarity forever!
Solidarity forever!
Solidarity forever!
For the union makes us strong!

In our hands is placed the power greater than their hoarded gold,
Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand fold,
We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old,
For the union makes us strong.

(Narrator):

IN BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA, THE SONG "WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED"
CONTINUES TO INSPIRE TODAY'S WORKERS—ESPECIALLY DURING STRIKES.

IT IS BASED ON AN OLD GOSPEL HYMN. THIS TUNE BECAME A FAVORITE ON PICKET LINES
BECAUSE IT WAS EASY TO ADD VERSES TO FIT A PARTICULAR STRIKE.
IT WAS FIRST SUNG BY STRIKING WEST VIRGINIA MINERS IN 1931.

THE INTERNATIONAL LADIES GARMENT WORKERS UNION LOCAL #91 CHORUS SINGS THIS
1950 RENDITION.

("WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED"/Local 91 chorus ILGWU)

We shall not be moved. We shall not be moved.
The ILG's behind us: we shall not be moved.
The ILG's behind us: we shall not be moved.
Just like a tree planted by the water, we shall not be moved.

We're fighting for our freedom: we shall not be moved.
We're fighting for our freedom: we shall not be moved.
Just like a tree planted by the water, we shall not be moved.

We're fighting for our children: we shall not be moved.
We're fighting for our children: we shall not be moved.
Just like a tree planted by the water, we shall not be moved.

We're led by our own union: we shall not be moved.
We're led by our own union: we shall not be moved.
Just like a tree planted by the water, we shall not be moved.

(Narrator):

THE GREAT LAWRENCE TEXTILE STRIKE OF 1912 BECAME KNOWN AS "THE SINGING STRIKE."
WORKERS FROM 25 DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES BRIDGED THEIR LANGUAGE BARRIERS
BY SINGING TOGETHER IN UNION MEETING HALLS, SOUP KITCHENS AND ON THE PICKET
LINE.

THE SONG, "IN THE GOOD OLD PICKET LINE," KEPT THEIR SPIRITS HIGH AND ENCOURAGED
OTHER WORKERS TO JOIN THEM.

("In the Good Ol' Picket Line" from "the Wobblies" documentary)

In the good old picket line, in the good old picket line,
The workers are from every place, from nearly every clime.
The Greeks and Poles are out so strong, and the Germans, all the time,
But we want to see more Irish in the good old picket line.

(Narrator):

AMERICAN POET JAMES OPPENHEIM SAW WOMEN STRIKERS MARCHING IN THAT SAME 1912 TEXTILE STRIKE WITH BANNERS THAT READ "WE WANT BREAD AND ROSES, TOO!"

HE WROTE A POEM ABOUT IT CALLED "BREAD AND ROSES," AND YEARS LATER THE POEM WAS SET TO MUSIC TO SYMBOLIZE THE FIGHT FOR UNION AND WOMENS' RIGHTS.

("Bread and Roses"/Judy Collins)

As we go marching, marching, in the beauty of the day,
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill lofts gray,
Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses,
For the people hear us singing: "Bread and roses! Bread and roses!"

As we go marching, marching, we battle too for men,
For they are women's children, and we mother them again.
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes;
Hearts starve as well as bodies, give us bread but give us roses!

As we go marching, marching, unnumbered women dead
Go crying through our singing their ancient cry for bread.
Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew.
Yes, it is bread we fight for—but we fight for roses, too!

As we come marching, marching, we bring the greater days.
The rising of the women means the rising of the race.
No more the drudge and idler—ten that toil where one reposes,
But a sharing of life's glories: Bread and Roses!

(Narrator):

THE SOUP LINE, LONG A SYMBOL OF ECONOMIC HARD TIMES, WAS OFTEN THE FIRST PLACE STRIKING AND UNEMPLOYED WORKERS HAD TO TURN FOR FOOD.

