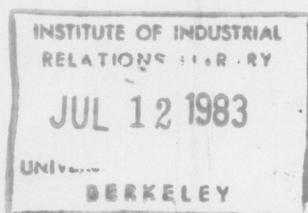


BUILDING CALIFORNIA:

The Story of the Carpenters' Union, →



Center for Labor Research and Education
Institute of Industrial Relations
University of California, Los Angeles

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By

Paul Bullock

With

Cara Anderson,

Jack Blackburn,

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Richard Steele *•//*

**Center for Labor Research and Education
Institute of Industrial Relations
University of California, Los Angeles**

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Obviously, only the authors of this history can be held accountable for any errors of fact or interpretation. Opinions expressed in the text are ours alone, and do not necessarily reflect the views of funding sources, interviewees, contributors of materials, and others mentioned, or of the Institute of Industrial Relations and the University of California.

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PREFACE

This history of the carpenters' union in California is written in honor of the 100th anniversary of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, founded in 1881. The purpose of the study, however, is not merely to memorialize the carpenters and their union. Had this been the sole or even the chief purpose, none of us would have been interested in the project. We undertook this research because, apart from a general interest in labor and trade union history, we believed the carpenters in California posed some important issues worthy of close investigation. These can be considered under two broad topics: the significance of the carpenters' union, and the significance of California as a setting.

Why Carpenters?

The carpenters are, of course, part of the construction industry. They are the largest of the building trades in terms of sheer numbers. The building trades occupy an important place in U.S. industry and in the history of the labor movement.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the building trades, and of carpenters in particular, is that they have belonged to what is sometimes called the "aristocracy of labor." Better paid than most workers,

and able to form strong trade unions early in their history, these workers, and others like them, have been able to forge a special position for themselves within the working class.

The key to the carpenters' relatively advantaged position lay in their command of a skilled craft. The skill of the carpenter required care, often on-the-job instruction. Carpenters themselves passed on their skills to the next generation. By playing an important role in the training of future carpenters, craftsmen were able to control entrance to the trade. They could enhance wages by maintaining scarcity. And they could build strong workers' organizations of people who shared the same scarce skill.

Over the years, most skilled trades in the United States were gradually broken down into simpler components such that semi-skilled workers could take over the tasks of craftsmen and undermine their control over esoteric skills. Ever-larger corporations replaced the small shop owned and run by a master craftsman and his handful of helpers. The tendency towards "degradation" of the crafts emerged in the late nineteenth century in this country and progressed rapidly in most industries.

But the building trades were remarkably resistant to these trends. Perhaps the major reason lies in the nature of their work. First, they "produced" for strictly local markets, limiting the possibility of mass production. Second, the

site of work was not fixed, nor was a fixed product produced. Consequently, a detailed and rigid division of labor could not be easily developed. Without such a division of labor, mechanization was thwarted to a certain extent.

Needless to say, technical innovations were gradually introduced into construction. Power tools, and eventually prefabrication, revolutionized the industry. But compared to most other industries, construction lagged woefully behind in terms of rationalization of production. This fostered the vitality of the construction crafts long after most crafts had been virtually destroyed by the growth of giant enterprise.

The ability of the building trades to resist being taken over by big business influenced the character of their work, and made their class position somewhat ambiguous. In large enterprises, the distinction between owner-manager and employee-worker became ever clearer as the rift between them widened. But for carpenters these distinctions remained blurred for decades longer. Unlike an industrial worker, a carpenter often owned the tools of his trade. There was considerable fluidity between working as an employee and becoming the owner of a small construction business. In some ways, many construction workers were more like small businessmen than industrial laborers.

Early carpenters' unions focused on the craft as their chief organizing principle. People who shared the esoteric

skill could join the union; others could not. In some ways, the early unions resembled guilds more than they did labor unions as we know them today, including independent entrepreneurs as well as "workers." They did not engage in collective bargaining with a clearly defined employer who owned and controlled all the capital, but rather, they dealt with an ever-changing set of contractors who hired them on a job basis, and who often had to deal with them less as hired hands than as independent operators who controlled their own labor, even hired their own hands, and delivered a finished product.

Building trades unions were able to establish the closed shop earlier than most other unions. Perhaps this is a function of their unusually close collaboration with their employers. Because construction continually changes sites and typically operates under a time constraint, contractors probably had more interest in securing a reliable workforce than they had in its cheapness. Unions would sign contracts and ensure a steady supply of labor. From the employers' point of view, then, unionism of a certain type would be beneficial in the construction business.

The unions formed by the building trades were "craft unions," and they reflect a particular stage in the development of production. The study of the carpenters' union is thus the study of an important and powerful craft union in U.S.

history, one that survived for longer than most due to the peculiarities of its industry. It is also a study of the gradual demise of a craft union in the face of inevitable change, and how the union adapted to these developments.

The Two Faces Of Craft Unionism

Some labor historians have condemned craft unionism. It has been seen as elitist and exclusive, typically shutting out women and racial minorities. It has been accused of failing to organize unskilled workers, thereby enhancing its members' privileges at the expense of the masses of workers.

While aspects of this harsh judgment are undoubtedly deserved, we believe it is an ahistorical judgment, failing to take into full account the actual conditions faced by crafts' workers. Craft unionism can be seen as a form of organization that reflected the particular condition of this group of workers. They were faced with a threat to their cherished skills and to the independence these skills made possible. And they organized to protect their tenuous position.

Craft unionism, in our view, has two faces. On the one hand, the accusations of racism, sexism and exclusiveness have considerable merit. For much of its history, the United Brotherhood consisted mainly of white males, often native-born or from Western Europe. They passed their

relatively privileged position on to their own relatives and friends. Unionism was used, in part, as an exclusionary measure, to maintain a monopoly over the craft and to keep "undesirables" out. This was a pattern of the American Federation of Labor in general, and almost all the craft unions participated in it.

On the other hand, the craft unions (and the AFL) were also outspoken proponents for improving the conditions of labor in general. When they fought for an eight-hour day, for example, they fought not only for a narrow craft interest, but for the working class as a whole. As the best organized, most powerful sector of the working class, the craft unions were in a strategic position to speak for labor as a whole and to make demands that would stick. They could act as leaders of the labor movement.

The two faces of craft unionism are interwoven through the history of the UBCJA. At times the exclusive, even racist theme predominates. At other times, the progressive spokesman-for-labor theme emerges. Part of the purpose of this study is to trace these changes over time, and to relate them to the technical and organizational shifts in the industry, and to the broader economic conditions in which the industry was located.

The Breakdown Of Craft Unionism

Craft unionism can be seen as a kind of defensive holding action against the

inexorable forces of capitalist development. Big capital would inevitably enter the construction industry and transform it. Even though construction lagged well behind other industries in this regard, and to this day retains "pre-industrial" features, the inevitable rise of big business occurred there, too. For example, with the rise of prefabrication, what was once a relatively easy-to-control local market became a national market.

Carpenters, like other craft unionists before them, had to adapt to the changing times. One of the themes of this volume, then, is the nature of this adaptation. As tasks which had previously been the prerogative of skilled carpenters were transformed by changing materials and techniques, the United Brotherhood could either hang on to a shrinking jurisdiction or change its exclusive character to include new, often less skilled workers. This shift also meant a dropping of exclusive racial and gender barriers, since women and minorities were among those workers that employers could most easily use to displace privileged craftsmen.

How the UBCJA responded to these challenges is one of the issues addressed by this history, and provides one of the reasons for our undertaking this research. In studying the carpenters carefully, we hope to learn some more general principles about how craft unions, as a category, responded to these changes.

Why California?

Our concentration on California is easier to explain. Apart from the practical considerations of our funding sources, and the fact that we were commissioned to study the union in California, the state provides some important features which make this more than merely another boring local history to be buried in the archives of the union and the state historical society.

Of course, local history need not be boring. In some cases, it is the most appropriate level of analysis. Such would appear to be the case for the carpenters. As we have already suggested, unlike most industries, construction catered for a very long time to an exclusively local market, and even today the national and international market in construction is but a small part of the industry. The inherently local nature of the industry gives a coherence to the local union which it may lack in larger, more amorphous markets. Indeed, the state may be too large and heterogeneous a unit to deal with adequately in gaining a full comprehension of the history of this union. In a sense, the history of the UBCJA in California is really a history of a series of relatively autonomous and only loosely unified locals.

The necessity of examining the local level, in order to study construction workers, would apply to any state. But are there any features about California, in particular, that make it worthy of a close examination of its carpenters and their union? We believe there are.

First and most important, California can be seen as the American "last frontier." It was the last hope of the small independent producer whose independence was being undermined by capitalist development. Not only was California the furthest point, physically, in the continental United States from the burgeoning industries of the northeast, but the Gold Rush also offered a unique opportunity for men who were finding their way of life undermined, to reestablish an independent footing. California was thus, from its early history, an area with a strong anti-big business and anti-monopoly thrust.

This spirit is shown in the emergence of an early and indigenous labor movement. Unlike many areas west of the Mississippi, where a labor movement was imported, California developed its own, centered in San Francisco. California was intended to be a place where labor had dignity and where a man still had a chance to better himself and his family. In a sense the carpenters epitomized these themes. And it is likely that they were able to resist the degradation of their craft longer in California than elsewhere precisely because of the prevalence of these attitudes in the state. In turn, the carpenters and their union helped to shape the attitudes of the state's labor movement.

A second reason for focusing on California concerns the state's tremendous heterogeneity. On the one hand there is

northern California with its strong, indigenous labor movement, able to hold capitalist development in check to a certain degree. On the other hand lies southern California, land of the open shop, where business was able to establish a clear upper hand after a period of struggle, and where the dreaded "ills" of the type of labor movement evidenced by San Francisco could be scrupulously avoided.

The contrast between the two sectors of the state provides an interesting topic of investigation. We need to understand why they developed so differently. And more pertinent to the present study, we need to consider their differential impact on the UBCJA. In a sense, the division of the state provides us with a kind of controlled experiment, in which we can examine the evolution of the union in very different environments.

Thirdly, California has been a boom area, almost steadily, since gold was discovered there. The tremendous growth of the state has, of course, had major implications for the construction industry, since the industry is very responsive to population change and economic conditions. As a boom area, we can examine the carpenters under optimal conditions.

Finally, California has been a state of heavy immigration, not only from other area of the United States, but also from Asia and Latin America. Several waves of Asian immigration, notably from China,

Japan and the Philippines, came to California from the 1850s through the 1930s. Starting later, but overlapping the Asians to a degree, and concentrating more heavily in southern California, were immigrants from Latin America, especially Mexico. Today we see a resurgence of both of these sources of immigration.

Immigrants provided a special challenge to the craft unions, since they made available to employers a seemingly tractable labor force which could be used to break the monopoly of Anglo craftsmen and to lower labor costs. Given the less developed character of construction, immigrant subcontractors potentially could enter construction with relative ease. And, since unions excluded them, they could have operated cheaper, nonunion shops.

This challenge occurred with special vividness in California because of its heavy concentration of non-European immigrants. As is well-known, the anti-Asian movement found its heartland in this state. Thus the carpenters here had to face the special challenge posed by a more-or-less continual flow of immigrants. How they responded in the past, and how they are responding today, is one of the major topics of this study.

Chapter I

What Is A Carpenter?

When Thomas R. Brooks wrote his history of the American worker, "Toil and Trouble,"¹ he began it with work. We begin this history under the same general rubric. "Building California--The Story of the Carpenters' Union" is about workers, about the work they perform, and the skills they possess. Those skills, in combination with existing technology applied to the trade through their union organization, have made a major contribution to the development of this state.

Early carpenters and joiners in California here continued what their predecessors had begun when they first arrived on the eastern shores of the new world. Given the acute shortage of shelter and the need for commercial development, along with an abundant supply of good lumber, carpentry and its related skills were in great demand in California.

No doubt Captain John Smith's entreaty to Virginia's sponsors in England, in the early part of the 1600s, would have been equally true for the West in the early 1800s. Captain Smith was quoted as saying, "When you send again I entreat you rather send but thirty carpenters, husbandmen, gardners, fishermen, blacksmiths, masons and diggers up of trees roots, well provided, than a thousand such as we have."²

Since those early days, the nation has undergone major changes in almost every aspect of life. We are no longer a rural society

connected by trails, or primitive roads or canals, to isolated hamlets. We have become urban dwellers, with a population in excess of two hundred million and with a transportation system that must accommodate that growing population. The nation ranks among the most industrialized in the world, and the skill of American workers has in large measure contributed to this progress. With the growth and shifts of population, and developing industrialization, came changes in technology, materials and skill requirements. And, as surely as the Jordan flows, these changes had a significant impact on carpentry and its tradesmen.

If you go back far enough, you'll find that there were skilled woodworkers and carpenters at the beginning of man's time on earth. Noah, we are told, created an ark of "gopher wood" which was 300 cubits by 50 cubits by 30 cubits. (The cubit of Noah's time was the length of a man's forearm--from the tip of one's elbow to the end of the middle finger, roughly 18 inches.) Noah's floating menagerie was approximately 450 feet from stem to stern...quite a construction job!

Skilled carpenters sawed the cedars of Lebanon and erected Solomon's Temple. Their skills were handed down to Joshua ben Joseph of Nazareth and on to his son,

Jesus. The early Greeks used wood-construction methods to build their classic temples and create the Wonders of the Ancient World.³

Origins Of The Trade Union

Modern day trade unions have their origin in early craft guilds which go back to the thirteenth century in Europe. Merchant guilds, which preceded the craft guilds by several centuries, regulated trade and managed the business life of towns. Gradually the crafts began to develop their own guilds. The reason for developing the craft guilds was that merchant guilds had become wealthy, aristocratic and exclusive. They disregarded the interests of workers, mistreated them and exploited them for their labor. This movement was most pronounced in advanced industrial centers such as northern Italy, the Rhineland and the Low Countries.

Organizing workers in crafts at first caused trouble and even violence. Town governments opposed craft guilds and used armed forces to prevent their organization.

Craft guild struggles were often bitter. In many ways they were similar to those experienced by unions in their efforts to organize open-shop industries today.

At the head of a craft guild was a group of "masters". They had mastered their craft,

had become successful in their business, and formed a small, close corporation

bound by identical interests. They managed the common business of the guild, which included charity, entertainment, religious functions such as processions, the making of new regulations, and enforcement of the old ones.

Below the masters were apprentices. Apprenticeship lasted a number of years, depending on the craft. A boy was apprenticed by his father to a master for a number of years, on certain specified terms. He was to work for the master, obey him like a son, and conduct himself decently, not stealing, carousing in alehouses, or behaving in a disreputable way. The master promised to feed and clothe him, and lodge him in his own home. Apprentices often received a small sum of money as a reward for good behavior. Upon completion of his apprenticeship, a boy became a "journeyman," that is, he began to work for a wage ("journey" meaning "day," from the French journee).

The basic purpose of the guild was mutual protection for its members. This meant that strict equality was maintained. Competition was eliminated by requiring masters to begin and stop work at a specific time.

They might not work by candlelight to produce more for the market, employ their wives and children under a specified age, or invent new tools that gave an advantage over their fellow masters. Advertising was forbidden and buying and selling were strictly regulated.⁴

One of the oldest of the continuous carpenters' craft guilds was founded in 1333 in London, England. The Carpenters Guild of London

required each member to attend church mass and to pay dues of one penny per man. Its ordinances also provided for attendance at funerals of deceased members, and made provision for the guild to pay for the funeral services of poor members. Sick members were to be assisted as were those out of work.⁵

In the middle ages, "if the guild was completely self managing, it elected its wardens and made its own laws." It also appointed overseers who might visit the masters at work to see that rules were being observed. Masters caught violating the regulations were brought before the Guild Warden and his Council,⁶ a procedure and penalties not too dissimilar from what is provided under the present UBCJA constitution for violation of work rules.

Another practice begun in the mid-centuries, and continued by most craft unions today, is the use of a password, the ability to answer ritualistic questions or use a certain handshake in order to identify bona fide members of the trade.⁷ In addition to these identifying characteristics, of earlier guild practices, most unions now require that each member present his/her membership book or card with the current month's dues paid before he or she is recognized for full membership. The question of membership will be discussed in more detail later on in this chapter.

"Tools Of The Trade"

Any discussion of skills development would be incomplete without some reference to the tools which craftsmen used to apply those skills to their trade.

Archeologists tell us that the first man-made tools were crudely fashioned from stone. Later these stones were flaked and the edges rudely chipped to make them sharp and hafting was added for greater utility. Bone was also used as a tool from early history and, to some extent, is still being used in certain cultures today. Copper followed stone, and its malleability made it a particularly desirable metal. Tools made from copper did have limitations, however. Early metalworkers, perhaps in Persia, discovered that by mixing tin with copper in the proportion of 1 to 9, a harder and more useful metal was produced. This mixture of metals, which is called bronze, was employed more and more in the manufacture of tools and other objects.

Iron, which has become the basic metal used in modern-day tools, was also discovered in man's early history. Where it was first found, or who discovered the way to work it, is not known. Beads of hammered iron with gold have been found in Egyptian tombs of about 4000 B.C. "The first industrial employment of iron, however, occurred in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley where extensive mining began probably as early as 1500 B.C., in the mountains east of

Ninevah." Being cheap and plentiful as compared with bronze, iron became the favorite metal for tools, hitherto made from stone, copper or bronze, and for the construction of war chariots and other military equipment. The use of iron spread northward, eastward and westward into Europe, Asia and Africa.⁸ In the mid-Centuries tools made from iron were crude, relative to those in use today, and were by necessity developed by craftsmen to accommodate their particular needs. Modern toolmaking did not come into existence until the Industrial Revolution.

Transmitting Skills: Apprenticeship

Prior to the advent of modern toolmaking, as noted earlier, the craft of carpentry was highly developed and many of the tradesmen's creations were a tribute to their excellent skills. Those skills that were learned were nurtured, jealously guarded and handed down to others who the journeymen felt were worthy of their charge. This "handing down" of skills was accomplished, as previously mentioned, by apprentices working with masters. But, as masters became employers and entrepreneurs, the "handing down" process became the journeyman's responsibility. In the U.S. today, that responsibility is shared among unions, employers and government. Standards have been adopted and agreed upon in California under the Shelley-

Maloney Apprenticeship Labor Standards Act of 1939, as amended. Advisory members are usually appointed from the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, U.S. Department of Labor, the state apprenticeship division, the employment service, and local school districts. In addition to on-the-job training, apprentices are required to enroll in designated classroom study. In most cases, the minimum classroom work required is the equivalent of 144 hours per year. For most crafts the normal time for completion of apprenticeship training, depending on the trade, is 2-4 years. The age for beginning apprentices is 17 or older. A high school diploma or its equivalent is optional, based on area requirements. Applicants must furnish proof of citizenship or the intent to become a citizen; and take aptitude and evaluation tests as directed. Class attendance is regulated, as are the hours of work and the pay received. While these are general requirements for most crafts, they are also applicable to carpenter apprentices.⁹

"Look For The Union Label"

From ancient times skilled craftsmen valued the quality of their product. They set and attempted to maintain high standards for the trade and took pride in the work they performed. It was natural therefore for these skilled

workers to seek recognition for their efforts. Consequently, they developed the practice of leaving their identifying mark on what they produced. With the growth for trade and increased demand for more products, individual craftsmen were unable to handcraft each complete product. The rise of mercantilism resulted in greater concentrations of economic resources into the hands of those who employed others to turn out finished goods and services. This development changed the manner in which output was organized, and set in motion the need for trade unions.

As trade unions grew, the concept of identifying individual craftsmen shifted to identification of the craftsman's organization. In the words of The Carpenter:¹⁰

At the Fourth Annual Convention of the United Brotherhood of 1884, the 22 delegates in attendance took a major step towards unification by adopting an official emblem to symbolize their united purpose.

Assembled in Workmen's Hall, Cincinnati, O., these craft representatives from 16 different cities chose a symbol which was patterned after one adopted by the old National Union of Carpenters' executive board, which had been organized in September, 1865. The Latin inscription, "Labor

Omnia Vincit," which appears on the emblem, has remained the official motto of the Brotherhood for almost a century. Translated into the English "Labor Conquers All Things," it is reflective of an ideology to which all serious workers have subscribed and dedicated themselves over the years.

In addition to the motto, the Brotherhood's official seal, or emblem, consisted in 1884, as it does today, of a rule, a compass, and a jack-plane contained within a shield. Each of these parts had special meaning for the delegates. By including the rule, the members indicated their pledge to abide by the Golden Rule--that is, "To do unto others as we would have others do unto us." With the compass, they expressed a desire to surround their members with better conditions not only in the work place, but also in the social, moral, and intellectual world. The jack-plane was chosen as a symbol of carpentry trade. Finally, the shield, which constitutes the outline of the emblem, signified that all those who wore the emblem were morally responsible for upholding and protecting the interests of the organization and its members.

The colors of the Brotherhood's official seal were also carefully selected by those attending the 1884 Convention.

Pale blue was chosen to symbolize ideals as clear, blue and lofty as the skies. The dark red was selected to denote that labor is honorable, and to represent the red blood that flows through the veins of all who toil with dignity.

Later on, the color of white and gold was added to the label--white as a gesture of patriotism, and gold for more artistic appearance and to signify proper remuneration for those who earn their living by the sweat of their brow.

The official label of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America has been the symbol of "Union Made" for members of more than three-quarters of a century. Officially adopted at the turn of the century in response to the Brotherhood's proud desire to identify its work, the union label denotes the quality of all of the products upon which it appears, and it symbolizes the faithfulness to true unionism on the part of the men and women who have made these products.

Prior to the year 1900, the Brotherhood had no formal, universal label to attach or stamp on woodwork to indicate that it had been made by union members. In some cities, however, local unions had independently adopted their own labels as

members. As far back as 1869, the Carpenter's Eight-Hour League of San Francisco issued a stamp to differentiate the work done in 8-hour day planing mills from that done in competing 10-hour day mills. Nevertheless, on the whole, the usage of union labels was not widespread or very successful before 1900.

At the Eleventh General Convention of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, held in Scranton, Pa. in September, 1900, Cabinet Makers Local Union 309 of New York City presented a resolution proposing the adoption of a Union Label for universal use. This was to be attached to all products manufactured in plants employing United Brotherhood members. After much deliberation, the Convention referred the matter of drafting a design for an official Union Label directly to the General Executive Board and the General Officers.

On January 15, 1901, the General Executive Board adopted a design and directed the General Secretary to have it registered with the United States Patent Office in Washington, D.C. On October 24, 1902, the Patent Office replied that the Label could not be registered, for "the Trade Mark Act provides registration to an individual, a firm or a corporation..." and the Brotherhood did not fall under any of these categories.

In spite of this rejection, the Brotherhood was determined to make the Label operative. It learned that in order to do this, the Label had to be registered individually in each and every state of the union. By May, 1904, the Label had been registered in forty-one states.