IN 1945, JOE GLAZER RE-WROTE THE DEPRESSION ERA "SOUP SONG" FOR THE HARD PRESSED UNION WORKERS—TO OFFER SOME COMIC RELIEF TO THEIR OFTEN BLEAK SITUATIONS.

("THE SOUP SONG"/Joe Glazer)

Way back in the days of the depression, I had very little to eat,
But that didn't bother me, mister, I was fed from my head to my feet
With so-o-o-p, so-o-o-p,
They gave me a bowl of soup,
So-o-o-p, so-o-o-p, they gave me a bowl of soup.

One day the depression was over, I almost was back on my feet.
But quickly there came a recession, so once more I started to eat,
So-o-o-p, so-o-o-p,
They gave me a bowl of soup -- with a spoon!
So-o-o-p, s-o-o-o-p, they gave me a bowl of soup.

We work in the mill for a living, and one thing on which you can bet,
Is that if we don't stick together, there's only one thing we will get..
S-o-o-o-p, so-o-o-p, they'll give us a bowl of
Soup -- with a spoon!
So-o-o-p, so-o-o-p, they'll give us a bowl of
Soup -- no meat!

(Narrator):

WOMEN HAVE SERVED AN IMPORTANT BUT OFTEN OVER-LOOKED ROLE IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT.. "THE UNION MAID," WAS WRITTEN BY WOODY GUTHRIE IN 1943, TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE STRENGTH AND LOYALTY OF UNION WOMEN THROUGHOUT LABOR HISTORY. Bobbi McGee has an updated version.

("Union Maid" /Bobbi McGee)

There once was a union maid; she never was afraid
Of goons and ginks and the company finks
And the deputy sheriffs who made the raids.

She went to the union hall, when a meeting was called,
And when the company boys came 'round,
She always held her ground.

Chorus:

Oh you can't scare me, I'm sticking with the union,
I'm sticking with the union, I'm sticking with the union.
Oh you can't scare me, I'm sticking with the union,
I'm sticking to the union till the day I die.

This union maid was wise to the tricks of company spies;
She couldn't be fooled by company stools;
She'd always organize the guys.

She'd always get her way, when she struck for higher pay.
She'd show her card to the National Guard,
and this is what she'd say: *Chorus*

You girls who want to be free, just take a tip from me!
Break out of that mold you've all been sold,
You've got a fighting history.

We'll work for equal pay and we will have our say.
Like Mother Jones, just roll them bones
And fight the union way! *Chorus*

(Narrator):

SONGS OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT CONTINUE TODAY AS THEY REFLECT
THE CURRENT PROBLEMS AND ISSUES OF UNION WORKERS.

"LOOK FOR THE UNION LABEL," TRADEMARK SONG OF THE INTERNATIONAL LADIES
GARMENT WORKERS UNION, HAS BECOME AN INSTANTLY RECOGNIZED ANTHEM OF THE
AMERICAN WORKER'S PRIDE AND FIGHT FOR JOB SECURITY.

THIS SONG APPEALS TO THE PUBLIC'S SENSE OF PATRIOTISM—
CALLING ON AMERICANS TO PROTECT UNION JOBS AGAINST FOREIGN COMPETITION IN THE
MARKETPLACE.

("Look for the Union Label"/ ILGWU Chorus)

Look for the union label
When you are buying a coat, dress or blouse.

Remember that somewhere your union's sewing,
Our wages growing to feed the kids.
And, remember how we work hard,
But who's complaining, in the ILGWU we're paying our way.

So always look for the union label.
It says we're making it in the USA!

(Narrator):

LABOR SONGS HAVE HELPED TO UNITE WORKERS, TO PROMOTE WORKERS' RIGHTS,
TO EASE THE HARDSHIP OF PROTEST AND STRUGGLE, AND TO GAIN PUBLIC ATTENTION AND
SUPPORT FOR WORKERS THROUGHOUT AMERICA.

THE SONGS OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT HAVE EARNED A SPECIAL PLACE IN AMERICAN
HISTORY.

Names in the News: Massachusetts Textile Strike: 1912

Joseph Caruso

Joseph Caruso was a striking mill worker in Lawrence, MA in 1912. Caruso took an active role in picketing and public demonstrations. In January, he was with a group of strikers on a street corner in Lawrence. When they were confronted by police and militia, a scuffle broke out. A striker named Anna LoPizza was shot and killed during the incident. Caruso was arrested despite eyewitnesses who claimed the shot had been fired by the police. Caruso was jailed and put on trial for murder. In November, 1912, a jury found him not guilty and he was freed.

State Representative Calvin Coolidge

Calvin Coolidge was a Republican State Representative from Northampton in the Massachusetts Legislature in 1912. Governor Foss made him chairman of the committee to investigate the Lawrence Textile Strike. Although the committee met, little was accomplished.

Coolidge went on to be elected Governor of Massachusetts and President of the United States.

Joseph Ettor

Joseph Ettor, a Syrian/Italian-American from New York City, was a leader in the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) union. He came to Lawrence, MA in 1912 to help organize the mill workers' strike. He helped strikers set up organization and structure for the strike. He was a brilliant strategist and an eloquent and fiery speaker.

Ettor was arrested in January, charged with being an accessory to the death of striker Anna LoPizza who was shot during a confrontation with police. He was two miles away from the site of the incident. IWW officials charged that the police were trying to cover up their own responsibility for LoPizza's death and trying to break the strike by jailing the strike leaders. Ettor was jailed until the conclusion of his trial in November, 1912, when a jury found him not guilty.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was a union organizer for the IWW. She had become well-known as she travelled throughout the country to organize unskilled workers into mill workers and the children. She organized the exodus of mill children to other cities. Flynn was a powerful speaker and an articulate organizer for the union movement.

Governor Eugene N. Foss

Eugene Noble Foss was governor of Massachusetts (1910-1912). He was a Republican who switched to the Democratic Party to run for governor. As a result of this and because he vetoed legislative pay raises, he received little cooperation from the Republican-dominated legislature. He was also a mill owner. When the Lawrence mill workers went on strike in 1912, Foss called out 12 companies of the state militia to the strike scene. He requested that the workers return to their jobs for 30 days and negotiate a settlement. Foss named a committee to investigate the Lawrence Textile Strike, but substantively little was accomplished by the committee.

Arturo Giovannitti

Arturo Giovannitti was one of the IWW's best organizers. He was a well known editor and author. During the Lawrence Textile Strike, Giovannitti helped organize the relief efforts. He helped set up 6 stores, 11 soup kitchens, 120 relief investigators, and a fund-raising committee. Giovannitti authored strike literature and helped devise strategy for the strike.

When a striker, Anna LoPizza, was shot and killed during a confrontation between police and strikers in January, 1912, Arturo Giovannitti was arrested and jailed as an accessory to the crime despite the fact he was two miles away from the site of the incident. His arrest and trial drew international attention and protests. In November, 1912, a jury found Giovannitti not guilty of the charges.

John Golden

John Golden was president of the United Textile Workers, American Federation of Labor, the largest organization of textile workers in 1912. Because there were only 208 AFL textile workers in the whole city of Lawrence, MA, the AFL did not play an early role in the textile strike. As public support for the strike mounted, the AFL approved a resolution of solidarity with the strikers and assisted in relief efforts.

William Haywood

William "Big Bill" Haywood was a militant leader of the mine workers before he became the national President of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). He was a large and imposing man who had lost an eye in a childhood accident. He was a great and powerful orator. Haywood travelled throughout the United States to organize all workers into "One Big Union." In 1912, his arrival in Lawrence, MA, drew a crowd of 15,000 people at the train station. He raised funds nationally to assist the strikers and after the arrests of Ettor and Giovannitti he took over leadership of the strike.

He was successful in mobilizing the women and children in the strike effort which resulted in increased attention in the national press. His efforts helped shape public opinion in sympathy with the strikers and their families.

During the Ettor, Giovannitti, Caruso trial, he organized international protests and mass demonstrations. He was arrested on an old charge when the strike was over.