Before the registration was completed, a different label had been adopted by the Brotherhood. At the 12th General Convention in Atlanta, Ga. in the fall of 1902, delegates from New York City proposed that the Brotherhood use the New York Union Label in place of the design prepared by the General Executive Board. This action was approved by the Constitution Committee.

The Union Label quickly became associated with high standards and respectable work conditions. Pursuing the goal of the early label movement and the American Federation of Labor to establish an eight-hour day, the carpenters would only allow a shop or mill to use the newly adopted label if its work day consisted of eight hours or less and if it met minimum standards of pay. Furthermore, only a select Union Shop Delegate was authorized by the Constitution Committee to apply the Union Label. Under no conditions could an employer handle it. This concept still applies today.

The Brotherhood's Union Label can be found today on furniture, in houses of worship, in the schools of America, through the halls of the Congress, as well as on manufactured items of the forest products and the building trades industries. It stands as one of the most important pillars in the structure of the United Brotherhood, as it shows that the products bearing this label are produced under fair working conditions and fair wages by workers united for their common welfare.

The Carpenter Defined

To better understand the structure and composition of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, it is essential that its constituent trade groups be identified. Heretofore the generic term of carpenter has been sufficient. When is a carpenter not a "carpenter," but is a member of the Brotherhood?

The constitution of the UBCJA is the document which governs the organization. It sets forth the object of principles, establishes the forms of governance, conditions of membership, qualifications for election to office, affirms the autonomy of the trade and asserts its claim of jurisdiction over the many divisions and subdivisions of the trade.

Under Section 7 we find the following language:¹¹

Section 7. The trade autonomy of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America consists of the milling, fashioning, joining, assembling, erection, fastening or dismantling of all material of wood, plastic, metal, fiber, cork and composition, and all other substitute materials. The handling, cleaning, erecting, installing and dismantling of machinery, equipment and all materials used by members of the United Brotherhood.

The jurisdiction claimed includes, but is not limited to, the following divisions and subdivisions:¹²

Carpenters and Joiners; Millwrights; Pile Drivers, Bridge, Dock and Wharf Carpenters, Divers, Underpinners, Timber Workers and Core Drillers; Shipwrights, Boat Builders, Ship Carpenters, Joiners and Caulkers; Cabinet Makers, Bench Hands, Stair Builders, Mills Workers; Wood and Resilient Floor Layers, and Finishers; Carpet Layers; Shinglers, Siders; Insulators; Acoustic and Dry Wall Applicators; Shorers and House Movers; Logger, Lumber and Sawmill Workers; Furniture Workers; Reed and Rattan Workers; Shingle Weavers; Casket and Coffin Makers; Box Makers,

Railroad Carpenters and Car Builders; Show, Display and Exhibition Workers; and Lathers, regardless of material used; and all those engaged in the operation of woodworking or other machinery required in the fashioning, milling or manufacturing of products used in the trade, or engaged as helpers to any of the above divisions or sub-divisions, and the handling, erecting and installing material on any of the above divisions or sub-divisions; burning, welding, rigging and the use of any instrument or tool for layout work, incidental to the trade; and the erection and placement of all materials used in lathing procedures. When the terms "carpenter(s)" or "carpenter(s) and joiner(s)" are used, it shall mean all the divisions and sub-divisions of the trade.

Despite these divisions of the trade, the Brotherhood, like some other American craft unions in recent years, has tended toward industrial or horizontal type unionism, i.e., organizing all the workers in a plant or factory. This trend by the Brotherhood toward industrial organization is changing the membership composition. Out of a total membership of over 750,000, approximately 40 percent are now industrial affiliates. As the largest craft union in the United States and one of the oldest, it is ironic that industrial unionism is finding support within the UBCJA. Perhaps

such a move was inevitable and in the long run could assure survival as well as future growth possibilities. That it will bring about organizational change there is little doubt, but exactly what form the change takes will depend upon many factors.

Governing The Union

Governance of the Brotherhood is set forth in its constitution and laws.¹³ Under that document the General Convention, when in session, has supreme executive, legislative and judicial authority over the union. From 1881-1884, the convention was held annually; 1884-1920, convention held every two years; 1920-1981, convention held every four years. After 1981, the General Convention will be held every five years.¹⁴ All the local unions in North America, whose members are in good standing (observing all union rules), are represented at the Convention. Representation at such conventions is based on the number of members in each local.

When the General Convention is not in session, the General Executive Board, with some exceptions, exercises control over the affairs of the union. The General Executive Board is composed of the following officers: General President, First General Vice President, Second General Vice President, General Secretary, General Treasurer and one board member elected from each of ten districts. These ten

districts are apportioned among the fifty states and Canada. The General Executive Board meets quarterly, or when required, shall hold special meetings at the call of the Chair. The General President chairs the Executive Board. In practice, and in fact, the General President is the chief executive with responsibility for running the International union in its day-to-day activities.

Under the UBCJA constitution, locals or ladies' auxiliaries may voluntarily form state or provincial councils. The function of these councils is to assist in organizing and strengthening the locals in their respective state or province.

Where there are two or more local unions of the Brotherhood located in one city, they must establish a District Council. In addition, District Councils may be formed in localities, other than cities where two or more locals in adjoining territory request it, or where the General President requires it. The primary function of District Councils is to make working or trade rules for locals and members within their districts.

The basic unit, and the most important link in the organizational chain, is the local union. Beginning in Chicago in 1881, with 36 delegates from 14 local unions representing a total membership of 2,042, the UBCJA has grown to its present size of 1,832 local unions representing approximately 3/4 million members.

Each local of the Brotherhood has its own elected officers, whose duties and responsibilities are set down in the constitution and laws. The officers are: President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Conductor, Warden and three Trustees, and they constitute the local's Executive Committee. One other individual who is, in some instances, not a member of the Executive Committee but who, nonetheless, may attend the committee meetings, is the Business Representative. Although he/she has a voice, but no vote in the committee deliberations, the position is one of influence and power within the local's structure. Normally it is the responsibility of the Business Representative to "police" or enforce the labor agreement between the union and the employer; to see that workers are members of the union; to visit job sites which are often spread over a wide area; to protect the union's jurisdiction; to make sure that the proper wage and benefit payments are being observed, and to settle disputes over working conditions arising on the job. Assisting the Business Representative in these duties, at specific plants or work locations, is the job or shop steward. In some instances, for efficiency or budgetary reasons, an officer of the local may also serve in the position of Business Representative. In such cases, the Business Representative is a member of the Executive Committee. This brief overview of the structure of the UBCJA is lacking in detail, but for anyone interested in a better understanding of the subject, additional information may be found in the January 1, 1982 constitution and laws of the organization.

Issues of Jurisdiction

Over the years, a persistent and difficult problem confronting unions has been the issue of work jurisdiction, i.e., which union has control over the work to be performed. Disputes among unions over this issue have at times generated such interunion hostility that cooperation on other matters concerning organized labor solidarity has been adversely affected.

Within the building trades industry disputes among trade unions over jurisdictional work assignments are commonplace. Due to the complexity of the industry, with more than fifty distinct trades, each having a separate local craft union, the boundary line between the work of one trade and another is, and has been, difficult to determine. Friction often occurs along the marginal lines and the resultant interunion struggles have a long and stormy history.

Each union jealously guards its jurisdiction. This desire for complete control over one's field of endeavor is not peculiar to the UBCJA, or for that matter, restricted to labor unions in general. Every businessman attempts to control as much of the market as possible. From the worker's perspective, once he or she attains a skill or proficiency at a particular task, each may regard that as property or a "vested interest." Selig Perlman called this

"job consciousness" and asserted that it was the one overriding characteristic of the American worker. Many students of this subject perpetuate this subjective interpretation as the underlying cause of jurisdictional disputes.¹⁵ Among the primary causes listed, with varying degrees of emphasis, are: the introduction of new building materials; the introduction of new machinery; changes in construction methods; aggressiveness of some unions; the existence of dual unions; and claims by industrial unions.

The tenacity with which the UBCJA has clung to its jurisdictional claims is unmatched in American labor history. While under the leadership of the socialist and trade union organizer, Peter J. McGuire, the union stressed a policy of interunion cooperation on questions of organization and jurisdictional alignments. But, with the ouster of McGuire and the advent of such leaders as William Huber, James Kirby, and William Hutcheson, "business unionism" triumphed. The union then adopted a doctrine of jurisdictional laissez-faire, with the motto: "Anything made, or ever made, of wood."

The introduction of machinery into the building trades tended to standardize some work processes and reduce the amount of skill required to erect the finished structure. When machine products displaced skilled workers, jurisdictional fights occurred as to which workers would operate the machines. According to William Haber, in an early study of this subject, "one of the bitterest and most costly

disputes in American labor history" occurred between the UBCJA and the Amalgamated Wood Workers International Union (AWWIU) because of the introduction of woodworking machinery into the mills.¹⁶ This dispute is discussed in more detail later in the text.

During its existence almost every union has experienced some form of jurisdictional dispute within the family of organized labor. Some were more protracted and intense than others.

One such conflict occurred between the UBCJA and the International Association of Machinists and lasted over forty years. That dispute concerned jurisdiction over millwright work.

In a Treatise on Mills and Millwork in 1878, Sir William Fairbaine, a millwright himself, wrote that

The millwright of former days was to a great extent the sole representative of mechanical art, and was looked upon as the sole authority in all the applications of wind and water, under whatever conditions they were to be used, as a motive power for the purpose of manufacture. He was the engineer of the district in which he lived, a kind of jack-of-alltrades, who could with equal facility work at the lathe, the anvil, or the carpenter's bench. In country districts, far removed from towns, he had to exercise all these professions, and he thus gained the

character of an ingenious, roving, rollicking blade, able to turn his hand to anything, and, like other wandering tribes in days of old, went about the country, from mill to mill, with the old song of 'kettles to mend' reapplied to more important fractures of machinery.¹⁷

From the Dictionary of Occupational Titles:¹⁸

MILLWRIGHT: Installation man; machine erector; maintenance mechanic; plant changer. Installs machinery and equipment according to layout plans, blueprints, and other drawings in an industrial establishment, using hoists, lift trucks, hand tools, and power tools. Reads blueprints and schematic drawings to determine work procedures. Dismantles machines, using hammer, wrenches, crowbars, and other hand tools. Moves machinery and equipment, using hoists, dollies, rollers, and trucks. Assembles and installs equipment, such as shafting, conveyors, and tram rails, using hand tools and power tools. Constructs foundations for machines, using hand tools and building materials, such as wood, cement, and steel. Aligns machines and equipment, using hoists, jacks, hand tools, squares, rules, micrometers, and plumb bobs. Assembles machines and bolts, welds, rivets, or otherwise fastens them to foundation or other structures, using hand tools and power tools. May repair and lubricate machines and equipment.

In 1876, the millwrights of Toronto, Canada formed unions of their craft. After the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America had been formed and had chartered a local union in Toronto, the millwrights there affiliated with that local in 1894. Since 1886, the millwrights have enjoyed recognition within the Brotherhood's Constitution. According to Mark Perlman, the major dispute between the UBCJA and IAM over millwrights had its beginning "sometime around 1908, when the IAM decided not to accept millwrights as members, on grounds that they were insufficiently skilled for anything but the rigging of power belts." Behind this decision, Perlman takes note of other factors, "including a belief by the IAM that they could have squeezed the millwright's craft into oblivion and have inherited for itself the latter's job opportunity."¹⁹ Given the history of the millwrights and the skills they possessed, as indicated by Sir William Fairbaine, such comments and attitudes by the IAM played a major role in establishing the battle lines and set the stage for the more than forty-year struggle which ensued. There were other factors, however, which contributed to this and other disputes. Technologies, as indicated earlier, which changed skill requirements, used different materials and substituted steel for wooden machines, were perhaps more influential in bringing about jurisdictional conflict than any other single factor.

This dispute simmered and at times boiled within the Building Trades Department, the Metal Trades Department, The Structural Building Trades Alliance, the arbitration process, the NLRB, the courts and the AFL itself.

On September 18, 1954, president Maurice Hutcheson of the UBCJA and president Al Hayes of IAM signed an agreement which ended the bitter struggle between the two organizations.²⁰ The two union presidents were assisted in this historic settlement by Father Leo Kelly and Professor John Dunlop of Harvard University. The settlement gave the UBCJA conveyors, machinery, and motors in new construction work, and also in plants where the carpenters' union had had a long-term contract. Installation of turbines was divided equally between the two unions. In addition, a grievance system was devised to work out any dispute arising under the new accord. The IAM was granted jurisdiction over manufacturing and handling, installing, and repairing all printing presses and auxiliary machinery, most brewery equipment, and all machine shop work in connection with construction, on the site or in the shop.

After so many years, why was this settlement possible? Mark Perlman suggests four reasons: (1) there were new leaders in the organization who did not wish to relive earlier episodes; (2) the IAM's inability to drive the

carpenters out of the jobs; (3) the carpenters' annoyance at the machinists resorting to NLRB and the courts which did not really settle the issue between the two parties, and (4) participation by the mediators leading the parties along a conciliatory path.²¹ While these reasons appear to be valid, perhaps they are not all inclusive, but only a part of the larger picture. That picture would include changes in attitudes by the population toward labor unions, as expressed by Congress in the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947; a recognition by unions that their real threat came from outside their organizations, and that labor unity was essential for the protection and well being of the whole movement. In any case, this spirit of unity which helped to resolve the dispute between the UBCJA and IAM was sufficiently prevalent among all unions to bring about a merger between the AFL and the CIO the following year.

Along with the introduction of new machinery, the substitution of new materials played havoc with existing trades by reducing the amount of handwork and by creating new trades. After 1906, a new material known as metal trim was introduced and installed by members of the Sheet Metal Workers Union(SMWU). For twenty years the UBCJA contested this work with the SMWU.

Because of its small membership, the SMWU had little power or influence in local labor councils, but the AFL's Building Trades Depart-

ment was sympathetic to its claims. In 1909 the department instructed the UBCJA not to usurp the jurisdiction of the SMWU. However, the New York City carpenters had been awarded this jurisdiction by a local board and refused to accede to the decision. In 1910 the Building Trades Department expelled the UBCJA from membership. The executive board of the AFL ordered the reinstatement of the union, but the conflict persisted. In 1921 the newly formed National Board for Jurisdictional Awards granted jurisdiction to the SMWU. Again the UBCJA refused to abide by the unfavorable ruling and continued to strike construction sites. Under pressure from contractors and architects, the Board granted a rehearing in 1923 and again in 1926. At the latter hearing, a compromise agreement was signed which recognized most of the carpenters' claims.

In the words of William Haber: "The carpenters' union maintained control over this material only because it could fight the entire building-trades labor movement."²² The size and strength of the UBCJA within the AFL--it was the largest of the building trades and one of the largest of the affiliates--would be exerted again and again in these jurisdictional disputes. This is evident in the union's forty year struggle (1913-1954) with the International Association of Machinists over the installing of machinery; the fifty year fight (1928-1979) with the Lathers, who affiliated with the UBCJA in 1979; and the continuing disputes with the plumbers, and roofers, and laborers.

Rival Unions

One of the most spectacular struggles of this nature was between the UBCJA and the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners. Founded in Great Britain in 1860 with branches in the United States, the ASCJ never exceeded a membership of 10,000 and was not hostile to the formation of the UBCJA in 1881. Indeed, relations between the two unions were generally friendly until 1898, and the advent of "business unionists" William Huber and Frank Duffy. With the policy of "one trade, one organization" the new leaders of the UBCJA sought to amalgamate the ASCJ with their union. In 1902 the ASCJ charged the UBCJA with "unfraternal" activities. In 1903 the bitter strike and lockout in New York, involving 100,000 building workers, was a direct result of the conflict between these two organizations. As a result, the AFL worked out an amalgamation agreement, which was signed in 1912.²³

In a similar manner the UBCJA absorbed the International Union of Shipwrights, Joiners and Caulkers in the early years of the twentieth century, the United Order of Boxmakers and Sawyers in 1918, and the Lathers Union in 1979.²⁴

For some detached casual observers, the whole issue of jurisdictional disputes may seem inefficient and disruptive to the productive process, but for those unions so engaged, it is a matter of self interest. Should one take the negative view, it must be recognized that in many cases the employer or contractor is culpable. He may favor one craft or union over another and assign work accordingly. Or he may wish to vitiate the strength of a particular union by involving it in some jurisdictional embroglio and thereby accomplish his purpose. In the main, however, employer culpability occurs when he makes no assignment and allows "nature to take its course;" makes an honest mistake in the work assignment; makes a work assignment where a conflict exists between a local and national agreement; or when he does not understand the area practice.

No matter what view one may hold concerning jurisdiction, periodic disputes are likely to exist as long as there are changes in the methods of construction or production, new machinery or materials introduced. Jurisdictional conflicts between the UBCJA and CIO unions, beginning in 1935, were legion, but those disputes are discussed in later chapters.

Finally, some concluding remarks concerning technology and its impact on the UBCJA. From the dawn of civilization man has been inquisitive and inventive. Each new invention or discovery has made its mark on history and affected whomever it touched. From the dis-

covery of how to make fire to the production of the hydrogen bomb, the quest for new ways to do things had continued unabated. Most would argue that our social institutions have not kept pace with scientific advances, and there is a great deal of evidence to support this view. Despite this imbalance, change is inevitable and continuing. It is experienced and reacted to in ways which seem appropriate to every individual. This is no less true for unions than for other institutions. New methods, new materials and more sophisticated machines create the need for a more educated, skilled and adaptable work force. The UBCJA, with its multiple industrial and occupational composition, is as capable of accommodating these changes as any other union in the nation.

Chapter II

Before The Brotherhood: A Prehistory

The most momentous event in the early history of California was the work of a carpenter. James Wilson Marshall was a coach and wagon builder, a trade he had inherited from his father, who came to California in 1844 in search of steady work. Settling on a small plot of land just outside Sutter's Fort, in the Sacramento area, he spent his first months building and repairing spinning wheels, plows, ox yokes, and carts. In 1846-7, Marshall was an unpaid enlistee in John C. Fremont's California Battalion, but then returned, impoverished, to employment at Sutter's Fort. His employer, a Swiss immigrant named Johann Augustus Sutter, commissioned him to seek out a good location for a new sawmill. In January, 1848, while he was walking alongside a sluice channel at the site of the nearly completed sawmill, he spotted some yellow nuggets at the bottom of the water. Marshall's discovery triggered the "Gold Rush" which immediately converted northern California into a major population and economic center and accelerated statehood in 1850.

Strangely enough, gold actually had been discovered several years earlier in southern California, but the discoveries were little publicized and caused no stir. By contrast, the findings at Sutter's Mill generated a massive migration to California, sudden growth of new metropolises such as San Francisco and Sacramento, and a drastic labor shortage which was to influence the wage structure of northern California permanently. The resulting inflow into San Francisco made that city the

political, commercial, and financial center of California for at least the next seven decades.¹

Without a transcontinental railroad, the trip to California was perilous and uncertain. Some came to the Bay Area from Oregon, or from other parts of California, but thousands traveled in covered wagons across the plains, deserts and mountains or in ships around Cape Horn, or across the disease-infested isthmus of Panama, death or injury stalking them at every point. Many who came were single men, rough and undisciplined in demeanor, and the boom town of San Francisco gained a unique reputation for turbulence. Wages and prices were high, and skilled construction workers could command unprecedented earnings. With its location and its natural harbor, San Francisco soon became one of the world's leading seaports. The sailors were militant, opting for strong unionism almost from the beginning. The seamen and the carpenters led the way toward an active labor movement.

The first recorded strike in California erupted in San Francisco, in the winter of 1849, when the carpenters and joiners independently struck for a wage raise from \$10 to \$16 a day--an astoundingly high scale in this period. Within a week, the strike ended with a compromise settlement of \$13, boosted to \$14 shortly thereafter. This was, apparently, the highest construction wage in the country, but it could be preserved only as long as skilled labor remained scarce and the local labor market was largely isolated. Furthermore, prices were high, hours were long, working conditions

could be unpleasant or hazardous, and "fringe benefits" were unknown. Not until 1853 was a ten-hour day statute enacted in California.²

In 1850, mining remained the chief occupation of Californians, and not a few carpenters were numbered among the fortune-seekers. Most were to be disappointed, soon returning to the cities where they could ply their trade. Almost all were self-employed independent artisans, master craftsmen who simultaneously performed the roles of contractor and worker. Skilled in all aspects of their craft, they often passed along their skills to their sons in an informal apprenticeship system which the unions later would formalize.

There was plentiful work to be done in the burgeoning towns of northern California. The Gold Rush and accompanying boom transformed the quiet coastal village of Yerba Buena into the bustling seaport of San Francisco, boosting its population from about 1,000 to 30,000 within a few months. Carpenters were among the largest occupational groups in the San Francisco labor force, building and rebuilding a city which was to be struck by major fires five times. Southern California, by contrast, remained undeveloped and primarily rural, lacking a natural harbor.

Labor organization came quickly and strongly to San Francisco. The sailors, whose hardships and servitude were chronicled by California author Richard Henry Dana in Two Years Before The Mast and other works, organized against the oppression which they suffered, and they brought their commitment to unionism to

the Bay Area labor force. They were joined by many of the skilled craftsmen, who were in effect the "aristocracy of labor". The San Francisco experience typifies, in this last respect, the American pattern of unionization: The occupations which tend to organize first are those with a strong bargaining leverage and existing standards to protect and preserve. The California carpenters fit this pattern ideally; the seamen were an exception, impelled to organize by the special conditions of their trade.

Organization emerged miraculously out of the initial chaos and turbulence of this booming city. The vigilantes brought their own dubious form of law and order, transforming themselves occasionally into strikebreakers; the employers formed their own associations; and labor organized new unions and affiliated with a variety of political groups or parties. The mining camps had been a crude form of early organization, and many of the migrants to San Francisco had union backgrounds. The Germans and the Irish, in particular, were readily organizable.

Chinese laborers, first attracted by the Gold Rush, came thereafter in increasing numbers to work in several of California's growing industries.³ The railroads were important employers of Chinese labor, and it is believed that Charles Crocker of the Central Pacific Railroad recruited Chinese laborers in the Far East to help build that railroad. The Central Pacific and the eastern-based Union Pacific raced to complete the first transcontinental railroad. The Central Pacific's Chinese

workers, laying rails eastward from Sacramento, competed with the Union Pacific's many Irish laborers to determine which group could lay the most miles of track each day. The Chinese set a record by laying just over ten miles in a little under twelve hours, and thus acquired the reputation as hard and strongly competitive workers.⁴

The Chinese also worked in agriculture, and continued to work in the mines, but, while they made inroads into some branches of manufacturing such as cigarmaking and the garment and shoe industries, they were generally excluded from most manufacturing lines. The wages of Chinese workers in every industry were generally lower than those paid to available white workers, raising the fear among whites that they would be displaced by cheaper Chinese labor.

In addition, there was a widespread belief that many of the Chinese came to the United States as contract laborers, or "coolies," under semi-bondage. The direct contractors were generally perceived to be wealthy Chinese, but their control over the poorer masses of immigrants could become a channel through which unscrupulous Caucasian employers could exploit this group of workers in even greater degree. Since the United States had only recently fought a bitter Civil War to abolish slavery, the specter of a new class of "semi-slaves," brought in from a populous country where many people might eagerly desire to come here on any terms, sent chills of fear through the local population.⁵

The truth of this image of the Chinese is now in some doubt. The United States Government had, soon after the Civil War, banned the importation of contract labor. While many of the Chinese had to borrow the money for their tickets to come to the United States, and thus were in a sense "bound" to wealthy Chinese until the debts could be paid off, the degree of control exercised over them can be questioned. Generally, the studies conducted on the experience of Chinese workers themselves are few in number, though growing. We know much more about what was thought of them, than about their real situation and experience.

What was thought of them was, no doubt, tinged with a large dose of racial stereotyping. Nevertheless, the Chinese did come from a much poorer, less developed society, and could, for a variety of reasons, be made to work for less than the "white man." This fact inflamed the animosity of local workers against the Chinese, who were viewed as tools of the "monopolies" to undermine the standards of American workers. Because the Chinese were concentrated on the west coast, and particularly in California, agitation on the so-called "Chinese question" was especially virulent here. This question was one of three interrelated issues (the other two were the eight-hour day struggle and the anti-railroad crusades) which dominated California politics and labor relations from statehood in 1850 to at least the end of the nineteenth century.

The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 finally destroyed California's relative isolation and brought new waves of

migration, but long before this event, the surge of disillusioned miners into San Francisco and other northern cities and the continuing influx of foreign-born immigrants had undermined the high wage structure established at the height of the Gold Rush. By 1860, the \$14-a-day wage for carpenters in San Francisco had declined to \$6. In 1853, temporary organizations of carpenters struck for higher wages in San Francisco, Sacramento, and Stockton. Throughout this period, the ten-hour day was standard, and the earliest statewide organization of carpenters concentrated on the goal of achieving an eight-hour day.⁶

The Early Eight-Hour Movement In California

The movement for an eight-hour day in California was sparked largely by a printer, A.M. Kenaday, and a carpenter, A.M. Winn. Kenaday was the first secretary and second president of the San Francisco Trades Union, organized in 1863 as the first central labor council. He initiated the movement as a rallying point for otherwise isolated and self-centered unions. Under Winn's leadership, the carpenters soon took up the cause, forming the House Carpenters' Eight-Hour League, with 50 statewide affiliates, and the Mechanics' State Council.

Winn was a southerner in origin, born in Virginia in 1810 and later moving to Mississippi, where he took up the carpenter's trade. Coming to California in the early days of the Gold Rush, he became the first mayor of Sacramento, engaged in the real estate and planing mill businesses, and was appointed a brigadier general in the state militia. He moved to

San Francisco in the sixties, where he became an active leader in the labor movement. A natural and inveterate organizer, he became president of both the House Carpenters' Eight-Hour League and the Mechanics' State Council, a leader in the anti-Chinese movement, a temperance crusader, and in his later years until his death in 1883, a catalyst in formation of the Native Sons of the Golden West. Philosophically he was a curious blend of populist and bigot, combining a passion for unionism and economic reform with a bitter antagonism toward the nonwhite races. In this respect, he was not unlike many other Californians in the union and "progressive" ranks.

The arguments for a mandatory eight-hour day had diverse bases. Unemployment was a growing problem in California, and a shorter work day was regarded as a means of creating more jobs. Unions feared that employers would respond to high wages by lengthening hours of work per day (pay still was on a daily basis, with a six-day week). Winn argued for the shorter day on broader social grounds: Reductions in the work day would soon give workers the leisure time needed for more education and self-improvement, resulting in the eventual abolition of class distinctions based upon differences in education. With wide implementation of the eight-hour day, schools for men would spring up.⁷

The employers, with strong support in the press, countered that California wages already exceeded those in other areas; though wage levels were well below the high point of the Gold Rush, they still were relatively generous.

A reduction in the work day, with continued high pay, could not be sustained competitively. Even some of the unions agreed that an eight-hour-day was not economically feasible in their trades, though they usually endorsed the general principle.⁸

The movement for an eight-hour-day proceeded through both legislative and bargaining channels. In the mid-1860s, the stronger trades, led by the building trades, struck for a negotiated eight-hour-day, but they recognized that such agreements would always be endangered by competition from lower-cost labor. Thus, they petitioned the state legislature to enact a bill stipulating that eight hours constituted the standard length of a working day in California, unless the employer and employees agreed upon a longer day.

The eight-hour movement was linked closely with anti-Chinese agitation. The Chinese were known for their willingness and ability to work long hours, and although there were relatively few Chinese in the skilled trades, the early unions feared that employers would import more Chinese to serve both as strikebreakers and as low-paid docile workers. The Eight-Hour League participated actively in the anti-Chinese movement, which erupted frequently in violence.⁹

The eight-hour-day and anti-Chinese issues became part of a broadly-based class movement, uniting the workers, organized and unorganized alike, in a common struggle against the major employers. Faced with initial opposition in the state legislature, the building trades organizations, with house carpenters in the lead,

announced in the spring of 1866 that, beginning in June of 1867, they would demand the eight-hour-day in their respective trades. Step by step, the various trades set the machinery in motion for adoption and implementation of the shortened working day.

A major demonstration for the eight-hour-day, featuring a torchlight procession, was held on June 3, 1867. Despite forebodings in the local press that the demonstration would become riotous, it was both well-attended and peaceful, with fiery speeches by the bill's chief sponsor in Sacramento, Assemblyman John Wilcox (a strong champion of labor, known as the "Mariposa blacksmith"), and by others who hurled epithets at the Chinese at the same time.¹⁰

By now, the house carpenters were heavily involved in the movement, with a reported membership of 1,800 in their Eight-Hour League. Though figures are imprecise, it appears that most of the house carpenters in San Francisco had achieved the eight-hour-day through negotiation, and other branches of the building trades--among them, the ship caulkers and shipwrights, later to become affiliates of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America--had preceded them. Some of the strongest and earliest of the craft unions were in trades associated with ships or harbor facilities: The first of the continuous organizations, the Ship Caulkers Association of San Francisco, was organized in 1853, followed by the shipwrights in 1857.

The carpenters were efficient and aggressive in organizing the drive for eight-hour-day legislation, covering all workers. Throughout 1867, support grew in the legislature, and on February 21, 1868, the bill was signed into law. According to custom, the labor organizations of San Francisco held a torchlight procession to celebrate the victory, with the order of march determined by the date on which each group had first obtained the eight-hour-day:

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Ship Caulkers | December, 1865 |
| Shipwrights, ship joiners | January, 1866 |
| Ship Painters | March, 1866 |
| Plasterers | August, 1866 |
| Bricklayers, Laborers | February, 1867 |
| Stone Masons | March, 1867 |
| Stone Cutters, Lathers | May, 1867 |
| House Carpenters' Leagues | |
| Nos. 1 and 2, Riggers, | |
| Wood Turners, Metal Roofers, | |
| House Painters | June, 1867 |
| Plumbers and Gas Fitters | July, 1867. |

The celebration was premature. The opening of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, the increasing vulnerability of the California economy to recessions and financial crises, the steadily expanding labor supply and rising unemployment, the immigration from Asia, and growing resistance of employers combined in the 1870s to weaken the gains of labor. By the end of the decade, the eight-hour-day had vanished, replaced again by the old ten-hour-day. The unions did not yield easily, but economic circumstances ultimately overwhelmed them.

The unions fought a rear-guard action, although it was clearly a losing cause and the struggle would not be effectively resumed until the 1880s, after formation of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners in 1881 and the American Federation of Labor in 1886. As early as August, 1869, the California Planing Mills announced that the ten-hour-day would be reinstated, and the Eight-Hour League responded by commending members who refused to work the ten hours or rejected offers of additional pay for longer hours. The League resolved that its members would refuse to "put up work gotten out of the California Mills from and after the day they commenced working their men ten hours a day," and that a stamp would be issued to any mill maintaining the eight-hour-day, so that the members could boycott only the ten-hour mills. This was, of course, an incipient form of union label.¹¹

With the existing eight-hour law virtually a dead letter, the carpenters and their allies again turned to political action. Their major vehicle was the new Workingmen's Party, formed in 1877 under the leadership of a drayman and former vigilante named Dennis Kearney. Both radical and racist, the party made the eight-hour-day and Chinese exclusion its priority goals, and also called for the direct election of U.S. Senators; state regulation of banks, railroads, and industry; compulsory education; more equitable taxation; and social control of monopoly and concentrated wealth. The party experienced much success in the elections of 1878 and 1880, and sent 51 delegates, of a total of 152 delegates, to the state constitutional convention in 1878.¹²

The occupational and political composition of the 51 delegates to the 1878 constitutional convention reflected the amazing diversity of party membership. Almost all were from northern California (only one delegate, a farmer, was from Los Angeles), and all were white. There were many lawyers, merchants, physicians and other professionals, and farmers numbered in their ranks, but four delegates were listed as carpenters, one as cabinetmaker, and one as boatmaker: William P. Grace of San Francisco (formerly a Republican), Ezra Soule of Plumas (formerly a Republican), S.F. Thompson of an unidentified section of northern California (formerly a Republican), and the most influential carpenter leader, P.M. Wellin of San Francisco (formerly an Independent); cabinetmaker John D. Condon of San Francisco (formerly a Democrat); and boatmaker Charles Klein of San Francisco (formerly a Republican).

One goal of the Workingmen's Party delegation was to insert into the new state constitution a clause firmly establishing the eight-hour-day as the standard length of the working day. Delegate Charles Beerstecher of San Francisco, a lawyer and former Republican, introduced the following resolution early in the convention:

No person shall be employed in manual labor (except agricultural) by any person, firm or corporation, in this state for more than eight hours in any one day, except when it is necessary to repair machinery, to prevent stoppage or to prevent impending calamity. Eight hours constitute a day's work and in no case shall labor exceed forty-eight hours. Violations hereof shall be punished as misdemeanors.

Delegate P.J. Joyce of San Francisco, a furniture dealer and former Independent, added the following: "In all state, county, municipal or town work done by day, eight hours shall constitute the working day." There was sharp and long debate on this resolution, with opponents arguing that no employers could pay the same wages for eight hours' work as were paid for ten hours, and supporters claiming that working hours could be even shorter than eight hours per day. The eight-hour provision finally was approved by a resounding margin, 99 to 17, with only one Workingmen's Party delegate in opposition: J.E. Dean of El Dorado, a Justice of the Peace and former Republican.¹³

The Workingmen's Party delegates also favored a strong provision for a so-called "Mechanics' Lien," which would give laborers first claim on any business assets for payment of unpaid wages. Delegate P.M. Wellin introduced a resolution to this effect, but the wording did not go far enough, in the view of other Workingmen's delegates, and amendments broadened and strengthened it. Delegate S.J. Farrell of San Francisco, a gas fitter and former Democrat, declared that "We are only asking the Convention to protect the laboring men and mechanics from thieving contractors and scoundrelly owners who connive to swindle the workingmen out of their wages."¹⁴ The resulting Section 15 of Article XX of the State Constitution incorporated the essence of the Workingmen's Party's "Mechanics' Lien" resolution.

The carpenter delegates had an interest in other economic issues as well, notably, the creation of a new tax system which would place

a relatively greater burden of taxation on property, wealth, businesses, and land values. Henry George's theory of land taxation had wide support, and delegate Charles Swenson of San Francisco, a restaurant owner and former Republican, proposed that "all land in this state, of equal productive capacity, shall be taxed alike without reference to improvements." Carpenter delegate Wellin added to land taxation a full levy on banks, mining, and other stocks, "to be assessed at their full value in money." Section 1 of Article XIII of the State Constitution, as adopted, became a modified version of the provisions suggested by the Workingmen's Party, with a mandate that land and the improvements thereon be taxed separately, and Section 9 created a State Board of Equalization, whose duty "was to equalize the valuation of taxable property of the several counties of the state for the purpose of taxation."¹⁵

The Workingmen's Party, with carpenters active in the membership and leadership, strongly endorsed the proposed new constitution and campaigned for it throughout the state. Fortunately, the Grangers and other farmers' organizations were allies, enthusiastic about the taxation and related economic provisions; California still was predominantly rural, and neither the Workingmen's Party nor the unions had sufficient strength to secure approval at the ballot box. Opposition was intense, especially from business and propertied groups, and the voters in San Francisco rejected the proposed constitution by a margin of almost 1,600 votes. Despite this, the support from rural areas proved decisive, and on May 18, 1879, the new constitution was approved statewide by a margin of almost 11,000 votes out of about 145,000 cast.

The Anti-Chinese Issue

By far the most controversial issue debated at the constitutional convention of 1878 was the prospective treatment of the Chinese. Although anti-Chinese feeling prevailed widely in all areas of the state and in all political parties, it was especially virulent in the Workingmen's Party and among the unions. Along with the eight-hour-day, as noted before, Chinese exclusion became the foremost "class" issue in the state, with the white workers and many of the merchants and farmers lined up against the large corporations and other major employers.

The animus against the Chinese had diverse origins. Economically, it reflected the fear of low-wage competition in the labor market and the presence of the Chinese as a convenient scapegoat for growing unemployment and/or deteriorating working conditions. Politically, it was an issue which demagogues and ambitious politicians, both generally and within the labor movement, could exploit to their personal benefit. Sociologically, it represented the paranoid reaction of a predominantly white, nativist and Christian labor force to a perceived "invasion" by an alien, "pagan," and culturally different population.

Even the Irish, such as Kearney of the Workingmen's Party, expressed deep prejudice against these Asian "foreigners," although the Irish themselves had only recently been the targets for similar outpourings of racism and discrimination. In the pre-Civil War period, the immigrant Irish encountered adverse stereotypes in the labor market, accompanied by

specific injunctions that "No Irish Need Apply." Usually poor and undereducated, and confronted by discrimination, the Irish workers often took the lower-wage and less desirable jobs. This later brought them into competition with the Chinese.

Nevertheless, the Irish had some measurable advantages over the Chinese. The Irish immigrants were white and, very importantly, they were Christian; to be sure, their Catholicism was unwelcome among many of the majority Protestants, but at least they were devout Christians. Moreover, many of them displayed a certain talent for politics and organization, and they could become active and loyal union members when given the opportunity. None of these routes to political and economic acceptance was available to the Chinese, who rarely were invited into the ranks of the unions and, indeed, were shunned as culturally and ethnically unworthy of membership.

Perhaps even more important than religion, however, was the fact that Chinese were declared "aliens ineligible to citizenship," while the Irish fell in the category of "free white males" who were permitted citizenship under United States law. The "free white male" provision grew out of an effort to deny citizenship to blacks during the period of slavery. But it could be, and was, used to deny citizenship rights to other nonwhite groups, particularly from Asia. This extension was by no means logical or inevitable, especially as the fourteenth amendment to the Constitution granted citizenship rights to

blacks in 1868. The denial of citizenship to Asian immigrants was a product of long court battles, the ultimate outcome of which was to place Asians in a peculiarly disadvantaged position in the work force.¹⁶

The legally disadvantaged position of the Chinese was of obvious benefit to employers, who could exploit this class of workers with special ruthlessness, while the workers could not use the legal system to defend themselves. Further, as immigrants, the Chinese could be readily subject to deportation if they caused any problems to their employers. Non-Chinese workers thus felt that the Chinese could be especially misused by California capitalists and monopolists, such as the railroads and large agricultural landowners. Their very helplessness made them more exploitable, and therefore dangerous to local labor.

The antagonism against the Chinese, most violently exhibited among the workers, went far beyond the bounds of mere economics. The invidious stereotypes and myths were pervasive, fed by lurid accounts of their presumably universal addiction to opium and involvement in "pagan" rituals. There were frequent, and sometimes locally successful, efforts to ban the Chinese from employment, and, beyond this, there were attempts to exclude them from the state and the country, to deny them property and business ownership, and to penalize any employer who hired so-called "coolie" labor. Resolutions to this effect were introduced by Workingmen's Party delegates to the 1878 constitutional convention, several of them by Wellin and Klein. Wellin even proposed that

the Chinese be prohibited from suing or testifying against any white person, and Klein wanted to make it "a criminal offense to send from this to any foreign country the bones or remains of an alien after the person has been interred for a period of two months or more." This latter provision was aimed at the custom of Chinese to send their deceased back to China.¹⁷

Many delegates felt that a state was not legally empowered to bar immigrants, a power which assertedly had been reserved in the United States Constitution to the federal government. Workingmen's Party delegate J.R. Freud of San Francisco, a merchant, argued in response that "the state has sovereign power over its people" and that "the power to regulate foreign commerce does not imply the right to force upon a free state hordes of coolies of degraded, servile and alien race." Therefore, he added, "from these conclusions, I again declare that California has the right and the power, first to stop the Chinese immigration, and second, to remove the Chinese already on our soil."¹⁸

The anti-Chinese provisions finally approved at the convention did not go as far as the Workingmen's Party delegates sought, largely because of genuine and widespread uncertainty about the legality of some provisions. The resulting Article XIX of the State Constitution, carried by a vote of 107 to 17, gave the legislature power "to prescribe necessary regulations for the protection of the state, and the counties, cities and towns thereof, from the burdens and evils arising from the presence

of aliens, who are or may become vagrants, paupers, mendicants, criminals, or invalids afflicted with contagious or infectious diseases, and aliens otherwise dangerous or detrimental to the well-being or peace of the state, and to impose conditions upon such persons as may reside in the state and to provide the means and mode of their removal from the state upon failure or refusal to comply with such conditions..." Section 2 further mandated that no California corporation shall henceforth "employ directly or indirectly in any capacity any Chinese or Mongolian," and Section 3 added that "No Chinese shall be employed on any state, county, municipal or other public work, except in punishment for crime."¹⁹

Two sections in the original resolution, forbidding persons "ineligible to become citizens of the United States" to settle in California or to own any property, were stricken from the articles in a very close vote. The articles did declare that the presence of such "foreigners" is "dangerous to the well-being of the state," and ordered the legislature to "discourage their immigration by all means in its power." The State Constitution, therefore, formally and explicitly designated all Chinese as inherently undesirable.

The skilled craft workers, including the carpenters, regularly joined the anti-Chinese crusades, but there is no reliable evidence that the Chinese significantly penetrated the ranks of the skilled. In an exhaustive study of this question, Professor Alexander Saxton concludes that "there was extraordinarily little confrontation between union members and Chinese competitors. In the building,

maritime, or metal trades sectors, the average craftsman could work out his entire life without ever setting eyes on an Oriental in his own trade."²⁰

On the other hand, we might note that employers had successfully managed to displace white with Chinese labor in a few manufacturing lines, as suggested earlier.²¹ The employment of Chinese was often accompanied by a transformation of the trade, from a skilled craft into a lesser skilled, factory-organized occupation. Undoubtedly, many of the skilled craftsmen, fearful of the erosion of their craft, were aware of these events and sought to head them off before they materialized in their own trade. Technological and economic change already was threatening to deskill some of the construction jobs. One did not have to see water seeping into the living room before erecting a dam against the flood.

Thus, the actual presence or absence of Chinese in a trade need not prove or disprove the reality of the perceived competition. The absence of Chinese in certain trades may reflect more the consequences of efforts by white workers to keep them out, than that there were no Chinese ready or available to work in these occupations. The sequence of events may have been: A fear of Chinese competition, the erection of barriers against Chinese employment, and the reality of few Chinese employed in the trade, rather than the sequence of: Absence of Chinese in a trade, irrational fear of Chinese competition based on lack of direct experience, and the continued exclusion of Chinese.

There were, to be sure, a few Chinese carpenters: The 1870 census recorded that about two percent of all carpenters in the state were of Chinese or Japanese nativity. Available evidence suggests, however, that most of the relatively small number of Chinese carpenters and cabinetmakers were located in San Francisco's Chinatown, or in other Chinese settlements, where they worked only for Chinese employers.²²

The carpenters, it appears, shared in a racial prejudice which was so widespread throughout American society that both the Democratic and Republican national platforms, in 1876, condemned the Chinese and urged their exclusion. The Democrats, as a working-class party with a white southern base and a strong element of racism in the ranks, were especially sweeping in their condemnation, describing the Chinese as "unassimilable," but anti-Chinese sentiment was growing in the Republican Party as well. Many of the employers, who had welcomed Chinese laborers as long as the newcomers accepted low pay for long hours, now resented the tendency of more Chinese to form their own businesses and to become competitors in at least the service and retail trade areas. In addition, a series of recessions had created labor surpluses in many trades, and employers may have felt less need for an abundance of Chinese workers, who might then be regarded as potential burdens on local charitable and other resources.

With Chinese immigration reaching a peak in 1876, the issue became national in scope and intensity. In 1882, Congress enacted the Chinese Exclusion Act, which lumped the Chinese with "morons" and "prostitutes" as groups which were categorically denied admission to the United States. The Act remained on the books until October of 1943, during World War II when China was an ally and the Act was a political and military embarrassment.²³

Although anti-Chinese sentiment was visibly strong among the white workers, it was by no means confined to the working class and the merchants. Many of the intellectuals, state and national political leaders, journalists and authors, and professionals such as lawyers and doctors joined the ranks, spewing prejudice not just against the Chinese but also the blacks (preeminently), Jews, and, somewhat later, the Japanese. Blatant racism was expressed at various times, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, by the tax reformer, Henry George; the noted author, Jack London; the state's first Democratic governor, Henry Haight; and various faculty members and presidents of the University of California and other institutions of higher learning.

Until well into the twentieth century, the "progressive" movement in the west (and, to a large extent, nationally) was infected with overt racial prejudice. Even the socialists, such as Jack London, could sometimes be found in the ranks of the bigots. Another former Socialist, and first president of the American Federation of Labor, Samuel Gompers, poured

invective upon a diversity of racial and national groups, such as the Asians, blacks, and even the southern Europeans (apparently the northern Europeans were "superior") and the slavs.²⁴ Gompers' expressed racism seems all the more ironical because he was Jewish in background.

Anti-Chinese feeling found its way into popular songs of the period, many of them written from the viewpoint of allegedly displaced or endangered Irish workers. The famous stage performer, Tony Pastor, sang the following verses:²⁵

Now Coolie labor is the cry,
"Pat" must give way to Pagan "John,"
Whom Christian bosses, rich and sly,
Have anxiously the heart set on.
For he's a nice, cheap Chinaman,
Who ne'er turns Turk or "strikes" his
work,
For more pay, like the Irishman.

Another song in the late 1860s--"John Chinaman"--contained the following lines:

Your sturdy tillers of the soil,
Prepare to leave full soon,
For when John Chinaman comes in
You'll find there is no room.
Like an Egyptian locust plague,
Or like an eastern blight,
He'll swarm you out of all your fields,
And seize them as his right.

Let the mechanic pack his traps,
And ready make to flit;
He cannot live on rats and mice,
And so he needs must quit.
Then, while he can with babes and wife,
Let him in peace retire,
Lest in the shadowed future near,
His children curse their sire.