Anna LoPizza

Anna LoPizza was a young mill worker in Lawrence, MA. She was part of a group of strikers gathered together on a street corner the night of January 29, 1912. When the group was ordered to disperse by local police and state militia, trouble broke out and Anna LoPizza was shot and killed. Anna's sister and the other strikers present said the fatal shot had been fired by the police. But a fellow striker, Joseph Caruso, and IWW organizers Joseph Ettor and Arturo Giovannitti (who were two miles away when the incident occurred) were arrested and jailed for the crime. All three were put on trial and found innocent of the charges in November, 1912.

Mayor Michael Scanlon

Michael Scanlon was the Mayor of Lawrence, MA in 1912. When the mill workers struck in January, he sounded the riot alarm in the city. He demanded that the strikers go back to work. Scanlon gave the order to use force against the strikers and is recorded as saying, "We will either break this strike or break the strikers' heads."

Colonel E. LeRoy Sweetser

Colonel E. LeRoy Sweetser was the head of the 12 militia companies sent to Lawrence, MA in 1912 to quell the textile strike. It was the first time in the state's history that the militia had been used for such a purpose. Sweetser declared, "I will allow no mass meetings, I will allow no parades. We are going to look for trouble. We are not looking for peace now." Sweetser drew national press attention during the strike when he ordered women and children to be beaten and jailed when strikers tried to board their children onto trains to transport them to other cities for the duration of the strike. Sweetser refused to allow the children to leave.

President William H. Taft

William Howard Taft was the 27th President of the United States (1903-1913). In 1912, as a result of the public pressure and outrage which resulted from the congressional hearings investigating the Lawrence Textile Strike (which his wife attended), Taft ordered a full investigation into the existing working conditions in all American industries.

Camella Teoli

Camella Teoli was a 14-year-old girl who worked in a mill in Lawrence, MA in 1912. She was one of 16 Lawrence children who testified before the Congressional Hearings in Washington, DC which were held March 2-7, 1912 to investigate the conditions that led to the Lawrence Textile Strike. Camella Teoli testified that her father had paid a mill agent \$4.00 for forged papers to prove she was old enough to work in the mill. She stopped going to school to take a job as a twister in the mill. She earned from \$2.64-\$6.55 per week. She was injured in an accident at work when her hair was caught in unsafe equipment and she was "scalped." She was hospitalized for seven months. The company paid her hospital bills but would not continue her wages. Her father was arrested for putting an under-aged child to work with forged documents but was later released and allowed to return to his own mill job when it was discovered that a mill agent had arranged it for him. Her testimony and that of the other children were reported in newspapers around the country and led to a public outcry for improvements in working conditions for mill and factory workers.

Annie Welzenbach

Mrs. Annie Welzenbach was a young woman who worked as a skilled mender in a mill in Lawrence, MA. She was known throughout the city as the highest paid worker in the mills. She earned \$20.00 per week. She was instrumental in uniting the skilled workers in support of the 1912 strike. She was one of the ten-member Strike Committee which led the strike. Her slogan was "Get on the picket line!"

William M. Wood

William M. Wood, son of Portuguese immigrants, became president of the American Woolen Company which had grown to include more than 27 mills. The *New York Times* called it the "\$65 million wool trust." The Wood Mill in Lawrence, MA, which was named after him, was the largest cloth-producing factory in the world in 1912. Wood was the leader of the mill owners during the Lawrence strike. He refused to meet with the strikers to negotiate their grievances. He employed strike breaking tactics: a dynamite hoax, intimidation and vandalism by hired thugs, settlement rumors, and employing scab workers to bring an end to the strike.

After the strike had gone on for 63 days, Wood gave in and agreed to the strikers' demands which ended the strike on March 12. Wood was indicted in Boston, charged with being involved with the dynamite plot during the strike but was later acquitted, after the key witness against him committed suicide.