At the full cost of bloody war,
We've garnered in a race,
One set of men of late we've freed,
Another takes his place.
Come friends, we'll have to leave this
land
To nobles and to slaves,
For, if John Chinaman comes in,
For us,--There's only graves.

Even after passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, and the return of prosperity in the 1880s, anti-Chinese agitation persisted. It was, in truth, a useful organizing and political ploy, with the union label often symbolizing and identifying an all-white shop. Professor Saxton suggests that the issue had enabled labor to form alliances with other groups within the state, including many which differed with the unions on other issues. It had also assisted in the revival of the Democratic Party in California and given at least a temporary power to the Workingmen's Party (which vanished in the later 1880s).

A bit later, the Japanese would replace the Chinese as major targets for discrimination, and would thereafter play a similarly

useful role politically and tactically. Successful organizing may frequently require the presence of a highly visible threat, a readily definable "enemy" against which organized protection is needed. Throughout American history, the "aliens," most particularly the non-whites, have fulfilled this function. Both the Chinese and Japanese, of course, were particularly inviting targets because, in truth, they did serve as "cheap labor" for California agribusiness and for certain other industries such as railroads.

California Carpenters On The Eve Of Permanent Organization

In 1880, the carpenters were almost entirely white and male, and slightly over three-fifths of them had been born in the United States, compared with about 46 percent of native-born in the California labor force as a whole. There were significant percentages of carpenters who were natives of Ireland, Germany, Great Britain, and Canada: almost one-third in California as a whole, and about 46 percent in the city of San Francisco. Carpenters accounted for almost 2.5 percent of the state's 376,505 workers, and San Francisco was the place of residence for about 29 percent of all carpenters in California. The vast majority of carpenters were migrants from other states or from foreign countries.²⁶

Census figures indicate that average wages for California employees, and especially for carpenters, far exceeded those for the United

States as a whole, and that the typical carpentering firm was relatively small. Of course, the Census tells only a part of the story, because it offers no data on the income of the many independent, self-employed carpenters, who apparently constituted about 85 percent of all carpenters in the state. Clearly, California carpenters fared quite well, in terms of income, in comparison with those located in the east.

The center of economic activity and labor organization continued to be in the San Francisco-Oakland area, but there were indications of growth and movement in southern California. As usual, the focus was on the eight-hour and Chinese issues, though they came to the fore later in Los Angeles than in San Francisco. Los Angeles County remained primarily rural and undeveloped, but there was some rise in population during the 1850s and in 1859, typographical workers organized the first union. Again, the more skilled workers led the way.²⁷

The decade of the 1860s saw some industrial and commercial expansion in the south, with a slight building boom late in the decade. Immediately after passage of the state's eight-hour-day law in 1868, the building trades and other craft workers took a concrete interest in establishment of the eight-hour-day in the various trades, organized a local branch of the Mechanics' State Council, and, in July, announced that as of August 10, the carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers, stone masons and painters of the League would work only eight hours a day, with no reduction in daily wages. Some of the crafts did indeed achieve a shortening of hours, but, as in San Francisco, it proved to be only temporary.

In the 1870s, Los Angeles developed still further as a city, with completion of a new railway linking the area with San Francisco, the subdivision of many of the large Mexican estates, and a growth in population from 5,728 in 1870 to 11,182 in 1880. Many of the more positive effects of growth, however, were offset by economic depression and the monopolistic practices of the Southern Pacific railroad, and organized opposition to the railroad and to the Chinese soon emerged. In 1876, the first Anti-Coolie Club was founded, and in 1877, the Los Angeles branch of the Workingmen's Party was formed. Anti-Chinese agitation was the party's major activity, and its two most prominent concerns were merged in a proposal to prohibit the Southern Pacific from hiring any Chinese. The party swept the city elections in 1878, but its control of Los Angeles was shortlived. Internal dissension weakened and eventually destroyed the party, and its attempts to tax Chinese workers and businessmen out of existence were clumsy and abortive.²⁸

In general, the era of the 1870s was a difficult one for labor. Unemployment rose sharply in the second half of the decade, triggered in part by the general economic decline following collapse of the Bank of California in 1875. For the first time, the state experienced the severe downturns in the business cycle which had plagued other parts of the country for years. The Workingmen's Party enjoyed some ephemeral successes, but it was already eroding as California moved into the decade of the 1880s.

The carpenters, as a trade, also faced new difficulties, although the full effect would not be felt until later in the century. The construction of mansions and other large residential and commercial buildings necessitated larger construction firms and work crews, and the general building contractor was making an appearance. This soon would weaken the role of the independent artisan, transforming him into an employee.

Employers, too, were beginning to organize more effectively, to combat unionism and preserve their unilateral control over wages and working conditions. Several of the earliest employer associations in the country were formed in San Francisco, a city which seemed to have a penchant for organizing. The southern part of the state was largely populated by migrants from areas which had traditionally been hostile to unions, and unions were virtually absent from the labor market.

Thus, despite their relative affluence, the carpenters of California were ripe for some form of organization in the 1880s. The early optimism had given way to uncertainty, and the future was clouded. New struggles, and even greater turbulence, lay just ahead.

Chapter III

The Carpenters Organize

As the country entered the decade of the 1880s, carpenters still lacked a permanent national organization. Past organizational efforts had consistently failed, despite significant growth at the local level. In California, the local organizations had been temporary or spontaneous, although the ship caulkers, as noted, had formed an association as early as 1853. The state's carpenters had been prominent in the eight-hour and anti-Chinese movements, but only through ad hoc organizations.

The need for stronger and more permanent workers' organizations was becoming increasingly obvious. In the post-Civil War period, the United States was emerging as a major industrial power. Businesses, under the leadership of such aggressive capitalists as Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller, were consolidating into corporate giants. Financial institutions, with the arrogant J.P. Morgan leading the way, wielded great and growing power. In California, the Southern Pacific Railroad, along with mining and agricultural interests, controlled much of the state's wealth and politics.

Business cycles of booms followed by devastating depressions were becoming a regular feature of American life. For much of the 1870s, the country had been gripped by a major depression.

The individualism of an older America was giving way to a kind of corporate collectivism. No longer could a typical worker depend solely upon his individual skill as the means of livelihood for himself and his family. Technical innovation and industrial reorganization could reduce him to the status of a cog in a vast and impersonal machine.

Craft workers, such as the carpenters, felt especially threatened by these changes. Unless their organized power could match the growing concentration of capital, they might soon be replaced by machines and by unskilled workers. Their skills would erode, and their wages would decline. It was in this milieu that the carpenters moved toward a permanent organization.

On August 8, 1881, 36 delegates from 14 carpenters' locals, in 11 cities, met in Chicago to organize the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. A Civil War veteran from Washington, D.C., Gabriel Edmonston, was named general president, but the key figure was the only salaried officer, general secretary Peter J. McGuire of St. Louis.

Principled, articulate, and indefatigable, McGuire was a socialist who deeply believed in the unity of the working class. Born in New York City on July 6, 1852, he attended parochial school, but had been forced to go to work at the age of ten, when his father joined the army. After working at a variety of jobs, in 1869 he apprenticed as a piano maker and became a journeyman in 1873. In May of 1872, he took part in a strike for the 8-hour day, a goal

which he cherished and pursued throughout his career. For some part of this period, he attended evening classes at the Cooper Institute, a school for workers, where he first met Samuel Gompers. Simultaneously he began attending meetings of the International Workingman's Association, and developed an interest in socialism.¹

For the last half of the 1870s, McGuire toiled in the carpentry trade but spent much of his time working in behalf of the Social Democrats. He was a dedicated unionist, convinced that a combination of worker syndicalism and political action could undermine the power of the capitalists. Moving to St. Louis in October of 1878, he promptly became active in the local labor movement and resumed his fervent activity in behalf of the eight-hour day. In 1881, he took a prominent leadership role in the newly-organized carpenters' local, and was elected the secretary of the St. Louis Trades Assembly, the city's key federation of unions. When he led a successful strike in the spring, his reputation spread, and, together with fellow socialist Gustav Luebker, he formed a committee to organize a national union of carpenters. He also edited a labor publication, The Carpenter, which was to become the journalistic voice of the Brotherhood. From this time on, he was the nation's leading spokesman for the carpenters. Later in 1881, he also was instrumental in organizing the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions, predecessor to the American Federation of Labor.

Clearly, the time was ripe for national organization. In more pragmatic terms, McGuire identified the major causes for concern in the trades:²

By the introduction of woodworking machinery operated in planing mills the old workshops and their handwork gave way very largely to machine-made doors and sash, machine-made mouldings, window frames, etc., so that consequently a larger amount of work could be done with less labor in a given time, resulting in protracted periods of idleness and unsteady work. And in addition, in many cities, the time-honored custom of day-work was rapidly giving way to piece-work, with the minutest subdivisions of the trade into petty branches, lessening the demand for skilled mechanics, and making the introduction of unskilled labor not only a possibility, but more and more generally the rule. The entire absence of any apprentice system, or any methods of mechanical training, contributed to augment the evils.

The goals of the Brotherhood were reflected in resolutions adopted at the first convention:³

- Shorter hours of work;
- Elimination of monopoly power;
- Passage of uniform and strong mechanics' lien laws;
- Abolition of competitive convict labor;
- Actions to consolidate all building trades unions;
- Establishment of employment offices in various cities;
- The stamping out of subcontracting and piecework;
- Avoidance of political party affiliation, with support only for candidates who represent the worker.

McGuire was a progressive leader, although his idealism sometimes had to be tempered by short-run pragmatic concerns. Even on sensitive issues of race, the Brotherhood was relatively advanced and enlightened. There never was a constitutional color bar, and there were black delegates to the early conventions, though they were from segregated locals. At the 1884 convention, held in Cincinnati, one black delegate was turned away from a local restaurant, and the convention immediately resolved that "in this indignity offered to Brother Rames, one of our delegates, we recognize a gross and ignorant insult to our body worthy of the severest rebuke at our hands, and we call upon the citizens and working people of this city to do all in their power to withdraw all patronage from the 'People's Restaurant' and hold it up to public execration." Rames subsequently was unanimously elected fourth vice president of the Brotherhood.⁴

All of the founding delegates of the Brotherhood were from the east, south, or mid-west, but carpenters from the far west soon would join them. In 1882, eleven carpenters in San Francisco banded together, under the leadership of Edward C. Owen, to form a union, and in March they received a charter from the Brotherhood, becoming Local #22. This west coast union soon became one of the strongest and most successful locals in the Brotherhood, promptly winning the eight-hour day on Saturdays. On May 1, 1883, Local #22 became the first carpenters' union in the nation to obtain the nine-hour day, and it also induced San Francisco employers to drop piecework. Membership grew rapidly, and four other locals

were organized in this period. Their composition reflected the characteristics and interests of the membership: one was entirely composed of Germans, while another contained only carpenters of French, Italian and Spanish extraction. A third comprised only stair-builders.⁵

The economic environment of San Francisco was favorable to unionism in the building trades. Building contractors, in this still-growing city, could not afford shutdowns at peak construction times, and were therefore inclined to make concessions rather than face a strike. Some of the contractors, especially the larger ones, welcomed widespread unionization of the trade, because it could protect them from lower-wage competition. In this inherently localized industry, of course, higher labor costs could be passed along to the consumer.

Somewhat earlier, the independence and highly developed skills of the typical carpenter had served as barriers to unionization. The artisans could move easily into the role of entrepreneur, and many of them identified with the interests of the contractors. Some union leaders complained that too many carpenters expected to become bosses. But with the increasing fragmentation of skills, growth of subcontracting, and expanding size of construction firms, this occupational mobility sharply declined and, in the later 1880s and in the 1890s, more carpenters thought of themselves as permanent members of the working class.

Furthermore, changes in the trade were perceived as threatening to the jobs of carpenters. Iron and other metals were in increasing use in construction, with bigger and taller buildings--skyscrapers in later years--in this city so vulnerable to earthquake and fire. The dilution of skills and growing specialization, diminishing the need for fully skilled carpenters who had mastered all aspects of the craft, raised the possibility that unskilled workers could enter the trade and take work which formerly belonged to the more skilled. These factors combined with the anti-Chinese and immigration issues to provide a visible threat to job security, further strengthening the appeal of strong unionism.

With these changes came a multiplication of trades on the construction site, bringing the carpenters into more frequent conflict with other unions over jurisdictional questions. At the same time, this tendency accentuated the need for greater cooperation among unions, since a strike by any one could close down all construction at the site and throw other unionists out of work. Further, with the various trades working side by side at the site, some relationship of wages and working conditions had to be achieved.

These events persuaded the carpenters to initiate a movement for greater unity among building trades unions. According to Jules Tygiel, the concept of a building trades council appeared as early as 1883, but the many difficulties and tensions involved in implementation delayed the formation of the San Francisco Building Trades Council until 1896.

Local #22, the largest union in the state, led the way, but its size alone seemingly posed a threat to the smaller unions. The relationship between the more powerful carpenters' union and the several smaller building trades unions always was complex: each group feared the possible dominance of the other in any council. This uneasy relationship persisted over the coming decades, at both the national and local levels.

A potent impetus to broader organization on the labor side was provided by the growing organization of employers. San Francisco employers quickly discovered that collective action on their side was needed to offset the expanding power of organized labor, and the Ship Owners' Protective Association of the Pacific Coast, formed in 1886, became the country's first employers' association created specifically to deal with unions. The Board of Manufacturers and Employers in San Francisco, in 1891, and the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association in Los Angeles, in 1896, completed the organization of major employers to preserve the open shop. Unless the unions joined forces, they could be picked off, one by one, in the accelerating employer counteroffensive.⁶

The chief weapons of the building trades unions were the "working card" and the union label. The craftsman's union card became a passport to regular work, and the local's "walking delegate," who later evolved into the position of "business agent" or "business representative," made the rounds of construction sites and mills to check cards. No nonunion

workers could be employed at unionized sites, and no loyal unionist would work alongside a nonmember. Nor should a union member work on or with materials produced under nonunion conditions.

The union label, originated in California during this period, became the device by which union conditions were enforced. Goods and materials not bearing the appropriate union label were subject to boycott, both at the work site and in the stores where they might be sold. Using these "secondary boycott" and "hot cargo" weapons, the newly united unions could force nonunion employers to adopt the union shop.

The weapons were particularly effective when the key transportation unions cooperated. If the teamsters, longshoremen, and maritime workers refused to handle nonunion goods or transport necessary materials to and from the work sites, the union position was virtually invincible. The broader the scope of collaboration among the various unions, inside and outside the building trades, the more successful were the measures adopted to establish and maintain unionization. Such reasoning underlay the further movement for organization of central labor bodies and state federations of labor. San Francisco's first central labor body, The San Francisco Trades Union, had been established as early as 1863, but it was short-lived; a similarly impermanent statewide federation had been formed in 1867. The permanent San Francisco Central Labor Council was organized in 1892, and the State Federation of Labor in 1901; much of their activity, however, was political in nature.

The various unions were increasingly concerned about the continuing influx of nonunion workers, which endangered the jobs and conditions of employees in union shops. The unions, of course, strongly supported anti-immigration legislation and persisted in the anti-Chinese agitation, but they were equally worried by the inflow of domestic workers. In southern California, the immigration was deliberately stimulated by "booster" organizations: chambers of commerce, real estate promoters, developers, railroads, and others who profited from population growth. The effect of this, and perhaps one of its major purposes, was to maintain a plentiful supply of labor, keep wages relatively low (especially in comparison with San Francisco's high wage structure), and make it difficult for unions to organize the workers. The San Francisco experience was much different: The circumstances of the city's early development had engendered high wages, notably in the building trades, and the workers were militant and quick to organize in protection of their advantages.

Throughout the country, in the 1880s and 1890s, local unions and their allies struggled against the flood of new workers into their respective jurisdictions. In this campaign, they ran directly counter to the pervasive efforts of employers and their associations to encourage an influx within the demand occupations. Each group placed ads or notices in newspapers published in other cities, with diametrically opposite messages: The boosters hailed the presumed advantages of moving to their area, while the unions pleaded with workers to stay where they were. In 1887, when the

Coronado Beach Company announced its plans to build a large hotel in San Diego, the local there warned, through the pages of The Carpenter that "there were already too many looking for work, that the cost of living was at least 40 percent higher than in the East, and that rents were exorbitant."⁷

A dramatic boom in population took place in southern California during the later 1880s, spurred largely by rate competition between the established Southern Pacific Railroad and the newly-arrived Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad (popularly known simply as the "Santa Fe"). The Southern Pacific had held a complete monopoly of rail transportation since its formation in 1876, but the Santa Fe reached Los Angeles in 1886 and promptly ignited a furious rate war with its older rival. Passenger fares from the midwest dropped from \$125 to as low as \$1, subsequently rising to the moderate level of \$25, and more than 200,000 persons traveled the rails to California in 1887 alone.

New towns sprang up by the dozens, many of them spawned by real estate promoters and land speculators or by the railroads; liberal arts colleges such as Occidental and Pomona were founded; and land values rose to absurd heights. One speculator, it is recorded, bought about 4,000 lots in the Mojave Desert for a price of about ten cents each, and then sold them for as much as \$250 apiece. In 1887, land prices in Los Angeles County zoomed from \$100 to \$1,500 an acre. In 1889, the southeast section of the county seceded and became a brand new county, called "Orange."⁸

The bubble burst in 1888. Property values dropped sharply, to more realistic levels, and several of the newly-organized towns vanished. Most of the new communities, however, survived intact, and joined the already established cities of Pasadena (the second largest city in Los Angeles County), Santa Monica, and Pomona as growing sections of the region. Among the communities which survived, and prospered, were Glendale, Inglewood, Azusa, Claremont, Glendora, Altadena, Whittier, Fullerton, Burbank (first known as Providencia), and La Verne.

Almost all of these towns were deliberately created by promoters and real estate agents. Azusa, for instance, was a pure-and-simple real estate promotion, whose name purportedly reflected the claim that it contained "everything from A to Z in the USA." A real estate promoter, and former railroad builder, W.N. Monroe, founded the town of Monrovia and was prominent among the founders of Inglewood. An eccentric millionaire, "Lucky" Baldwin, later founded Arcadia, just west of Monrovia. Still later, in the early part of the twentieth century, a visionary developer named Abbot Kinney transformed some marshlands near the Pacific Ocean into canals, and named the new community "Venice-By-The-Sea" after its counterpart in Italy.⁹

Southern California, in short, was a promoter's paradise. Almost everything was developed artificially, for entrepreneurial and economic reasons: Not even the citrus fruit, to become so identified with the region, was indigenous to it. Its natural assets were only the warm climate and the vast abundance of land,

but these were enough to provide the base for successive waves of induced immigration. The migrants, typically, were native-born and Anglo-Saxon in background, homeseekers and investors or speculators, middle-aged and older persons who were attracted by the climate and the opportunities for settlement at a low cost. Tens of thousands came from rural areas or small communities in the midwest or the south, where unions were rare or nonexistent. For many decades, the region remained predominantly rural and residential in character. The labor movement was small and impotent, although, as we shall see later, it contrasted sharply with the general population because it contained noticeable elements of progressivism and even of socialism.

San Francisco, by contrast, had developed in a wholly different way, and with a quite distinct type of population. The settlers of the northern city were much younger on the average, more diverse in national and ethnic origin, and more independent and militant. The San Francisco-Oakland area was characterized by relatively high wages from its inception, while southern California was developed as a lower-wage and "open shop" region. Many of the newcomers to the Bay Area had union backgrounds, or were culturally receptive to organization, whereas the migrants to the south usually were hostile, or, at best, indifferent, to unionism. In San Francisco, the daily Examiner, published by young William Randolph Hearst, was strongly pro-labor, while the Los Angeles Times, founded in late 1881 by General Harrison Gray Otis, was aggressively anti-union. The Times' masthead proclaimed its dedication to "True Industrial Freedom," a euphemism for the open shop.

In addition, the growth of industry and commerce in Los Angeles was stymied by the absence of a suitable harbor. The local campaign for a new harbor reached its peak in the late 1890s, sparked by the Chamber of Commerce and the Los Angeles Times, but an ugly controversy arose over the question of whether Santa Monica or San Pedro would be the site of the harbor. The Southern Pacific Railroad, which controlled the only rail access to Santa Monica, lobbied for that city, but United States Senator Stephen White and other powerful allies successfully fought for San Pedro as the location. Reflecting the union bent of the seamen, San Pedro subsequently became known as a "union town," but the rest of Los Angeles remained generally "open shop."

Greater Los Angeles, of course, remains a sprawling and decentralized region, sometimes characterized as "several suburbs in search of a city." Movement within the area was, and is, slow and time-consuming. Until the mid-1890s, the community lacked any effective system for local transportation, but in 1895 General M.H. Sherman and E.P. Clark completed a merger of all horsecar lines in Los Angeles and Pasadena and joined the two cities with an electric line. A year later, they converted the Hollywood-to-Santa Monica steam line to electric. Late in the decade, San Francisco capitalist Henry Huntington moved to Los Angeles and began the development of the Pacific Electric system, which absorbed the Sherman and Clark lines in 1909. The PE system, with its famous "Big Red Cars," dominated public transportation until World War II, but automobiles made a first appearance in Los Angeles in 1895 and, in the

coming twentieth century, would clog the roads.¹⁰ Despite these advances, the great distances still made local movement difficult, and this also created obstacles to union organization. Unlike the comparatively small and centralized San Francisco area, the vast Los Angeles community could not be easily unionized and "policed" by a few "walking delegates."

San Francisco remained the dominant urban center in California, but southern California was growing rapidly. The population of Los Angeles County jumped from 33,381 in 1880 to 101,454 in 1890, and between 1890 and 1900 the cities of Los Angeles, Pasadena, and Santa Monica doubled in population, Whittier almost tripled, and Long Beach quadrupled. The region still lacked an industrial base, despite some important oil discoveries by E.L. Doheny, and unions were visible only in the building and printing trades. Even there, the open shop prevailed, and the San Francisco unions became increasingly anxious over the potential threat to their established labor standards.

The Eight-Hour Struggle Resumes

In 1886, the American Federation of Labor was formed, bringing together several unions, largely of craft workers. Under the leadership of Samuel Gompers, of the Cigarmakers' Union, the AFL soon came to be the dominant labor federation in the nation, helping to destroy its more radical opposition such as the Knights of Labor. The new federation stood for "business unionism," or focusing the struggles of labor upon job-related rather than larger political and social issues.

The Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners played an important role in the formation of the American Federation of Labor. McGuire and other carpenters' leaders were instrumental in creating the new federation, and McGuire was elected its first secretary.

Despite McGuire's personal idealism and socialistic views, the realities of industrial society led him into the more conservative AFL. Big business, using its immense power, had already demonstrated its capacity to crush the more radical and socially conscious unionism. The so-called Haymarket Affair of 1886, in which capitalists and police violently defeated strikers led by the Knights of Labor, left no doubt about the ability and determination of the employing class to destroy a politically-oriented labor movement.