Vocabulary: Selected Terms

American Federation of Labor (AFL): a group of labor unions of the United States and Canada, founded in 1881. It merged with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in 1955.

child labor: the regular, full-time employment of children under a legally defined age in factories, stores, offices, or other job sites. In the United States the minimum legal age under Federal law is 16 years (in hazardous occupations, 18 years).

collective bargaining: meeting in which workers and employers discuss and come to an agreement on working conditions.

grievance: a circumstance thought by the workers to be unjust or injurious and reason for complaint to company management.

immigrant: a person who comes from another country to settle permanently in a new country.

Industrial Workers of the World (IWW): a worldwide union of workers open to unskilled and skilled workers. In the United States, the IWW was most active and powerful in the early 1900's, especially in organizing immigrant unskilled workers.

Wobblies: a nickname for IWW members which resulted when a convention speaker once mispronounced IWW and said, "I wobble, wobble," instead.

labor union: an organization which seeks improved working conditions, salaries, and other benefits for working people, through collective bargaining and the strike threat.

picket line: a continuous line of strikers stationed outside a factory, office, store or other job site, often carrying a sign to demonstrate protest, keep strikebreakers from entering, or to dissuade customers from buying the company's products.

picket stick: a sign carried by strikers to protest against employer. Name is derived from early strikes in mill industry. Mill workers attached signs to the "picket sticks" they used on their job to throw the shuttle through the warp on their weaving machines.

- premium system:** an additional amount of wages paid to workers when they reached or exceeded a specific production goal set by the company management. The company would also pay a "premium" to the foreman when the workers he was in charge of reached the production goal.
- scab:** a slang term for a worker who refuses to join a union, or who works for lower wages or under different conditions than those accepted by the union. A worker who refuses to strike or who takes the place of a striking worker on the job. The word itself is derived from an old slang term which meant "contemptible fellow" or "scoundrel."
- settlement:** an agreement made between workers and employers to end a labor dispute or strike.
- shop floor democracy:** when union workers elect fellow workers to representative them to deal with the company management.
- skilled worker:** a worker who has a required ability in a particular job, craft or industry gained through special training or experience.
- speed-up:** system used when an employer increases speed of machinery to increase production without increasing wages of workers who are producing more.
- stretch-out:** the system used by an employer to require workers to do more work for little or no increase in pay.
- strike:** a refusal by workers to continue working until certain demands of theirs are met by management.
- strike breaker:** a non-striking worker hired by the management of a company as an attempt to force the striking workers to settle the strike.
- turn-out:** another term for "strike," indicating that workers "turn" away from their work and go "out" of their workplace due to work-related grievances.
- unskilled worker:** a worker who does a job that requires no special training or experience.

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The Wobblies. (Documentary produced through a National Endowment for the Arts Grant; 82 mins.) Profile of the Industrial Workers of the World union movement in the United States.

Supplemental Booklist:

(* Secondary reading level)

Biddle, Marcia McKenna. *Labor.* (Contributions of Women) Minneapolis: Dillon Press, Inc., 1979.

Blewett, Mary H., *Men, Women and Work: Class, Gender & Protest in the N.E. Shoe Industry, 1780-1910.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988. See other works by same author.

Bruner, James E. Jr., *Industrialism: The American Experience.* Encino, CA: Glencoe Publishing Co., 1980.

Cahn, William. *A Pictorial History of American Labor.* New York: Brown Publishers, 1972.

English, Betty Lou. *Women At Their Work.* New York: The Dial Press, 1977.

Foner, Philip S., *American Labor Songs of the Nineteenth Century.* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1975. *

Fowke, Edith and Joe Glazer. *Songs of Work and Protest.* New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1973.

Gutman, Herbert G., *Power and Culture.* New York: Pantheon, 1987.

Hambourg, Serge, *Mills and Factories of New England.* New York: Henry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988.

Hareven, Tamara K., *Family Time and Industrial Time.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982. *

Harris, Janet. *Thursday's Daughter: The Story of Women Working in America*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1977.