The particular characteristics of the carpentry trade gave further impetus to organization along craft lines. The carpenters were highly skilled craftsmen whose skill and independence were directly threatened by a possible deskilling of their trade. They could, moreover, better protect their economic status through a strong craft union, in an industry which was inherently localized and largely protected from national or interregional competition. In a trade characterized by considerable seasonality and intermittency, employers could not afford the withdrawal of skilled labor during critical periods of construction. When sheltered from competition, many contractors were prepared, as noted before, to accept higher wages and pass the added costs along to the consumer. Pragmatic considerations such as these led McGuire and the Brotherhood into the craft-oriented AFL.

Due largely to McGuire's profound commitment, the eight-hour-day remained a preeminent goal of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners. McGuire and Edmonston had already made the eight-hour-day a priority objective of the previous Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions. In 1884, they secured passage of a resolution, at the Federation's convention, to the effect that as of May 1, 1886, the eight-hour-day would become standard in all organized trades which had not yet achieved it. A general strike would be called, if necessary.

Some locals did obtain the eight-hour-day in that period, but most did not and there was insufficient enthusiasm and support for a strike. Even McGuire, who was a pragmatic union tactician as well as a socialist, did not find the time propitious for a strike, and urged caution and moderation. The other officers of the new AFL agreed, although all of them endorsed the principle of shorter hours.¹¹

In 1889, the AFL Executive Council selected the Brotherhood to spearhead a united national drive for the eight-hour-day. It was a natural choice: The carpenters had the largest and strongest union in the country, having gained further strength in 1888 through a merger with the New York-based United Brotherhood of Carpenters (which added the word "United" to the organization's official title). Moreover, the carpenters had consistently led the eight-hour movement, and had advanced further toward shorter hours than had any other major trade.

Within the Brotherhood, the west coast carpenters had been the pioneers. Local #22 had achieved the nine-hour day in 1883, and carpenters in Oakland, Alameda, San Rafael, and other northern cities soon followed; the Los Angeles carpenters were similarly successful in 1884. Their successes spurred movements in the east and midwest. Of course, the House Carpenters' Eight-Hour Leagues had mobilized in California as early as the 1860s, with many temporary victories.

The American Federation of Labor and the Brotherhood set May 1, 1890, as the target date for establishment of the eight-hour-day on a national scale. With this goal in mind, carpenters' leaders in both northern and southern California reformed Eight-Hour Leagues. In Los Angeles, Carpenters' Local #56, under the dynamic leadership of Arthur Vinette, sparked the campaign in 1889 and successfully pressured the City Council to adopt an ordinance mandating the eight-hour-day in all public work (the same ordinance forbade employment of Chinese). The San Francisco union leader, W.C. Owen, moved to Los Angeles and actively collaborated with Vinette in organizing the local Eight-Hour League.¹²

Local #56, later to be known as "Old 56," had been organized in March, 1884, by eleven carpenters, had increased in membership to 225 within a month, and had quickly become the largest labor organization in southern California. Under the leadership of Vinette, its secretary, the local fought for the nine-hour day, which it achieved in principle in 1884 but could not fully enforce. Vinette persevered

and by 1886, the nine-hour-day was effectively in force. The printers and the carpenters, the two most powerful unions in Los Angeles, sparked the creation of the first Trades Council, and it was therefore natural that Local #56 would again lead the fight for the eight-hour-day.

Its initial success in this revived movement was short-lived and superficial. The collapse of the land boom weakened the carpenters' union, and the Eight-Hour League soon vanished. Leadership in the eight-hour movement was then assumed by the Knights of Labor, the politically and socially active rival to the AFL, and by a new political force in California, Edward Bellamy's socialistically-oriented Nationalist Party. The party had strong support in southern California, even enlisting the enthusiastic participation of a wealthy property owner, H. Gaylord Wilshire, who also was a socialist. Vinette and another activist from the carpenters' union, Jonathan Bailey, sought to build ties with the Nationalists, and the new alliance temporarily achieved an eight-hour-day in the building trades, in 1890. Again, the gains were illusory, and Local #56 went into eclipse. The decade of the 1890s, characterized by frequent recessions and powerful employer resistance, was a difficult one for the Los Angeles labor movement. Now lagging behind the other unions, and torn by internal strife, Local #56 surrendered its charter late in 1892. It was replaced by Local #332, which was promptly organized by dissident members of "Old 56."¹³

New Local #332 took up the fight, but the carpenters lacked their previous strength. Although the local, with about 300 members, set June 1, 1893, as the date for implementation of the eight-hour-day, it was not until 1896 that Vinette could proclaim the success of the bitterly-fought campaign. For the rest of the decade, the local's vitality surged or waned in sequence with the business cycle. In relatively prosperous 1896, membership grew to 600, and it again became the largest union in Los Angeles. The severe recession of 1897 decimated its ranks, but, unlike many other southern California unions, it managed to survive this turbulent decade.

The experience in San Francisco was somewhat similar, despite the fact that the carpenters there were much better organized than was the case in Los Angeles. The building trades secured the eight-hour-day, in principle, as early as 1890: "Over ninety percent of the San Francisco contractors agreed to the reduction in hours without decrease in pay. It was reported that not more than fifty carpenters, both union and nonunion, were obliged to resort to a strike to obtain their demands."¹⁴ But enforcement remained difficult, even in the public sector where the eight-hour-day was legislatively mandated.

In 1899, when organized labor regained much of its strength, the state legislature enacted a new law making it unlawful for any person or corporation to require or permit any employee to work more than eight hours in one day in any public work, except in emergencies or wartime, with penalties for violation.

Other legislation followed, but for the next several years the new laws faced constant challenges in the courts. The eight-hour-day would not be firmly established legally until well into the twentieth century.

Only the anti-Chinese campaign rivaled the eight-hour-day as an emotional issue for organized labor. And like the Chinese issue, the eight-hour-day gave rise to scores of labor songs in the nineteenth century. One of them, called "The Toiler's National Anthem," was sung to the melody of "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys are Marching:"¹⁵

Toiling brothers, why contend
Til our youthful days are spent
And the vigor of young manhood pass away
We, the stalwart sons of trade
From our course will not be swayed
Till eight hours constitute a working day.

Eight hours a day sing we loudly,
Eight hours a day for toilers all,
Whether in the mills or mines
Or wherever trades combine
For eight hours a day we'll stand or
fall.

We'll have eight hours to rest
Oh! how long we've been oppressed
We'll have eight hours to work and eight
to play,
We'll have eight dollars, too.
Every cent before we're through
When eight hours constitute the working
day.

When toilers all unite
And aid with all our might
Labor's cause without delay,
To succeed we're fully bent,
And we'll never rest content
Till eight hours constitute a working day.

In 1890, a carpenter in New York wrote the following verses in a campaign song called "The Eight-Hour Day:"

The Eight-Hour Day
A Campaign Song by T.C. Walsh,
Local 63, New York

A glorious dawn o'er the land is breaking,
And from the sleep of serfdom waking;
See the sons of toil arise.
Hearken to the song they're singing,
Through the welkin gladly winging,
Joy unto the weary bringing,
On, still on, it flies.

"Let scabs and cowards
Do what they may,
Eight hours, eight hours,
Shall be our day."

Aloft our banner courts the sky,
The glorious day of freedom's nigh,
From toiling long and late;
"Eight hours" shall be our working day,
"Eight hours" to sleep fatigue away,
"Eight hours" to seek in wisdom's ray,
Improvement of our state.

"Let scabs and cowards
Do what they may,
Eight hours, eight hours,
Shall be our day."

Accursed be him who leaves us now,
Let slavery's brand be on his brow;
Let honest men him shun,
Let the viper crawl and creep
Within himself a hell fire deep
His conscience be, may he ever reap
Of evils many a one.

"Let scabs and cowards
Do what they may--
Eight hours, eight hours,
Shall be our day."

Much of the argument for the eight-hour day was put in moralistic terms. The pages of The Carpenter, personally edited by McGuire, were filled with homilies about the dangers of hard drink, infidelity, and possible marital breakup, presumably associated with excessive length of the working day. The ten-hour day, it was suggested, left no time for self-improvement, leisure, religion, family life, and education. The ideal carpenter was pictured as a good husband and family man, sober, religious, and homeloving. There were strong union reasons for encouraging such behavior: A property-owning carpenter, with family ties, was less likely to be an itinerant, moving from one jurisdiction to another in search of work, and more likely to be concerned with protecting his economic status in the trade and the local community.

Carpenters And "Coxey's Army"

Many of the carpenters in southern California were socially conscious and progressive. Arthur Vinette, the key leader in

Los Angeles, was much like Peter McGuire in philosophy: He was idealistic, self-sacrificing, and tireless in his dedication to the cause of unionism and social reform. He regarded labor organization as a means for the transformation of the entire economic system. Thus he was relatively unconcerned with narrow jurisdictional issues, more oriented toward the unionization of labor along class lines. He was politically active, finally joining the Socialist Party in 1904, just two years before his death.

Born in Canada, of French-Canadian parents, Viette attended college for a time and then learned the trade of ship's carpenter from his father, in Troy, New York. After an unsuccessful mining venture in Colorado, and stints as a postmaster and as justice of the peace, he moved to Los Angeles, where he organized the first carpenters' union and the first central labor body. Vinette spent the remainder of his life organizing carpenters, and laboring in behalf of social and economic reform, rarely earning more than \$50 a month (and much of that, according to his wife, came from boarders). Time and again, he was fired from a job in the trade for his union activity.¹⁶

As a union leader, Vinette consistently participated in movements proposing jobs or relief for the unemployed, public ownership of utilities and railroads, public works, and monetary reform. In 1894, there were 5 million unemployed persons in the United States, proportionately almost as many unemployed in relation to the total labor force as there were at the bottom of the Great Depression in the early 1930s. There were no provisions for relief, or

unemployment compensation, or food stamps, or public works employment. The unemployed had to depend upon their own meager resources, or those of friends and relatives or of private and local charities.

The situation was desperate in the recession-ridden 1890s. Organizations such as the Greenback Labor Party and the People's Party, espousing populist views, pressed for governmental action at the federal and local levels. In 1893-94, even some of the skilled workers were to be found in the ranks of the unemployed, and in early 1894 the Los Angeles City Council was induced to appropriate \$10,000 for a six-week trial public works program. This was a feeble response to a grave problem, and pressure mounted on Congress to adopt a more effective program.¹⁷

An Ohio farmer and retired businessman, Jacob S. Coxey, decided in 1894 that he would lead an "industrial army" to Washington, D.C., to lobby for a federal program of relief to the unemployed. Although he was wealthy, Coxey was sensitive to the plight of the unemployed and was an active populist. He petitioned Congress to enact a public works program, to be financed out of monetary expansion, and when the legislators failed to act, he joined with a former Californian, Carl Browne, to organize a march of the unemployed. The first contingent of "Coxey's Army," which also had some religious overtones, left Massillon, Ohio, on March 23, 1894.

In Los Angeles, where unemployment was severe, similar marches were organized and led by Lewis C. Fry and by Vinette. Fry proposed a

basic three-point plan for legislative action, which reflected the usual mixture of progressivism and xenophobia: Federal jobs for the unemployed, a ban on all immigration for ten years, and no alien ownership of land. On March 16, Fry led the initial contingent of 600 men, on foot, with Vinette already organizing a second army of jobless and poverty-stricken men. After a long and frustrating journey, Fry arrived in Washington on June 28, with 200 men.

Vinette pleaded with the City Council either to provide jobs for the local unemployed or to help finance the march to Washington. The Council ignored his pleas, but Vinette obtained some food, blankets and other materials through private contributions. With support from the Knights of Labor, the People's Party, and the electrical workers', cooks', and painters' unions, he brought together 167 men and, on April 2, Vinette's regiment left on foot for Washington.

Vinette's men were faithful churchgoers. They attended church services in Whittier, where some of the citizens gave them meat, eggs, fruit, bread, and butter, plus \$22 in cash. The Orange County officials were hostile: The Sheriff met them in Anaheim and warned them to bypass the towns of Orange and Santa Ana, because, he said, the people did not approve of these organized bands. Still on foot, the weary "army" reached south Riverside on April 5, where they were given more supplies; a grocery store owner at Rincon contributed food for everyone, tobacco for those who used it, and a pair of shoes for one person. Wherever they went, the Farmers' Alliances and other sympathetic groups gave them food and

other support, and the local press noted, on occasion, that they were well-dressed and orderly. Most of the city officials and many newspapers, however, were unfriendly, and even some members of the Los Angeles City Council denounced them as "tramps" and "revolutionaries."

Circumstances turned sour in the little town of San Bernardino. So far, they had traveled through a fertile, and somewhat populated, plain, but mountains and deserts now lay ahead. From San Bernardino eastward, they would have to proceed by train, but they lacked enough money to pay the full fares. Vinette asked the railroad to transport his men free, or at least for a reduced fare, but to no avail. A mass meeting was called to build support for the army, which proved counterproductive when local citizens, and even some of the Republican and Democratic marchers, were irritated by the populist sentiments expressed. Hysteria gained momentum, with formation of a vigilante committee, after a few men tried to board a train without paying. Vinette and some others were arrested, and released the next day after promising to leave town promptly.

The army, swollen to 250 men, moved to Colton, a village just to the west of San Bernardino. When the report came that the men had tried to board a freight train there, a sheriff's posse was formed in San Bernardino and rushed to Colton. A company from the U.S. Army's Ninth Regiment was on the scene, protecting railroad property, but the men were allowed to remain on the train. Many local residents supported Vinette's army, one of them noting the irony that troops were protecting

the property of a company which had failed to pay its state taxes. Fire hoses were turned on the men, but sympathetic citizens slashed the hoses or turned off the hydrants. Only when the posse threatened to shoot did the men leave the train. Vinette and seven others were jailed.

The near-destitute army continued to get provisions from residents, and maintained its reputation for piety and sobriety by attending Baptist church services as a group. The minister preached a sympathetic sermon, but a visit from members of the vigilante committee persuaded him to recant. The arrestees were released from jail on April 21, the same day on which a meeting in Colton petitioned the governor to urge county governments to provide emergency public-works employment for the unemployed. At four in the morning, fifty army members jumped aboard a fast freight and, without further interference, headed for the desert village of Indio. The train was sidetracked in Indio, and the men forced to leave. Now in the midst of a steaming desert, they dispersed and vanished. The rest of the army began to scatter, although some of them had reached the Beaumont-Banning and Palm Springs areas. Vinette had been rearrested.

After his trial, Vinette began planning for another army, and enrolled eighty men in mid-May. Although the Southern Pacific again refused to transport the new army free, and some of the men were arrested (and later acquitted) for trying to steal a train, Vinette's second army made better progress and by the end of June an advance unit had reached Kansas

City, with the remainder scattered over Kansas and Colorado. Vinette and a remnant of eleven men finally reached Washington on July 25. Ironically, the main Coxey movement had collapsed weeks earlier, when Coxey and Browne had been arrested and jailed for parading through the Capitol grounds and walking on the grass. They had not even been allowed to present their proposals to congressional committees.

Although the Coxey and Vinette "armies" had failed to obtain their declared goals, they did raise public consciousness of a serious national problem. In Los Angeles, the mayor and other civic leaders presided over meetings which urged the employment of unemployed county residents on construction of a boulevard between Los Angeles and Pasadena (decades later, in 1940, the state's first freeway--called the "Arroyo Seco"--followed exactly this route). The workers formed cooperatives, and continued to press for governmental action against unemployment. The AFL had not participated in the movements as an organization, but several individual unions and some central labor bodies, as in Chicago, gave them valuable support, and Gompers sympathized with their objectives. Vinette's army had been a noble, albeit futile, effort.¹⁸

Carpenters On The Threshold Of A New Century

The period between 1882, when eleven San Francisco carpenters had formed pioneering Local #22, and the end of the nineteenth century was a crucial one in the history of the carpenters' union in California. The union had grown in membership and power, despite the dangers

and vicissitudes engendered by recessions, technological changes, and growing employer organization. The center of strength remained in the San Francisco-Oakland area, where a leader of Local #22, Henry Meyers, assumed the presidency of the newly-formed Building Trades Council in 1896. The building trades in that area were well organized in 1899, having overcome the effects of the recent recessions.

The remainder of the state still lagged behind, although new locals were in process of formation. In San Jose, Local #316 was chartered on August 20, 1887, with 22 members, but meetings were secret because the employers would fire anyone known to be a union member. Wages then were \$3 for a ten-hour day, and were raised to \$3.50 for a nine-hour day in October. Minutes of a union meeting in October, 1888, indicate that the railroad was petitioned to accept carpenters' tool boxes as luggage, as many carpenters took the train to and from work in the valley. In April, 1889, the Local opened its headquarters in a building which housed a saloon; mindful of its image, the union dubbed it a "cigar store." Rent was a mere \$4.50 a month.

The business agent would board the train in San Jose, putting his bicycle in the baggage car; debarking at towns such as Palo Alto or Mountain View, he would ride the bicycle to the work sites, check the jobs, and return on the evening train. Parades were a popular organizing and public relations gambit: In 1902, Local #316 amended the bylaws to provide a fine of \$4 for failure of a member to march in a parade, and a fine of \$25 for drunkenness while marching.¹⁹

As we have seen, southern California was overwhelmingly an "open shop" area. The population, as a whole, was conservative, but the labor movement was largely populist and progressive in its leadership. In 1894, many of the Los Angeles unions, including the carpenters, supported the nationwide railroad strike led by Eugene Debs of the American Railway Union, the eloquent socialist leader. Carpenters' locals cooperated regularly with other unions, inside and outside the building trades, aided the movements for social and economic reform, and were politically active, thereby violating every tenet of the narrower "business unionism" espoused by Gompers and the American Federation of Labor.

The San Francisco experience was quite different. There, the carpenters were better organized, but now were, predominantly, an older and more stable group, comprising high proportions of married men and homeowners. Many of them lived in the "better" sections of the city, registered and voted Republican, attended church faithfully, and paid taxes. Their sons usually entered the skilled trades or white-collar and professional jobs. They were, in general, more conservative in their attitudes and their politics. Few of them regarded their union as a vehicle for social change; instead, it was perceived as an institution for the protection of their relatively affluent economic status and their jobs. A great many of them saw the unskilled worker, especially the minority unskilled, as a greater threat than the employers.²⁰

In the last years of the nineteenth century, their fears were compounded by ongoing and accelerating changes in the trade. Much of

the work formerly done by carpenters, either at the construction site or in the mills in the wintertime, was now being performed by lesser-skilled machinists on woodworking machines. Prefabrication was increasing in scope, with doors, window frames, sashes, and so forth manufactured in the mills off site. Particularly in the larger buildings, wood was giving way to other construction materials; the new Bessemer process had made structural steel a practical and popular alternative to wood. The "all-around" carpenter was in danger of extinction, threatened by the growing specialization in the trade.

In addition, the rapid and sudden growth of southern California posed a potential threat to labor standards in the northern part of the state. This "open shop" area deliberately lured industry to it by promises of lower wages and an abundant supply of nonunion labor. At the same time, the population and commerce of San Francisco were leveling off, having reached a plateau. San Francisco remained the dominant financial and commercial center of the state, but Los Angeles was beginning to challenge it. From a labor standpoint, the most hated newspaper in the west, perhaps in the country, was Otis' Los Angeles Times, a relentless foe of unionism, reform, and social progress. Though building construction is a localized industry, less directly threatened by interregional competition, the carpenters were justifiably anxious about the possible spiraling effects of the southern California "open shop" movement.

All of these forces combined, at the turn of the century, to strengthen "business unionism" in San Francisco. On the other hand,

the United Brotherhood never has been a completely homogeneous union, politically or otherwise, and many of the carpenters, especially among the younger and newer members, vigorously opposed the more conservative policies of the official leadership. Furthermore, some pragmatic considerations modified the older-line commitment to "business unionism." Enforcement of the eight-hour-day, for example, required political and legislative support; the unions, operating alone and without legal sanction, could not police all the trades effectively.

A major factor in the background was the weakened power and influence of Peter McGuire at the national level. In declining health, underpaid and overworked, the old socialist was being eased out of the Brotherhood's leadership. He had tried to centralize much of the union's administration and policymaking in the national office, but he was defeated by a powerful countertrend. Local administration was becoming more and more professionalized, with salaried business agents wielding greater power. Naturally enough, they were not inclined to cede this growing power back to the national office. McGuire was permanently retired in 1902, to be succeeded by the redoubtable and more conservative Frank Duffy; Duffy was to remain the United Brotherhood's general secretary for another 47 years. McGuire died in 1906, his last words being: "I must get to San Francisco; the boys in Local 22 are in trouble, and they need me."

Chapter IV

Into The Twentieth Century

The first decade of the twentieth century was a period of fundamental social and political change in the United States. Theodore Roosevelt's ascension to the presidency in 1901, after the assassination of William McKinley, brought to the highest office an aggressive, dynamic, and progressive man who crusaded, albeit selectively, against the powerful corporate "trusts." Through the strength of his personality, Roosevelt greatly expanded the role and influence of the president.

The role of this country as a world power grew correspondingly. In the aftermath of the Spanish-American war in 1898, the United States had acquired the Hawaiian Islands, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico, extending its hegemony farther into the Pacific area and Latin America. Roosevelt's foreign policy views contained more than a hint of militarism and imperialism, and his acquisition of the Panama Canal zone was characteristic of his "big stick" international strategy.

Industrially, the nation surged ahead. Tall buildings now dotted the skylines of New York and other major cities, and metal had generally displaced wood in their construction. New waves of immigration from eastern and southern Europe boosted the population, igniting anew the fears and prejudices of American workers.

The first decade also was a period of major change for the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. Transitions in leadership, nationally and in California, presaged a profound transformation of policy and philosophy. The reign of Peter McGuire was ending, and social activism was giving way to a more limited and pragmatic "business unionism." In northern California, a strong but controversial new leader in the building trades, carpenter Patrick Henry McCarthy, emerged out of Local #22 to take full control until his retirement in 1922.

Born in Ireland in 1863, McCarthy apprenticed as a carpenter, and emigrated to the United States in his late teens. First settling in Chicago and then moving to St. Louis, he was active in the formation of the United Brotherhood. He headed west in 1886, joining and soon leading Local #22 and becoming president of the District Council of Carpenters. In 1898, he was elected president of the Building Trades Council of San Francisco, which he completely dominated for the remainder of his career.

Conservative in philosophy and demeanor, McCarthy was the antithesis of McGuire and Vinette. He vigorously opposed the concept of a class struggle, believing instead in the maximum possible collaboration between employer and employees. "I have always believed that labor and capital should go hand in hand."¹ His policy as union leader was based upon a quid pro quo: employer acceptance of the union shop and union scale, in return for an assurance of moderation, peace and stability on the labor side.