Holland, Ruth. *Mill Child: The Story of Child Labor in America*. New York: Macmillan, 1970.*

Lens, Sidney. *Unions and What They Do*. New York: New York: Putnam, 1968.*

Lerner, James. *Too Many Hours: Labor Struggles to Shorten the Work Day*. New York: United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America, n.d. (11 East 51st St., New York, N.Y., 10022)

Macaulay, David, *Mill*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1983. See also *Underground*, 1976. Grades 5-12.

Meltzer, Milton. *Bread and Roses: The Struggle of American Labor, 1915-1965*. New York: Random House, 1973. *

Paradis, Adrian. *Labor In Action: The Story of the American Labor Movement*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Messner, 1974.*

Pelling, Henry. *American Labor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.*

Seeger, Pete. *Carry It On! A History in Song and Picture of the Working Men and Women of America*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985. *

Tax, Meredith. *The Rising of the Women: Feminist Solidarity and Class Conflict, 1880-1917*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980.

Weitzman, David, *Windmills, Bridges and Old Machines: Discovering Our Industrial Past*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1982. *

Werstein, Irving. *Pie in the Sky, An American Struggle: The Wobblies and their Times*. New York: Delacourt, 1969. *

Supplemental Resources

Curriculum Materials:

- Beall, Pamela and Weitzman, David. *People, Places, Power: A Workbook for Industrial Archeology*. Washington, DC: Society for Industrial Archeology, 1985. Grades 7-12. With Teacher Guide by Pamela E. Beall.
- Bigelow, William and Norman Diamond. *The Power in our Hands*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1988. Secondary level.
- Bronder, Saul, ed. *Teaching Labor Studies in the Schools*. Vol. I: 1987; Vol. II: 1988. Dept. of Human Services, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, 25 Louisiana Avenue, NW, Washington, DC.
- "Child Labor," Social Studies School Service, Culver City, CA 90230. Photo packet for all ages.
- "Factory: Strategies in Problem Solving." (Apple Computer) Sunburst Communications Inc., Pleasantville, NY, 1985. See also "Superfactory." Grades 7-12.
- "Industrial Revolution: Teacher's Guide," Science Research Associates, Inc., Chicago, IL, 1985. Secondary level.
- LaVoy, James and Peterson, Martin. "Industrializing America: A Game of American Industrial Development." (Apple Computer) The Perfection Form Co., Logan, IA, 1987. Grades 7-12.
- "History of Lawrence Curriculum Project," Lawrence Heritage State Park, Lawrence, MA. Grades 1-8.
- "New City on the Merrimack: Prints of Lawrence 1845-1876," Merrimack Valley Textile Museum, North Andover MA 01845, 1974. Grades 7-12.
- Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, MA 01566. "Choosing Work" packet; "From Farm to Factory: A World of Work," packets for students and teachers and study prints; "Making a Living" packet series, 1976-79. Adapt for all ages.
- Tsongas Industrial History Center, Boott Mill, Lowell, MA 01852. Two curriculum packets available: "Ten Hour Movement," and "Making It Out In Spindle City" (photos).

York Institute Museum, Saco, ME 04072. Packet, "Mill and Mill Hands," 1988. Adapt for all ages.

Audio Visuals: Filmstrips:

"Americans Create an Industrial Society." Imperial Educational Resources, Inc., Pleasantville, NY, 1980. Grades 9-12.

"Industrial America." Associated Press, Prentice-Hall Media, New York, NY, 1974. Grades 7-12.

"Industrial Revolution in America." Random House School Division, Westminster, MD, 1978. Grades 7-12.

"Songs and Stories of Labor" (16mm. film produced by the Rutgers Labor Center; 35 mins.)- *collection of labor songs used throughout labor movement, sung by Joe Glazer. Historical labor photos provide background.* George Meany Archives, National AFL-CIO, 10000 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Springs, MD 20903.

"The Evolution of American Industry, Enterprise and Welfare." Society for Visual Education, Inc., Chicago, IL, 1966. Grades 7-12.