As head of the Building Trades Council, McCarthy regularly pursued a policy of isolationism within the labor movement. He eschewed ties and cooperation with other unions, rarely supported their strikes, and engaged for years in a running battle with the Central Labor Council of San Francisco. He infuriated other San Francisco labor leaders, such as Andrew Furuseth of the Seamen and Michael Casey of the Teamsters, by his consistent refusal to endorse their strikes or assist their organizations, and, in many ways, he was more popular with the business community and the local political establishment. In 1900, Mayor James Phelan named him a member of San Francisco's Board of Freeholders, and later, as we shall see, McCarthy himself was to be elected Mayor for one term. He moved easily in business circles, always reassuring his counterparts on the employer side that they had no reason to be worried as long as he headed the Building Trades Council.

This independent policy gave him a negative image outside the building trades, but it made much sense in terms of his collaborationist strategy. The bargain he had struck with employers required that he be able to protect union-shop building contractors against interruption of construction due to strife in the labor force, and against competition from non-union employers. This understanding precluded sympathy strikes and the observance of picket lines established by other unions. McCarthy focused exclusively on enforcement of the union shop in the building trades, unconcerned with the question of whether it could be achieved and enforced in other trades. He assured the employees that, so long as they accepted and

observed his own "moderate" contracts, the resulting labor standards would not be endangered either by unfair competition from nonunion firms or by militancy and excessive wage demands on the labor side.

The first, and decisive, challenge to McCarthy's power came in the millmen's lockout of 1900-1901. In July of 1900, the Building Trades Council had notified the employers that as of October 1, its members would work only eight hours a day for a standard daily wage of \$3. Except for the millmen, woodworkers, and varnishers and polishers, all of the 27 unions involved secured the new conditions promptly. With further concessions, only the millmen remained among the unsuccessful trades, and the Council decided to launch a special campaign in their behalf. Mill workers in San Jose, Santa Clara, and other northern California cities were organized, in order to build a potent united front against the employers.

In mid-August, the Master Builders' Association proposed a lockout, and the Millmen's Association of San Francisco, representing 19 mills, and planing mills in Oakland, Berkeley, Hayward, San Jose, and Santa Clara promptly locked out their 8,000 employees. The employers rejected arbitration, claiming that they could not withstand competition from the nine- and ten-hour mills. The Building Trades Council responded that none of its members would be allowed to work on any material produced by these nonunion mills, if the eight-hour-day were granted, but the employer associations remained adamant. The Council then ordered its affiliates to refuse to perform work on any

building where such "unfair" mill work was used anywhere on the construction site, and the associations countered by ordering their own members not to sell materials to any contractor employing union labor. The issue was clearly joined.²

Under McCarthy's leadership, the Building Trades Council then developed a unique and unprecedented counterstrategy. The Council established its own planing mill, Progressive Mill #1, which became the second largest mill in the city; its stock was held by the affiliated unions. With this new mill now available to supply materials to union contractors, the employers' strategy backfired. The unions also raised \$25,000 in support of the locked-out millmen, and in February of 1901, the employers threw in the towel, requesting arbitration.

The arbitration award constituted a victory for the unions. The workers gained an eight-hour day after three months (an 8 1/2 hour day would prevail for the first three months), and the employers were required to adopt a union shop (except for foremen) after six months. In return for these considerable gains, the building trades unions agreed not to work on any material produced in those mills not maintaining an eight-hour day. All employers had signed an agreement to this effect by April of 1901.³

This major victory reinforced McCarthy's already substantial reputation, and established a precedent for the strategy which he faithfully pursued from this point on. By skillful use of the union label (the official Brotherhood

label was adopted in 1901) and close cooperation with the unionized employers, he forced other employers not only to accept unionization but also to use only materials made in union shops. Despite persistent criticism from other unions, and some sharp opposition to him in the ranks of certain building trades unions, McCarthy had the support of the majority of building craft workers. Local #22, his home local which continued to be the largest in the city, was a particular stronghold for him.

The strike's success boosted McCarthy's influence at the state level. In mid-December of 1901, delegates from San Francisco, Alameda, Santa Clara, and San Joaquin counties led the way in establishing the State Building Trades Council, and McCarthy was named its president, remaining in that capacity until his retirement. Of course, the State Federation of Labor had been organized in January of 1901, but the San Francisco Building Trades Council refused to affiliate with it. McCarthy also ordered the local BTC member unions not to affiliate with the Central Labor Council of San Francisco, and kept them unaffiliated until 1909 when he was campaigning for Mayor. All of these actions stemmed from his strong belief that the building trades should "go it alone" organizationally, free from obligations to other unions and under no compulsion or pressure to take direction from them.

This isolationism, combined with McCarthy's lack of militancy, provoked opposition to him within the building trades, led by Carpenters' Union locals #483, #304 (German membership), #616 (stairbuilders) and #1032.

These locals defied McCarthy and the BTC by affiliating with both the State Federation of Labor and the Central Labor Council of San Francisco in 1904-5. McCarthy dealt harshly, sometimes ruthlessly, with all such opposition, seeking to punish locals and members who challenged him. He kept tight control over the business agents, forming them into a powerful cadre which would support him politically and enforce discipline in the ranks. His tactics did not endear him to many members, but they were effective and kept him in the leadership role without a successful challenge. Ray Stannard Baker, San Francisco's leading journalistic "muckraker," described him as the undisputed "boss" of the building trades in that city, and there was much truth in the description.

Despite his autocratic methods, McCarthy had some qualities which were of value to the building trades workers. He was personally honest, and there never was a hint of the corruption which was endemic to some of the building trades in other cities, such as New York and Chicago. By keeping a tight rein on the business agents, and limiting the power to negotiate only to those agents who worked directly for the Building Trades Council, he could forestall any attempts to extract bribes. The other side of the coin, of course, was that both the BTC and local union agents, virtually all of them directly or indirectly in McCarthy's service, could mete out severe discipline to any members who were deemed disloyal. Some dissident workers would find that they no longer could secure jobs in San Francisco, and therefore had to move elsewhere.

Although McCarthy insisted that all wage demands be "reasonable" and "moderate," the carpenters still were among the highest paid crafts in the area, and their jobs were well protected. Some of the trades adopted rules which were openly designed to maximize employment: for example, the size of paint brushes was controlled, or the number of bricks to be laid was specified. Employers and economists complained that excessive labor costs, "featherbedding," and lowered productivity placed the San Francisco building trades at a competitive disadvantage in relation to other cities, because these higher costs were reflected in higher prices and became a burden on consumers. The unions rejoined that highly-paid skilled craftsmen were better workers and produced work of high quality, while the nonunion workers in other areas, such as Los Angeles, were inferior craftsmen and often did shoddy work. This reasoning was sometimes broadened into an axiom for differentiating between San Francisco and Los Angeles: The northern city, it was said, emphasized quality, whereas southern California aimed primarily for quantity.

McCarthy's strategy was so successful that the San Francisco building trades were almost totally organized by 1910, and remained so until the vigorous "open shop" counteroffensive of the 1920s. Furthermore, his policy of moderation meant that there were relatively few strikes, sparing both employers and workers the financial losses from interruption of employment. Except for a small two-day strike against use of nonunion materials in 1901, a strike by planing millmen for higher wages, abolition of piecework, and the union shop in 1902, and a strike by all the building trades

for higher wages in 1903, there were no strikes called in San Francisco between 1901 and 1905 in the carpentry trades.⁴ McCarthy, therefore, secured the union shop throughout the industry largely without striking.

The Union Labor Party

In the first decade of the twentieth century, San Francisco was the scene of a startling experiment in politics. The unions formed their own political party, nominated and elected candidates for Mayor, and controlled city government from 1901 to 1907 and from 1909 to 1911 (although some have argued that the party, as a genuine labor party, really ceased to exist after 1905). Impetus for formation of this unique party came largely from labor's experience during the critical waterfront and teamsters' strike of 1901, when the administration of Democratic Mayor Phelan helped break the strike. Many of the unions felt that labor no longer could depend upon the Republican or Democratic parties to serve its needs and interests. Some of the smaller and newer unions formed an organizing committee, which resulted in formation of the Union Labor Party and the decision to nominate a candidate for Mayor in that year's municipal election.

Some of the older leaders opposed this move. Andrew Furuseth and Walter MacArthur of the Seamen's Union were among the opponents, and, in line with his philosophy of "business unionism," so was McCarthy. The building trades unions, as a bloc, went on record in opposition to any labor party. McCarthy individually asserted that labor and management actually had much in common within the political

sphere. "The Building Trades Council represents many thousands of property owners and taxpayers, who are as jealous of their interests as any...affiliated body, commercial, mercantile, financial, or any other...[It] has always worked side by side with such bodies...for the selection of safe and competent officials."⁵ McCarthy's philosophical antagonism may have been augmented by a more pragmatic consideration: He was still serving as an officeholder in the Phelan administration.

A labor lawyer and political operator, Abraham Ruef, entered the picture, an action which would prove to be disastrous for the budding party. He persuaded a bassoon player who was the local Musicians' Union president, Eugene E. Schmitz, to seek the party's nomination. Schmitz had a striking appearance, heavily-built, bearded, and well-dressed, and as a Catholic with both German and Irish ancestry, he could appeal to influential groups of voters. He first resisted Ruef's entreaties, noting that he had no experience and knew nothing about municipal government, but Ruef soon persuaded him that none of this mattered. With dramatic oratory, Schmitz won the nomination and then the election, in a three-way race. Ruef quietly had garnered the support of the well-heeled liquor interests in San Francisco, whose endorsement remained silent because the party did not want to offend the temperance advocates.⁶ Hearst's Examiner backed Schmitz and the Union Labor Party strongly.

Ruef, as "kingmaker," and Schmitz subsequently proceeded to establish a regime of almost unbelievable corruption, but the voters did not seem to mind until a group of patrician

reformers secured criminal indictments against them in 1906. McCarthy, strangely enough, had become a supporter of Schmitz and the party by this time, having endorsed Schmitz for reelection in 1905. Apparently he had been enraged by the open-shop activity of the Citizens' Alliance, a coalition of conservatives and employers which opposed the Schmitz administration, feeling that this campaign was a breach of faith. In 1906, the Building Trades Council, like many of the other unions, first treated the prosecution of Schmitz and Ruef as an effort by anti-union forces to smear the labor party and regain control of the city, but the evidence soon became too monumental to ignore. Schmitz and Ruef were convicted, and Ruef was imprisoned.

McCarthy now had political ambitions of his own. He was nominated for Mayor by the Union Labor Party in 1907, but was defeated by the Democratic candidate in a typically confused race. Naturally, he had made many powerful enemies within the labor movement itself, and leaders such as Furuseth never supported him. In 1909, he finally succeeded in winning the mayoralty, in an even more confused campaign. The reformers still were active, but the voters were tired of their preachments by now. As Mayor, McCarthy was honest but ineffectual; clearly, politics was not his strong suit. He lasted one term only, and in the next election he failed even to be renominated. The Union Labor Party, a bold but disastrous experiment, vanished.

Earthquake And Fire

Early in the morning of April 18, 1906, residents of San Francisco were awakened by an ominous sound. The rumble of the San Andreas earthquake fault soon became a terrifying roar, as buildings tumbled off their foundations and massive cracks opened up on the streets and pavements. Utility wires fell to the ground, the sparks setting off fires which gutted entire blocks in minutes. Firemen rushed to attach hoses to the fire hydrants, but no water came; many hydrants had not been attached to the city's water supply, and the pipes had been broken in the quake. The monstrous fire raged for three days and two nights. Before its end, more than five hundred city blocks had been completely destroyed. Both luxurious Nob Hill and old Chinatown lay in ruins.

The administration of Mayor Schmitz already was under siege, but even the mayor's most bitter antagonists acknowledged that this was his finest hour. Rallying to meet the emergency, he enlisted all elements in the city's financial, business, civic, and labor leadership to help the thousands of homeless, hungry, and destitute residents and to rebuild the community. A new San Francisco emerged out of the ashes, with the building trades, most notably the carpenters, playing a crucial role in the reconstruction.

At the request of the Mayor and the Red Cross, the California Bureau of Labor Statistics set up a Free Employment Agency, centered at the Hearst Grammar School, where "those able-bodied refugees who needed employment and employers who required help" could register.

The Bureau found, it later reported, that some formidable difficulties were generated by the fact that many employers resisted paying the same wages as prevailed before the earthquake, and some workers refused to accept work they were capable of performing. "The Bureau met the first difficulty by urging that workers be paid the rate in existence prior to April 18, and the names and locations of the able-bodied men and women who refused work, offered at standard wages, were referred to the relief camp authorities, with the recommendation that their rations be discontinued."⁷ These actions were effective, and the labor market had improved so substantially by the end of May that the Free Employment Bureau could be terminated.

Of the 3,140 males and 491 females who were registered, more than 1,100 men and 93 women secured employment through the Bureau, and considerably more than 100 skilled mechanics also found work through their respective organizations. Among the registered males were 100 carpenters and 50 woodworkers, joining the 211 teamsters and the 143 machinists among the most numerous crafts represented. As a group, the carpenters were well paid, by the standards of the time, but were not at the top of the list among the building trades. Both the plumbers and the plasterers, for example, averaged above the carpenters in daily wages. However, the carpenters apparently worked fewer hours per week on the average: laborers worked 9 hours per day for a six-day week and other occupations usually worked 8 hours for six days,

but "carpenters and allied trades" worked only 44 hours per week.⁸ Wages, in general, rose markedly between June 10 and August 20.

Figures gathered by the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that house rents increased rather substantially in San Francisco after the quake, and the cost of lumber used in construction climbed dramatically. Except for these items, the local cost of living changed very little. The pace of reconstruction was rapid:⁹

Since the fire, more than 6,000 buildings have been erected in the burned district up to October 31. More than \$50,000,000 has been spent in improvements. All of the 35 Class A buildings but one, which withstood the fire, are occupied, at least in part. More than 35,000 men are employed in reconstruction alone, and besides these there are a great many at work on street railway construction. Over 200 carloads of debris are being removed daily. The principal streets are practically cleared and sidewalks are being rapidly repaired. Building permits to the number of 4,486 have been issued, at a total valuation of \$27,020,033, or within a million dollars of the total issued in Baltimore during two years after the fire in that city.

The carpenters' union actually became stronger in the aftermath of the earthquake and fire. The skill of the carpenters, the key

trade in building reconstruction, brought them praise and public support. Despite some employer efforts to undercut established wages and restore the open shop, union gains were preserved. Anxiety soon gave way to renewed confidence.

What did worry the labor leadership was the spiraling growth of open-shop Los Angeles. With new industry drawn to the lower-wage and predominantly nonunion areas, the open-shop policy might become even more appealing throughout the state. The unions, again led by the building and printing trades, decided to launch a major campaign to organize Greater Los Angeles.

Labor's Struggle Against The Open Shop

The immediate focus of the organizing campaign in southern California was on the Typographical Union's efforts to unionize the printers at the Los Angeles Times. A victory for the union at the Times would be significant in itself, since this nonunion newspaper was the largest and most influential daily paper in the region. It would, of course, have an even greater psychological and symbolic impact. In its editorials and in its news columns, the Times regularly fumed and fulminated against organized labor. The bete noire of the labor movement was its publisher, General Otis, who symbolized the reactionary, anti-union "old guard."

Otis inspired deep hostility in progressive circles. California's maverick Republican governor from 1911 to 1917, Hiram W. Johnson,

once characterized the Times' publisher in language which must constitute an unchallenged record for political invective:¹⁰

In the city of San Francisco, we have drunk to the very dregs of infamy; we have had vile officials; we have had rotten newspapers. But we have nothing so vile, nothing so low, nothing so debased, nothing so infamous in San Francisco as Harrison Gray Otis. He sits there in senile dementia with gangrene heart and rotting brain, grimacing at every reform, chattering impotently at all things that are decent, frothing, fuming, violently gibbering, going down to his grave in snarling infamy. He is one thing that all California looks at when, in looking at Southern California, they see anything that is disgraceful, depraved, corrupt, crooked and putrescent--that is Harrison Gray Otis.

The printers' strike against the Times lasted from 1890 to 1910, without success. The Times fought back powerfully, importing strike-breakers from out of state. Allied with the newspaper in the struggle was the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association, which Otis had helped form in 1896. The M & M pressured employers to remain nonunion, gave them assistance during strikes, sought court injunctions against strikers, and, in 1910, secured passage of the toughest municipal anti-picketing ordinance in the country.

The open-shop movement in Los Angeles, led by the Times and the M & M, was so active and overpowering that in 1907, organized labor

mounted a large-scale counteroffensive. The California Federation of Labor underwrote an organizing campaign, with many organizers coming down from San Francisco. The labor movement purchased a local newspaper named the News, and changed its name to the Citizen. In Carey McWilliams' words, "from 1907 to 1910, a state of war existed in Los Angeles, with the community being torn apart by industrial strife."¹¹

Organized labor carried its fight against the Times and the open shop into the journalistic and political arenas. In August, 1903, the convention of the International Typographical Union formally requested William Randolph Hearst to start a morning newspaper in Los Angeles, in competition with the Times. Hearst's new newspaper, the Examiner, first appeared on December 12, 1903, with more than 10,000 union members marching in a parade to celebrate the event. For several years, the Examiner championed labor's cause, but could never topple the Times. After 1906, the new paper gradually retreated from its pro-labor stand, confirming the belief of many that it had been founded mainly to gain union support for Hearst's political ambitions. Two other Los Angeles newspapers, the Record and the Herald, were unionized, but could not rival the venerable Times in circulation and influence.¹²

True to its growing reputation for nonconformity, southern California now experienced a strong local movement in the direction of municipal socialism. Many unions joined forces with the Socialist Party, led by Job Harriman,

an idealistic and eloquent attorney. The coalition ran slates of candidates for all major political offices in Los Angeles. To the horror of the Times and the open-shop leaders, the Socialist and pro-union candidates topped most of the city primaries in 1911, and Harriman won a plurality of votes for the mayoralty. He would face incumbent Mayor George Alexander in a runoff election, on December 5. The labor movement backed Harriman, and the Times joined with the more conventional municipal forces in supporting Alexander, although General Otis had previously considered him too reform-minded.

While the progressive drive gained momentum politically, a fateful judicial trial proceeded simultaneously. Three members of the International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, John and James McNamara and Ortie McManigal, had been indicted for the alleged dynamiting of the Times building on October 1, 1910. The Times had immediately blamed the labor movement, and the unions were equally firm that the responsibility lay elsewhere. Many unionists argued, with much apparent justification, that gas leakage had caused the disastrous blast. After an undercover investigation by a famous detective, William J. Burns, charges had been brought against the union members. The unions proclaimed their innocence, engaging the nation's best-known civil liberties lawyer, Clarence Darrow, in the defense of the accused. But only a few days before the city elections in December, 1911, the McNamara brothers suddenly confessed. Job Harriman was trounced by Mayor Alexander, and the open shop in Los Angeles was stronger than ever. Not until the 1930s would the open shop be seriously challenged.

The carpenters shared in the damaging effects of the McNamara conviction and the collapse of the progressive movement. Unlike the San Francisco building trades, as led by the conservative McCarthy, the carpenters' union in Los Angeles was an integral part of the entire union structure. As noted before, the carpenters regularly cooperated with other unions, participated in collective political activity, and supported key local strikes. The building trades remained predominantly nonunion, but the unions had made gains in the first decade of the new century. The ultimate failure of the union-shop drive stopped their momentum, though the building craft unions still fared better than most other unions.

Outside of San Francisco, as Appendix I demonstrates, strike activity in the early years of this century was heavily focused on gaining or enforcing the union shop and preventing the use of materials from nonunion firms. At least sixteen of the 29 strikes recorded in carpentry and related trades between 1901 and 1905 involved these issues, with a high degree of success in northern and central California and relatively little success in southern California. Only in the "union town" of San Pedro was there substantial effectiveness in undercutting the otherwise prevailing open shop.

The United Brotherhood Expands In California

Despite the difficulties created by the open-shop campaign and recurring recessions, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America still experienced continuing gains in California. Much of this progress was

centered in northern and central California, but there were some organizational successes even in southern California. Rising membership reflected two separate movements: The organization of new locals throughout the state, and the expansion of the union's jurisdiction.

The resurgence of organized labor began in 1899, with recovery from the terrible recessions earlier in that decade. A new carpenters' local, #426, was organized that year in Los Angeles, followed by Locals #769 in Pasadena and #710 in the seaside village of Long Beach in 1901, Local #1140 in San Pedro in 1902 (with wages at \$1 a day), Local #1400 in Santa Monica in 1903, and a Pile Drivers local in San Pedro in 1904. In March of 1901, a new Building Trades Council was organized in Los Angeles, covering almost four thousand union members within a year.¹³

A carpenter was the key leader in the resurgent labor movement. Fred C. Wheeler was born in Minnesota in 1867, joined a carpenters' union in Florida at the age of twenty, and came to California shortly thereafter. Arriving in Pasadena in 1892, he quickly was elected president of the carpenters' local, and in 1898 he was named president of the Los Angeles Council of Labor. When the 1902 AFL national convention adopted Wheeler's resolution mandating the appointment of a special organizer in southern California, Gompers named Wheeler to that new spot. Wheeler continued to organize in this area until 1905. In building construction alone, 34 new locals were organized in Los Angeles, Pasadena, and San Pedro between June 1, 1900 and December 31, 1904.¹⁴

Although the carpenters' union made little headway in establishing the union shop, it did achieve some gains on economic issues. In 1902, the Los Angeles District Council of Carpenters, representing about 1,500 members, succeeded in raising the minimum daily wage for carpenters from \$3 to \$3.50, and the Pasadena carpenters promptly advanced to the same level. A particularly bitter strike was conducted by Local #144 of the Amalgamated Woodworkers in 1901 and 1902, seeking the eight-hour-day at two of the large planing mills. The strike was finally lost in 1903, and the woodworkers' union vanished. The District Council of Carpenters organized Local #1279 of the UBCJA to take its place, and in 1904 the new local claimed to represent 90 percent of local planing mill workers.¹⁵

The woodworking industry in Los Angeles continued to engender problems for the United Brotherhood, which had absorbed the Amalgamated Woodworkers. Carpenters' Local #1279 struck for the eight-hour day and the closed shop in the summer of 1905, with full backing from the District Council of Carpenters, the Building Trades Council, and the Central Labor Council. Again, victory eluded the woodworkers, despite a widespread boycott against nonunion mills and their products and suppliers. The Mill Owners' Association, which advertised in the East for strikebreakers, simply proved too powerful.

In spite of such setbacks, the Los Angeles building trades made general progress. In reasonably prosperous 1906, the carpenters consolidated three locals into one large union, Local #158, and, with its 2,500 members, it became the biggest local in the United Brotherhood.

The new local demanded an increase in daily wages from \$3.50 to \$4, a half-holiday on Saturday, and the closed shop. The employers resisted, prodded and supported by the anti-union Citizens' Alliance, and almost all the union carpenters struck. The San Francisco earthquake was an unexpected boon for the strikers, hundreds of whom were transported by the union to work in that city's reconstruction. Gradually the employers softened their resistance, although few would grant the closed shop. By 1907, most carpenters were working five and one-half days at \$4 a day. Other building trades followed the carpenters' lead, but none could achieve the union shop.