"Voices of a Union" (16mm. film produced by the Bakery and Commercial Workers Union; 20 mins.)- *profile of a union, its services, and the kinds of work union members do.* George Meany Archives. Same address as above.

Videos:

"America Grows Up." Mastervision, Inc., New York, NY. See also "Gathering Strength," and "The Game of Monopoly" with student worksheets. Grades 7-12.

"The Road to Dignity" (video produced by the United Food and Commercial Workers; 36 mins.)- *presentation of how a local union is organized, how elections are held, and how a union negotiates a contract with an employer.* George Meany Archives, National AFL-CIO, 10000 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Springs, MD 20903.

"The Wobblies" (documentary produced through a National Endowment for the Arts Grant; 82 mins.)- *profile of the IWW union movement in the United States utilizing actual newsreel footage, photographs and oral history interviews.*

"Union Maids," by Julia Reichert and John Klein, New Day Films, New York, NY.

Slides:

Immigrant City Archives, Lawrence Public Library, South Branch
135 Parker Street, Lawrence, MA 01842. contact: Director,
Eartha Dengler

Audio Recordings/Tapes:

"Talking Union," Almanac Singers with Pete Seeger and Chorus:
Folkways Records, FH 5285. *Songs of the American Labor
Movement.*

"Songs of Work and Freedom," Joe Glazer: Washington Records, WR-
460. *Songs of the American Labor Movement.*

"Favorite American Union Songs," Tom Glazer: CIO Department of
Education and Research (78 rpm).

"We Work and Sing," Gene and Francesca Raskin, International Ladies
Garment Workers Union. *Union songs and anthems.*

"Songs of the Wobblies," Joe Glazer and Bill Frieland, Labor Arts 3.
Songs of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) union.

Magazine Articles:

"New Era Brings New Battles: Job Guarantees Pitted Against
Competitiveness," (auto industry) Brian Moskal. Vol. 234,
Industry Week, July13, 1987, p. 152.

"Should the Minimum Wage Restoration Act of 1987 be Approved?" by
Edw. Kennedy, Walter Ellis, Jr., Lane Kirkland, Douglas Fontaine,
Jack Sheinkman, Matthew Runci, Jay Mazur and John R.
Glennie. Vol.66 *Congressional Digest*, Aug-Sept. 1987, p. 200.

"Trade Unions In A Changing Workplace," (Georges Spyropoulos
review) Vol. 112, *Monthly Labor Review*, June 1989, p. 45.

"Unions Must Woo Young and Old Women," *USA Today*, Vol. 118, Aug.
1989, p. 10.

"Women Hard Hats Speak Out," (the new worker) by Susan Eisenberg.
Vol. 249, *The Nation*, Sept. 1989, p. 272.

"Industrial Homework and Sweatshops: Fair Labor Standards," (Jay
Mazur speech) Vol. 53, *Vital Speeches*, Sept.1, 1987, p. 701.

Labor Resource Libraries:

American Museum of Textile History

800 Massachusetts Avenue
North Andover, MA 01845

George Meany Archives

National AFL-CIO
100000 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Springs, MD 20903
contact: Director, Stewart Kaufman

Heritage State Park

1 Jackson Street
Lawrence, MA 01842
contact: Visitor's Services, Denise Morrissey

Immigrant City Archives

Lawrence Public Library, South Branch
135 Parker Street
Lawrence, MA 01842
contact: Director, Eartha Dengler

International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Human Services Department
25 Louisiana Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001
contact: IBT Historian Saul E. Bronder

Labor Heritage Foundation

815 165th Street NW, Room 301
Washington, DC 20006
contact: Exec. Director, Laurel Blaydis

New York School of Industrial and Labor Relations

LMDC/MP Catherwood Library
Cornell University
144 Ives Hall
Ithaca, NY 14851-0952

Tsongas Industrial History Center

Boott Mill, Foot of John Street
Lowell, MA 01852
contact: Resource Center

The Commonwealth Museum
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125
(617)727-9268



Office of the Secretary of State
Michael Joseph Connolly, Secretary