The Los Angeles building trades pushed for economic gains again in 1911. The arrest of the McNamara brothers and the strong open-shop campaign discouraged most of the unions, but the carpenters proceeded with their strike plans. In May, about 800 carpenters left work, demanding wage increases of 50¢ to \$1 a day. The employers slowly acceded to the requested increases, and eleven locals gained about 500 new members. To save face and to mollify the M & M and the Times, many builders described their concessions as being purely "voluntary."¹⁶

Elsewhere in the state, the carpenters' union progressed in this pre-World War I period. Step by step, the UBCJA extended its jurisdiction over the shipwrights and caulkers, who had organized the first continuing union "west of the Rockies" in 1853. The San Francisco Ship Caulkers Association affiliated with the National Federation of Shipwrights and Caulkers of America a bit later, but jurisdictional and organizational tensions hindered

cooperation among the various shipbuilding trades. Affiliated with the National Union of Shipwrights, Joiners and Caulkers (AFL) in the early 1900s, the San Francisco shipwrights were in Local #29, the Oakland shipwrights in Local #47, and the San Francisco caulkers in Local #48. In 1908, after a long and complex struggle, the Boatbuilders, Joiners and Shipwrights finally joined the Pacific Coast Maritime District Council of the UBCJA, whose jurisdiction extended along the Pacific Coast all the way from the Bering Sea to Baja California. In September of 1913, after almost sixty years of continuous existence, the Ship Caulkers affiliated with the UBCJA and became Local #554. It was not until May of 1929 that the Ship Joiners and the Shipwrights permanently joined together as Shipwrights-Joiners and Boatbuilders, Local #1149, Oakland, and the Caulkers merged into that local in 1952.¹⁷

San Jose Local #316, the oldest union in Santa Clara County and one of the oldest in the UBCJA, initiated steps in 1904 to form a District Council, and, with support from Millmen's Local #262, the council was founded in January of 1905. Other locals in the Santa Clara valley affiliated later. Local #316 secured a wage increase to \$4 a day (50¢ an hour). In Mountain View, new Local #1280 was chartered by the UBCJA in January of 1905, with 23 members, and has been in continuous existence ever since. The various locals progressed in strength and membership until the renewed open-shop campaign of the early 1920s.¹⁸

Jurisdictional Issues

When Peter McGuire headed the United Brotherhood, questions of jurisdiction rarely were in the forefront of union policies. McGuire tended to take a broad view of such issues, concerned more with the organization of workers along class lines than with the definition and enforcement of narrow jurisdictional lines. All this changed drastically when Frank Duffy replaced him as general secretary and William Huber, James Kirby and, preeminently, William ("Big Bill") Hutcheson successively assumed the presidency in the early part of the twentieth century.

Duffy, Huber, Kirby, and Hutcheson were strict "business unionists," sharing none of McGuire's idealism or socialism. They rejected any notions of a class struggle, eschewed political involvement by the union, and accepted Gompers' emphasis on organization along craft lines. The new concern with jurisdictional issues, however, transcended these personal or philosophical considerations. The jobs of UBCJA members were increasingly being threatened by changes in the trade and in construction technology.

In the nineteenth century, carpenters typically performed all major aspects of construction at the site. The "outside" carpenter would cut and install the lumber and frame the building, while the "inside" carpenter was normally a "joiner" who finished the interiors and trim or a cabinetmaker who, if required, also could make furniture. As a craft union, the Brotherhood's original jurisdiction was defined

in these terms, and, after formation of the AFL in 1886, a separate union--the Amalgamated Wood Workers International Union--covered those employees who operated woodworking machinery in the mills.

McGuire had not challenged the Amalgamated Wood Workers' jurisdiction, but as his power declined in the 1890s and machine woodworking increasingly encroached on employment opportunities for carpenters, the UBCJA began to take action. In 1898, the United Brotherhood abrogated all previous agreements with the Woodworkers and launched a campaign to organize the mills. The more powerful UBCJA finally prevailed, and in 1912 the two unions merged, the Amalgamated Wood Workers having been reduced to a shell.

Control over the mill workers became a potent organizational weapon. In San Francisco, as we have seen, the astute McCarthy built his local empire upon an alliance with the unionized mills and the unionized contractors. Construction carpenters would only use and install mill products bearing the union label. Conversely, mill work would only be supplied to union-shop contractors. The mill operators and the builders enjoyed a protected market, and McCarthy could preserve the union shop and his tight domination of the industry.

To the carpenters, this was a logical extension of their initial jurisdiction. They claimed jurisdiction over "anything made of wood," and as the processing of wood moved from the construction site to the mill, the Brotherhood's jurisdiction assertedly followed. Since

the material was wood and had been processed by UBCJA members at the site, the work still belonged to the members even when it was off-site.

The issue became more complex with the increasing use of construction materials other than wood. Beginning early in this century, metal trim was being used more frequently in construction, and the Sheet Metal Workers promptly asserted their jurisdiction over the work. The carpenters' union immediately amended its informal definition of jurisdiction to read: "Anything made, or ever made, of wood." With this broad extension of its domain, the UBCJA launched a vigorous campaign to control the installation of metal trim. The struggle lasted from 1907 to 1926, when the AFL's recently-formed National Board for Jurisdictional Awards finally awarded metal trim work to the UBCJA.

These jurisdictional conflicts continued unabated for many decades. The Brotherhood fought with the International Association of Machinists over the installation of machinery, which the carpenters claimed for their millwrights; with the Lathers union, which ultimately affiliated with the UBCJA in 1979; at times with the Plumbers, Roofers, and Laborers; and, particularly in California, with the National Union of Shipwrights, Joiners, and Caulkers early in the century and the International Alliance of Theatrical and State employees (see Chapter IX).

The rise of jurisdictional strife also reflected the personal predilections of William Levi Hutcheson, who became national UBCJA president in 1915 and remained in that office for

nearly four decades. A heavy-set, aggressive, and uncompromising man, Hutcheson rode roughshod over all opposition. Born on a farm in Michigan, he had apprenticed as a carpenter in 1901 and joined the union in 1902. Rising through the ranks from business agent to second vice president of the international union, he made the preservation and extension of the Brotherhoods jurisdiction his primary concern. As international president, he assumed the key role in policymaking, and the general secretary, though still powerful, was relegated to a secondary role. According to Robert Christie, his life-long enthusiasms, in addition to the union, were "Methodism, Masonry, and Republicanism."¹⁹ He remained a faithful Republican throughout his career, even supporting Herbert Hoover at the depth of the Great Depression of the early 1930s.

Through both his personality and his philosophy, Hutcheson came into conflict with many of the other union leaders, inside and outside the building trades. He centralized jurisdictional and political power in the national office, crushing any independent or defiant district councils, but granted local unions considerable autonomy in negotiating wages, hours, and benefits. The carpenters' union soon acquired the reputation of being jurisdictionally imperialistic, seeking to gobble up smaller and less powerful unions. Either by expulsion or secession, the UBCJA moved in and out of membership in the AFL's Building Trades Department. The union regularly defied adverse jurisdictional awards made by the Department, or by the AFL executive council, or by special arbitration boards.

The dissension, of course, was manifested also in the state and local building trades councils. The smaller unions, fearful of UBCJA's power, frequently combined in opposition, sometimes seeking to discipline the highly assertive carpenters. Their efforts almost always were fruitless. The carpenters remained the key building trade, and the other unions rarely could mount a successful organizing campaign or strike without the support of the Brotherhood. Nor could they effectively resist the broad jurisdictional claims of the carpenters, although, as we shall see later, the UBCJA did suffer an occasional defeat.

Its jurisdiction is, in a real sense, the life blood of a union, and the carpenters were acting in reasonable self-interest in seeking to protect it. Hundreds of thousands of jobs were potentially at stake, threatened by technological and economic forces which the workers were individually powerless to control. The union fulfilled this protective function, albeit much too aggressively at times. Nevertheless, because the media were hostile and Hutcheson lacked any sense of diplomacy and public relations, the frequent jurisdictional disputes triggered the wrath of the general community and gave the Brotherhood a highly negative image. In addition, Hutcheson often asserted jurisdictional claims in trades and industries only for the purpose of preventing organization of the workers by other unions. He was uninterested in the lesser skilled workers, sometimes refusing to admit them into full beneficial UBCJA membership. The union, under his leadership, tended to organize "from the top down," pressuring employers directly to

sign closed-shop agreements without first organizing the workers themselves. This policy added to its image problems.

In California, McCarthy already had pioneered some of these policies, although he was much more genteel than Hutcheson in his tactics and his public relations. He, too, was conservative, skillful in the use of the boycott and the union label as organizing devices, and more than willing to antagonize other unions in the pursuit of his goals within the building trades. Partly because he was himself a carpenter, and exerted much influence in the State Building Trades Council, McCarthy sometimes could persuade the Council to endorse the activities of the carpenters' union in jurisdictional and related matters. The relationship of the UBCJA locals to building trades and central labor councils in cities throughout the state varied from one area to another. As we have seen, the Los Angeles and San Francisco carpenters differed fundamentally in their policies.

Political And Legislative Issues

The progressive movement in California reached its zenith during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Theodore Roosevelt and Wisconsin's Robert M. LaFollette, the two most prominent progressive leaders on the national scene (both of whom were Republicans), had many vocal followers in this state; Hiram Johnson, the fiery independent who crusaded against the Southern Pacific and other large corporations, was elected governor in 1910; and

liberal reformers, such as Dr. John R. Haynes in Los Angeles and Francis Heney, Fremont Older, Rudolph Spreckels and William Kent in San Francisco, were active and influential at the local level. During the Johnson administration in Sacramento, an unprecedented volume of social legislation was enacted into law.²⁰

The relationship between the progressives and the labor movement was ambivalent and unsettled. Many of the progressives, such as the wealthy "sugar baron" Spreckels, were upper-class in background, more concerned with political reform and the elimination of municipal corruption than with the interests of the working class. Several of them, in fact, had come into prominence through their fervent opposition to the Union Labor Party's regime in San Francisco. Some of them supported labor's right to organize, but few were enthusiastic about the existing unions and most of them vigorously opposed the closed shop. When anti-injunction legislation was being considered during the Johnson administration, a Los Angeles progressive leader, Meyer Lissner, protested to the governor that the bill would force the union shop upon Los Angeles, and that he was prepared to abandon the whole reform effort "rather than let Los Angeles be thrown under the sort of tyrannical domination of labor unionism that exists in San Francisco."²¹

On its side, the labor movement, particularly the carpenters' union, lacked sympathy with much of the program sponsored by the progressives. Nationally, the UBCJA presidents Huber, Kirby and Hutcheson tended to be anti-political and anti-government, holding that

unions, rather than government through legislation, should be primarily responsible for enhancing the living standards and social progress of workers. Hutcheson, indeed, strongly opposed minimum wage legislation throughout his lifetime. As suggested earlier, he had little interest in measures which would benefit primarily the unskilled and the unorganized. These views generally were shared by McCarthy (except to the degree that he had personal political ambitions and was much involved in purely local politics), who tried to keep the building trades aloof from legislative activity.

The most general and emotional concern of the unions, in the political arena, was the issue of immigration policy. Led by McCarthy and his second in command at the Building Trades Council, Olaf Tveitmoe of the Cement Workers' union, the building trades now called for Japanese as well as Chinese exclusion. Tveitmoe, as editor of the building trades' journal Organized Labor, editorialized against the Japanese as "dangerous spies" and against the Chinese as potential assassins who would kill Americans by infecting them with bubonic plague. McCarthy was a main speaker at the first convention called to push for Japanese exclusion. Tveitmoe became president of the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League.

In this instance, as in the previous anti-Chinese campaigns, the unions were joined by thousands of other Californians. Many, though not all, of the "progressive" candidates for office were at least as racist in their expressed views as were their more conservative

opponents. Even the conservative and eminently respectable San Francisco Chronicle joined the anti-Japanese crusade. The San Francisco Building Trades Council donated a monthly per capita payment to the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League.²²

The unions, naturally, feared additional labor-market competition from the immigrants. The Japanese, even more than the Chinese, had reputations as being highly competitive and ambitious, although, again, there is little evidence that they measurably penetrated the skilled building trades. However exaggerated or irrational many of these fears may have been, at least there was some economic basis for the unions' anti-immigration stance. No such excuse was available to the progressives, many of whom seemed only to evince an attitude of Anglo-Saxon superiority and elitism.

Pre-war And War: Period Of Growth

Well before the outbreak of the World War I, southern California already was undergoing major growth. The development of the harbor had been completed; the 264-mile Owens Valley Aqueduct was bringing much-needed water from central California to Los Angeles; and the oil industry was booming. The city of Los Angeles had annexed Hollywood, most of the rapidly developing San Fernando Valley, and the harbor cities of San Pedro and Wilmington. Los Angeles County constructed a Museum of History, Science and Art in Exposition Park, which housed some historic fossils dug out of the La Brea tar pits.

Between 1900 and 1910, the population of the city of Los Angeles had increased from 102,479 to 329,198, and by the time of America's entry into the war, the total had zoomed to around 400,000. In the first decade, the County's population also rose three-fold, to 504,131. Orange County's population climbed by seventy-five percent, to more than 34,000 residents in 1910.

The volume of manufacturing doubled in this period. The citrus industry launched a nationwide advertising campaign, proclaiming the merits of oranges. With much of the campaign centered in the midwest, many newcomers from that region were attracted to California, and most of them settled in single-family homes. Construction boomed, although most of it undoubtedly was nonunion. Greater Los Angeles assumed a characteristic pattern which differentiated it sharply from the more congested and centralized eastern communities and from San Francisco.²³

As a result of this renewed activity, the building trades unions progressed, but probably no more than 20 percent of the craftsmen were organized. In the spring of 1912, the construction unions struck for the closed shop, but the strike lacked sufficient support and was called off after about two weeks. As usual, there was recurring dissension within the Building Trades Council, and, for a number of reasons, the carpenters' union lost membership in 1912. It rebounded strongly in 1913, and by mid-spring, carpenters' local #158 was the largest union in Los Angeles.

In hearings held by the state Commission on Industrial Relations, in 1914, testimony both by employer and union representatives affirmed that the union shop still was far from prevalent in the building trades. The manager of F.O. Engstrum Company, one of the largest building contractors, testified that the company was nonunion and maintained the eight-hour day, except for woodworkers in planing mills who continued to work nine hours. Wages were based, he said, strictly on market forces and competition.

Owners of planing mills reported that the mills generally were nonunion. Most of the mills operated nine hours a day, six days a week, and paid wages ranging from \$2.25 to \$5 a day. Locals #882 and #884 of the mill workers sought the union shop, but were defeated by the employers' association. A slump in construction in 1914 caused five mills to cut wages by 50¢ to 75¢ a day, with much unemployment among the millmen.

C.R. Gore, business agent for the District Council of Carpenters, admitted that the building trades unions could not control the industry. Union carpenters received a standard daily wage of \$4 for eight hours, but often worked on the same project with nonunion men who got as little as \$2.25 a day. Carpenters' union members earned time and one-half for overtime, while nonunion men might work eleven hours at straight time. Gore explained that union carpenters were paid more because they were superior workers and more productive.²⁴

In August, 1914, war broke out in Europe. The United States would not enter it until 1917, but its economic and social effects were

felt long before that. According to Richard and Louis Perry, "organizing activities during the war centered on the carpenters as the key union group."²⁵ Local #158, the key local, feuded with the Central Labor Council and withdrew in 1915, but it rejoined in February of 1916. An extensive membership campaign was initiated, extending through 1916 and 1917, which involved Locals #2516, #46, #426, and #884 (millmen) as well. In the summer of 1917, the initiation fee was temporarily reduced to \$5 in an effort to sign up 2,000 new members. This goal was not attained, but about 1,000 new members were recruited and the union then claimed that 85 percent of all carpenters in the county were unionized.

The union now approached the Master Builders' Association with a list of demands. The construction carpenters asked for wages of \$5 a day, Saturday afternoons off, double pay for work on Sunday, and a closed shop. The UBCJA cabinetmakers' demands were identical, except that they sought a wage of \$4.50 for an eight-hour day. Most of the cabinetmakers worked at a few large firms, such as Peck and Hills Furniture, Pacific Sash and Door, Southern California Hardwood and Manufacturing, and Hammond Lumber.

The Master Builders' Association countered that Association employers already had granted wage increases from \$3 and \$3.50 a day to \$4 and \$4.50 a day, effective September 1917, in recognition of a rise in the cost of living. The Association refused to meet with the union, and both the construction carpenters and the cabinetmakers struck. With building activity

down, it was not a good time for a strike. Only 300 workers struck on two major projects. The strike ended a short while later, with a compromise which granted some demands but not the union shop. The millmen struck separately in October, 1917, but the Southern California Mill Owners' Association still was too powerful and the strike was lost.

In mid-September, 1918, thirty-two construction carpenters struck at a major construction site, where a new factory building was being erected. They demanded a wage of \$6 a day, a forty-four hour week, and Saturday afternoons off. The strike was futile, and the building was completed in six weeks. Los Angeles carpenters launched a new organizing campaign early in 1919, with the same demands. While they made some gains in wages, it appears that they never succeeded in cutting hours or securing the union shop. Union scale was raised to \$7 a day in August of 1919.²⁶

In general, the metal trades benefited from wartime industrial activity more than the building trades, but the carpenters gained substantially from the expansion of the shipbuilding industry in California. The UBCJA completed its absorption of the various shipbuilding trades, and president Hutcheson boosted the carpenters' cause through his service on the National War Labor Board. Nationally, the union's membership grew rapidly, but the open shop remained dominant in southern California. Clearly, the union's claim of 85 percent membership in the carpentry trades had been highly exaggerated. The Times reported in 1918 that only about 700 of the area's 6,000 carpenters

were unionized, and the union's continuing failure to achieve its basic demands seemed to confirm its relative weakness.

The San Francisco building trades retained their union shop and improved their labor standards, but organized labor in that highly unionized city did suffer setbacks. During a Preparedness Day parade in 1916, a bomb had been thrown, killing 10 people and seriously injuring 40 more. A major longshore strike was in progress at the time, and, as in the case of the Times bombing in 1910 in Los Angeles, many rushed to blame the unions. Two labor organizers, Tom Mooney and Warren Billings, were convicted and imprisoned, on highly questionable evidence. Their sentence was to be a cause celebre for labor, for another two decades, until Mooney received a gubernatorial pardon early in 1939 and was released from San Quentin Prison. Despite the fact that they were almost certainly innocent, public opinion was inflamed. The strike was lost, and San Francisco adopted its first anti-picketing ordinance.

McCarthy still dominated the building trades, but, unbeknownst to him, his days were numbered. There was growing opposition to his leadership within the trades, and, more importantly, the employers were getting ready to launch a major open-shop drive. His reign as "boss" of the construction trades would last only a few years after the end of World War I, in November of 1918.

Elsewhere in the state, carpenters' locals had gained much strength during the war, but they faced a difficult period ahead. During and immediately after the war, anti-radical

hysteria reached a crescendo nationally and in California. The successful Russian Revolution had frightened many Americans, who were inclined to see "subversion" even in such purely indigenous radical movements as the Industrial Workers of the World (the IWW, or "Wobblies"). The State of California, and several communities, enacted so-called Criminal Syndicalism statutes, ostensibly designed to control subversive activities. The new laws became a useful weapon for anti-union forces. Free speech was threatened; strikers and organizers were jailed; and combinations of local officials and vigilante groups harassed workers who dared to join what were labeled "radical" unions. The carpenters' union generally had a conservative reputation, but the anti-union elements did not make fine distinctions. Any effective strike leader could be subject to official or unofficial persecution.

An even tougher time lay ahead. The employers were girding for a powerful offensive. The period between World War I and World War II was to encompass the time of labor's most dangerous trial and the time of its most spectacular triumph. As before, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America would play a key role.

Chapter V

The "Roaring Twenties": Boom And Bust

The years of the 1920s were difficult ones for the labor movement. Although the nation was deemed to be prosperous, not all groups shared equally in that prosperity. The farmers were hard hit by the Federal Reserve's monetary constriction after World War I, as well as by overproduction during the war, and depression remained an inescapable fact of rural life until the 1930s. The minorities, most notably the blacks, were systematically exploited, or, at best, simply ignored. New immigration laws, cutting off the inflow from eastern and southern Europe and from Asia, assured the dominance of the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) majority.

For labor, the boom of the twenties was illusory or temporary. Millions of workers were underpaid and overworked, or unemployed. Unions lost strength in the decade, assaulted by goons and strikebreakers and crushed by injunctions or "yellow-dog" contracts (under which the worker pledged not to join a union). Union-busting campaigns often were enforced by the local sheriff. Whole communities resembled medieval fiefs, run tyrannically by an industrialist or rich family or a public official or, most frequently, by some combination of these forces.

On the other hand, the upper and middle classes, and even some of the working class, found the period highly congenial and exciting. A mad euphoria enveloped much of the

country, as the stock market boomed and automobiles poured off the assembly lines (manufacturer Henry Ford had established an unprecedented \$5-a-day minimum wage in his plants, though there were loopholes and qualifications not apparent to many Americans). The Gross National Product rose to new heights.¹

Many workers and small businessmen ventured recklessly into the stock market, buying stock on "margin" in search of speculative gains. Seeking quick and easy fortunes, they became minor-league capitalists. No longer did these workers identify themselves as members of a working class, nor did they value union membership. With stock prices zooming, their decision seemed correct and their financial prospects seemed bright.

In this favorable context, major employers and their associations embarked upon a nationwide open-shop campaign. Calling the open shop the "American Plan," the employers set out systematically to crush unions wherever they existed and to prevent their formation or recognition wherever they did not. The "American Plan" exponents borrowed the familiar boycott weapon from the unions and turned it against their adversaries. Employers who had recognized and negotiated with unions were pressured to withdraw recognition. Reluctant or resistant employers might confront a boycott by open-shop suppliers or purchasers.

In this campaign, the employers had strong political support. The presidencies of Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and, to a somewhat lesser extent, Herbert Hoover, were business-

oriented, conservative, and anti-union. Only one piece of significant labor legislation, the Railway Labor Act, was enacted in the 1920s, and this applied only to one industry. There was no legal right to organize and bargain collectively, no legal defense against sweeping court injunctions limiting boycotts and strikes, no effective recourse against the importation of strikebreakers, and no prohibition of the notorious "yellow dog" contract. In many communities, the employers could count on full cooperation from local officials and, most importantly, the law enforcement agencies.

The Fall Of P. H. McCarthy

San Francisco had been chosen by the "American Plan" forces as a special target for open-shop activity, in the light of its reputation as the most thoroughly unionized major city in the nation, but the local labor movement fought back with every resource at its command. The dominance of the union shop was threatened and, in many trades, weakened, although the community remained, in sentiment, fundamentally a "union town."

McCarthy's control over the building trades, however, was rapidly dissolving. Now close to 60 years of age, he had made some unforgiving enemies (who dubbed him "Pin Head" McCarthy) over the years of his leadership in the Building Trades Council, and his reputation in the broader community had been tarnished somewhat by the failure of his mayoralty earlier. Of far greater importance, almost certainly, was the growing determination of local

employers to break the union shop in construction. For the first time, his hold over labor relations in the construction trades was being seriously challenged.

The chief organizational arm of the "American Plan" movement in San Francisco was the city's Industrial Association. The tactic used was to pressure building contractors, mill operators, and other building trades employers to desist from further cooperation with McCarthy and his BTC allies. Union-shop employers were subject to boycott by members of the Industrial Association, unless they agreed to drop the union shop.

In truth, many of the building trades employers were reluctant to abandon their arrangements with McCarthy and the BTC, and had to be strongly pressured to do so. They had welcomed the industrial stabilization and the protection from competition which the union shop and "label unionism" had provided, in an industry which otherwise was characterized by instability and disorganization. Seasonality, multiplicity of work sites, presence of many small or "fly by night" contractors, speculation, and intermittency of employment were among the factors which made market conditions and labor relations chaotic.

In San Francisco, McCarthy's policy of wage moderation and cooperation was especially appealing to the employers. The union shop assured a steady supply of skilled workers, at acceptable wage levels, and the union's policy of boycotting nonunion employers and suppliers protected union-shop firms. Union-shop mills benefited from the refusal of union carpenters to install nonunion materials. The strategy of

union-management cooperation sometimes evolved into collaboration to prevent out-of-area competition, which, as we shall see, later triggered an anti-trust prosecution of the UBCJA for "conspiracy in restraint of trade."

The Industrial Association, as chief enforcer of the "American Plan" in San Francisco, could not afford to tolerate the continuation of the union shop in such a key industry. Whatever the preferences of certain building trades employers, the Association was determined to crush the union shop. Wherever necessary, it was prepared to fight the pro-union employers as well as union. The employers, facing a possible boycott by the open-shop forces, had little choice but to cooperate.

In the local building trades, the first and most crucial step in the open-shop offensive was the activation of the so-called "Builders' Exchange." In the summer and fall of 1920, the Exchange was transformed from a relatively weak informational and public relations body to a powerful coalition of materials' suppliers, large contractors, and manufacturers. The Industrial Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Builders' Exchange henceforth collaborated closely in an orchestrated campaign to break the union shop. The open-shop group used its control over building supplies to force building trades employers into line.

The opening volley in the open-shop offensive was fired by the Exchange in 1920, when it ordered a wage cut affecting seventeen building crafts. The unions struck in October, and the employers vigorously fought back. The Industrial Association actively recruited and housed

non-union strikebreakers, many of whom were imported from southern California. The parties agreed to submit the issue to arbitration, in accordance with procedures which they had regularly followed during the war.

In late March of 1921, the arbitration board recommended a wage decrease of 7.5 percent. The carpenters, along with some other trades, had refused to participate in the arbitration proceedings, and McCarthy opposed acceptance of this "award" by members of the Building Trades Council. The Council agreed, but the Exchange counterattacked by announcing that it intended to enforce the award. On May 9, the employers locked out all craftsmen who refused to accept the lower wages. The Building Trades Council could not respond as it had done in the 1900-1901 millmen's lockout, because it lacked control over the major materials' suppliers. In June, the Council capitulated and accepted the new wage schedule.²

The Builders' Exchange, now sensing total victory, became even bolder. It decided that the closed shop no longer would be tolerated in the San Francisco building trades, and therefore continued the lockout. The smoldering dissension within the Building Trades Council then erupted into a major revolt against McCarthy's leadership. Even his former friends in Local #22 turned against him and joined with his long-time adversaries in Carpenters' Locals #483, #1082, #1689, and #95, Millmen's Local #42, Painters Locals #19 and #72, Cement Workers Local #310, and the Pile Drivers and the Dock Builders.

Strangely enough, McCarthy had managed to alienate both the moderates and the militants. The militants had long opposed his collaborationist policy, but many of the more conventional building trades leaders and members now felt that the unwillingness to accept the arbitration award had been a fatal blunder. Apparently, McCarthy felt that his power and prestige were on the line and thus he could not afford to recommend acceptance. The unions, however, now faced a strong alliance of employers which could use its control over building supplies to enforce the open shop.

A so-called "Citizens' Committee," which actually was a front for the Industrial Relations Committee of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, proposed to settle the dispute on the basis of the 7.5 percent wage cut and a mixed union-nonunion shop. The BTC leaders favored this settlement, but the rank and file rejected it overwhelmingly. McCarthy was completely repudiated, and Local #22, McCarthy's own union, appointed an ad hoc committee of five members to cooperate with other unions, outside the orbit of the BTC.³

The dissident unions seized control, in defiance of both McCarthy and Hutcheson. The rebels now formed the "Rank and File Federation of Workers of the Bay District," which called for a general strike. R.E. Currie, of Carpenters' Local #1082, became its temporary president, and E.A. Wattles, of Local #22, became temporary assistant secretary; the Painters', Boilermakers', Housesmiths', and Barbers' locals also were represented in the Federation's leadership. Although originally the dissident body focused only on its ad hoc role in relation to the strike, almost all of the building trades unions affiliated with it.

The building trades unions struck on August 3, 1921, but the strike lasted only a little over three weeks and ended in failure. Although the unions never formally accepted the terms laid down by the Chamber of Commerce, their members returned to work under essentially open-shop conditions. Hutcheson, who had vigorously opposed the strike, lifted the charters of five of the carpenters' locals, Millmen's Local #42, and the Pile Drivers' and Dock Builders' locals, and individually suspended from UBCJA membership the leaders of the strike and the Federation. McCarthy had lost virtually all support within the building trades, and on January 12, 1922, he retired. His sidekick, Tveitmoe, also followed him into retirement.

Some of the leaders of the Rank and File Federation tried to keep the organization alive, calling for organization of the building trades along industrial lines. McCarthy's retirement early in 1922 took much of the steam out of the rebel movement, and by the middle of the year, many workers had returned to their original unions.

The Carpenters Fight Back: The 1926 Strike

The Industrial Association of San Francisco set out to perpetuate the open shop it had achieved in the building trades. It organized and administered an employment bureau to assure a steady supply of nonunion craftsmen, and established a "permit system" under which building contractors had to secure a special permit before getting needed materials from

manufacturers and wholesalers. To qualify for the permit, each contractor had to maintain an open shop and pay wages in accordance with a schedule developed by the Builders' Exchange. Banks were pressured to lend only to nonunion contractors.

The Association also arranged to train skilled workers, especially in the plastering, bricklaying, and plumbing trades, and advertised to bring more craftsmen into San Francisco. Professor Cross estimated that, by 1932, the Association had placed almost 88,000 craftsmen on local projects, had trained more than 1,700 youngsters in various crafts, and had brought approximately 5,000 nonunion workers into the city.⁴

The building trades unions resisted as best they could. Some of the trades struck again in mid-1923, without success. In 1925, the UBCJA decided to move against the open shop in San Francisco, and the union's General Executive Board visited the west coast to discuss a restoration of the union shop. This time, however, the international union wanted to control the negotiations. The employers refused to negotiate, thereby forcing the carpenters to take strike action. The most costly and violent strike in the history of the city's building trades began on April 1, 1926.

This strike, of course, had the full blessing of Hutcheson and the GEB. To support it, the carpenters' union spent about three-quarters of a million dollars, and the Industrial Association spend an even greater sum, though the exact figure is unknown, to oppose it. Close to 5,000 workers were directly

involved in the strike, tying up much of the city's construction work for eight months. The employers imported strikebreakers, mainly from Los Angeles, secured court injunctions against interference with nonunion construction, and insisted on strict law enforcement by city officials.

Both sides resorted to violence, each blaming the other for starting it. The Industrial Association hired one of the country's most notorious professional strikebreakers, "Black Jack" Jerome. The local police cooperated with the Association and its strikebreakers, protecting "scabs" who crossed the picket lines. The union organized so-called "wrecking crews," groups of tough young union members who went to work sites and systematically beat up strikebreakers and broke their tools. Each "crew" member received \$1.50 a day from the union, or \$40 if a foreman or superintendent was beaten up at the site.

One of the "crew" leaders was a powerful young Irishman, Joseph Michael O'Sullivan. Born in Ireland in 1902, he had learned the carpentry trade from his father, becoming a highly skilled all-around carpenter. When he arrived in San Francisco in 1925, he promptly sought affiliation with the carpenters' union. His brother Michael already belonged to Local #2164, but he advised Joe to join what he described as the "more cosmopolitan" Local #22. What Michael meant was that #22 would be more appropriate for an Irishman. Ethnicity still determined the composition of many San Francisco locals: Local #2164, which had

formerly been affiliated with the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters, primarily included Englishmen, Scots, and some Germans, but few Irish; #483 was the Swedish local; but #22 included Swedes, Danes, Finns, Russians, Germans, Irishmen, and practically every nationality group.⁵

Joseph O'Sullivan and his brothers were enthusiastic union members. When the 1926 strike erupted, they willingly served in any capacity to which they were assigned. Joseph and his associates even "stink-bombed" a local hotel which housed strikebreakers; he received the modest sum of \$35 for the deed, but his suit was ruined in the process. O'Sullivan has colorfully described their role in the strike:

"We'd get to a job, roust the scabs, break their tools--naturally people got hurt. I was kind of young and tough at the time.

"In the course of the strike, one man was killed--rumor was that he was hit by a two-by-four and died. That day I came back to my room at the Valencia Hotel, took my wash, and found there was two police detectives waiting for me--Mitchell and Von Mattrie.

"They says, 'You Mr. O'Sullivan?' I nodded."

'We got a warrant for your arrest.'

'What's the charge?'

'Murder!'

"They had come for me on the streetcar, so I suggested that we get a friend to drive us back to the police station. On the way we

dropped by the hall to let the members know I was arrested--the two of them even came into the building with me.

"I was in jail three weeks, constantly being interrogated. They arrested my brother Jimmy too. Why they even jailed the guy who drove us to the station, an Australian fellow. Probably because he was with bad company. Finally they couldn't hold us for murder, so we were charged with vagrancy when two other fellows confessed to the killing.

"No other trades would join us. Just the carpenters. When we shut a job down, nobody worked--they got out fast. We just used our hands but we worked the scabs over, threw their tools into forms, broke levels. Maybe it was the right thing to do, maybe it was wrong. But that's the way they wanted it, and that's the way it got done.

"We lost the strike after 12 months. I was blacklisted, couldn't get a job. I had to go to Vallejo to get work, even left the union for a time. There was not much left."

The strike really was lost in 1927, but Hutcheson did not officially declare its termination until late 1929. He had explained to the union's Executive Board that the strike could not be won unless the union could assure sufficient supplies for union-shop contractors. Hutcheson claimed some success for the strike, in that the "permit system" had been abandoned and the Industrial Association had agreed to maintain "fairer" wages and working conditions. The carpenters, however, still had

not achieved a return to the union shop, nor had they genuinely weakened the employers' ability to determine wage levels unilaterally. The union shop would not be regained until the mid-1930s.⁶

The strike left a residue of bitterness and distrust. The carpenters had borne the entire brunt of it, receiving little cooperation from the other trades. Even some of the union carpenters had "scabbed," and many of the strikers remained bitter about that fact for years. Some felt that the local leadership was incompetent, having failed to secure the support of the rest of the labor movement. Undoubtedly, many chickens were coming home to roost: the carpenters, under McCarthy, had earlier refused to cooperate with the Central Labor Council, and, under the national leadership of Hutcheson, the UBCJA had become highly unpopular with many of the other building trades unions. In some vital respects, the carpenters' "go it alone" policy had backfired.

The isolated San Francisco carpenters did receive some unexpected, though largely symbolic, help from another area. In 1926, the members of San Jose's veteran Local #316 voted to assess themselves, for the purpose of providing financial aid to the strikers. The San Jose and other Santa Clara County carpenters had been fighting their own battle against the "American Plan," since 1921. The Industrial Association there had pressured employers, and bankers, to boycott union-shop contractors. Mills, lumber yards, and other woodworking firms also were "persuaded" to join the open-shop association.

Under the leadership of Joseph Cambiano, executive secretary of the Building Trades Council until 1923, and Bert Ward, his successor from 1923 to 1935, the construction unions arranged to assure a continuing flow of building materials and supplies for union-shop builders. Materials were imported from overseas, where necessary. Cement was brought in from Sweden and Belgium, by the boatload. When the Industrial Association sought to cut off loans and working capital to unionized firms, a pro-labor financier organized the Surety Savings and Loan Association, and the building trades unions bought stock in the new company.⁷

In 1928, there was some improvement. The unions had held firm, with construction projects being either 100 percent union or 100 percent nonunion. Building material suppliers, and some of the smaller contractors, began to break away from the Industrial Association. The California State Council of Carpenters was organized that year, at a convention held in San Jose, and Cambiano was elected its president. He was to retain that key spot until 1958.

Southern California Leaps Ahead

The decade of the 1920s was another boom period for southern California. Population and industry zoomed upward, and building construction kept pace. Between 1920 and 1930, over two million persons moved to California, with about three-quarters of them settling in the south. The population of Los Angeles County jumped from 936,455 to 2,208,492, and Orange County's total increased from 61,376 to 118,674.

Over the same period, the population of the city of Los Angeles rose by nearly 115 percent, reaching 1,238,048 in 1930. South Gate, Bell, Lynwood, Torrance, Hawthorne, Maywood, and Tujunga were among the new cities which came into being. Alhambra's population jumped from 9,000 to 30,000; Inglewood's from 3,300 to 20,000; and Huntington Park's from 4,000 to 25,000. Beverly Hills experienced a startling increase, from 700 to 17,500.

The population boom, especially in the earlier part of the decade, strained the resources of the construction industry. Building craftsmen were in unprecedented demand, in residential, commercial and industrial fields alike. New oil discoveries in 1920 and 1921, in areas such as Signal Hill and Santa Fe Springs, made petroleum a major industry, and the opening of a Goodyear Rubber Company branch plant in Los Angeles, in 1919, soon was followed by similar moves by Goodrich, Firestone, and U.S. Rubber. Massive new studios in Culver City and Burbank reflected the burgeoning growth of motion pictures. Tourism remained the region's foremost industry, but thousands of the tourists, impressed by the sunshine and the living space, decided to stay. The All-Year Club of Southern California, born in 1921, sounded the virtues of both summer and winter travel to California, which further boosted the annual influx.

Of course, the spectacular growth brought its problems. The automobile became the region's symbol, with cars clogging the inadequate roads (Ford's "Model T's" and "Model A's" seemed especially popular). Water was in short

supply, and southern California looked to the Colorado River as a fresh source. Ushered in with the usual bitter political wrangling, the Metropolitan Water District was formed to meet this urgent need. Its Chief Engineer, William Mulholland, became an influential figure in Greater Los Angeles. Many formerly independent communities, such as Watts, decided in favor of annexation to the city of Los Angeles, in order to be eligible for the needed water supplies.

Although San Francisco remained the financial and the cultural center of California, Los Angeles was advancing. The new buildings were not tall (except for City Hall, no building could exceed twelve stories in height), but the downtown area was growing and some of the structures, such as the Richfield Tower, were considered to be architecturally impressive. Perhaps of greater interest to the building trades were the developing public facilities: the aqueducts, dams, and other parts of the wide-ranging water system; the Los Angeles Public Library; the new roads and highways; and the County's proud cultural achievement, the Hollywood Bowl, where the hills were leveled or terraced by horse-drawn graders. These larger projects provided much of the employment for union carpenters, since the community still was predominantly open shop and most of the houses were built under nonunion conditions. Using their political muscle, unions had succeeded in gaining passage of "prevailing wage" laws, which often assured that union standards would be maintained on publicly-funded projects.

A continuing problem for the building trades was the embroilment of the carpenters' union in prolonged jurisdictional disputes. The United Brotherhood fought with the Sheet Metal Workers (until 1926), the Machinists, International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees in Hollywood, and several other unions. Nationally, the carpenters grappled with the AFL's National Board of Jurisdictional Awards, finally toppling the Board in the later 1920s. As punishment for its jurisdictional transgressions, the union was expelled from the AFL's Building Trades Department, and this bitter conflict was duplicated at the state and local levels. In 1923, the national Department revoked the charter of the carpenter-dominated Los Angeles County Building Trades Council and chartered a dual council, as it did in several cities. The state BTC supported the carpenters, but the dualism continued for several years.

The carpenters thereupon came into head-on conflict with the Los Angeles Central Labor Council. Other member unions of the local Council had long resented what they regarded as the disproportionate power of the United Brotherhood, which simply reflected the numerical strength of the carpenters as the region's largest union. The hostility erupted in 1923 when the Central Labor Council sought to distribute some of the profits from its annual "Yearbook" to the dual BTC, rather than to the previously established body, and the District Council of Carpenters promptly withdrew all support from the "Citizen Company" which published the yearbook. The carpenters, in cooperation with some other building trades unions, started a rival

labor newspaper--the Southern California Labor Press. Carpenters' Local #158 supplied the initial funds, and buiding trades unions were automatically assessed a per capita subscription fee. The Labor Press was published weekly from February of 1924 to January of 1928, in competition with the Central Labor Council's paper, the Citizen.⁸

In several ways, the Labor Press was a far different paper from the Citizen. Naturally, the new publication gave relatively more space to news about the building trades, which had been downplayed in the older paper. Of greater significance is the fact that the Labor Press subscribed to the Federated Press Service, a news and feature syndicate which was progressive in its orientation. The carpenters' newspaper, therefore, was more liberal and socially conscious than its more conventional and cautious rival. Given the highly conservative reputation of Hutcheson and the other international officers, it may seem ironical that the Los Angeles journalistic voice of the union was on the liberal side in viewpoint. Nevertheless, Hutcheson did give the locals substantial latitude on these matters, as long as they did not cede any of the union's claimed jurisdiction or otherwise contravene the directives of the United Brotherhood.

This internecine warfare inevitably hindered the organizing campaigns, and, of course, it gave new ammunition to the open-shop forces. In nonunion Los Angeles, with the Times and the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association (M & M) still in the vanguard of the anti-union crusade, the obstacles confronting

organized labor were formidable enough even without the added threat of the "American Plan" movement. The southern California building craftsmen were fortunate in one major respect: Construction activity was so brisk that the demand for skilled labor remained intense. The carpenters were in a strong bargaining position, and the unions could achieve some economic gains. The union shop, however, was out of their grasp. With few exceptions, union workers had to work alongside nonunion workers on many projects. The employers advertised out of state for skilled labor to meet their requirements, hoping to prevent "excessive" wages and unionization.

The Los Angeles carpenters' locals struck in both 1923 and 1924. The M & M quickly moved to assist the employers, recruiting strike-breakers where necessary. Some of the workers won a \$9 daily wage, but little else was achieved. None of the union-shop demands was realized.

The last half of the decade was characterized by a great deal of commercial building activity. The Wilshire Boulevard "Miracle Mile" was developed, and the many suburbs grew apace. Labor resumed intensive organizing activity, with the Los Angeles area unions slightly gaining in membership, in 1926-28, at a time when the unions nationally were losing. The once-feuding building trades locals finally joined together to combat the open shop. The American Federation of Labor provided funds to underwrite organizing campaigns, but the Crash of 1929 doomed all these efforts.

Even before the depression, the organizing drives had been stymied by the rising costs of construction. The rate of new construction slowed, although the unions made progress in the public sector; in 1927-28, for instance, the Los Angeles City Hall was built with union labor. At the end of the decade, the open shop remained firmly intact within the building trades, but the unions had survived the employer counteroffensives and, at least until the declines of 1928 and 1929, had made some economic advances. The period of greatest challenge and tribulation, however, lay just ahead.

The "Great Depression"

The stock market crashed in October of 1929, heralding the end of "prosperity." The first impacts were strictly financial, wiping out the unsound speculative gains and turning them instead into massive losses. Despite top-level political and capitalistic assurances that "the economy is fundamentally sound," the collapse soon spread throughout the economic system. Production and wages dropped sharply, and unemployment began a steady climb. By the end of 1930, it was already clear that a general economic depression was underway.

The effect on the labor movement was shattering. Millions of workers, now deprived of employment and income, desperately sought any kind of work, however ill-paid and onerous it might be. Union members could not pay dues, and unions could not enforce contracts. By the spring of 1933, an unprecedented twenty-five

percent of the total labor force was unemployed. Tens of thousands more subsisted on odd or casual jobs which paid only a few cents per week. There were no federal or state relief programs, no unemployment compensation payments, and no emergency public works.

Hundreds of thousands of homeless men-- "hoboes"--rode the rails, or hitchhiked, or drove broken-down "jalopies," or traveled on foot, in search of work, or food, or hope. Breadlines stretched for miles in major cities, and shacks or "shanty" towns, nicknamed "Hoovervilles," sprang up. Many came to southern California, on the unimpeachable theory that if one must be unemployed and poor, it is better to be located in a warm climate.

As the depression deepened, these hapless migrants encountered an increasingly hostile reception. They now were treated much as the "alien" immigrants had been treated before, as enemies to be rejected and shunned. The "Okies" and "Arkies" of the midwest, dispossessed by drought as well as depression, were shunted from one area to another, sometimes harassed, illegally, by border patrols or vigilantes. Within California, they might be welcomed when cheap and exploitable harvest labor was needed locally, and escorted elsewhere when harvest season had ended.

Building construction, naturally, dropped precipitously. Some carpenters' locals sought to close the books, even denying clearance cards to migratory members of other locals. Others wanted to raise initiation fees, to discourage entrants to the trade. All feared the

impact of this vast migration upon employment opportunities and wages for local craftsmen. To their immense credit, the international officers of the UBCJA opposed such restrictions, emphasizing the value of preserving the Brotherhood's tradition of free movement of its members among areas.⁹

Inevitably, the UBCJA lost membership. Many of those who still were carried on the books as members, by special dispensation, could not pay their dues. Between June, 1928, and June, 1932, the number of national members in good standing dropped from 300,086 to 134,059, and the number of members in arrears rose from 36,384 to 100,013. Union revenues fell correspondingly; salaries were cut at all levels, and beginning September 1, 1931, the union's general officers and national representatives were required to donate one week of free service every month.¹⁰

The depression reached the west coast somewhat later than in the East. Perhaps because southern California still was growing, and was geographically so vast and decentralized, the depression's human impact was not quite as visible there as it was in the more congested Eastern cities. Nevertheless, rising unemployment and falling production crippled the local labor movement, with the building trades especially hard hit. Perry and Perry describe conditions in these terms:¹¹

The building trades were probably more severely hit by the depression than any other group. The decline in employment which had begun in the mid-twenties because of the fall in building

construction in the city was accentuated after 1929 and continued well into the 1930s. The carpenters suffered more unemployment than any other union in the Building Trades Council. The corresponding drop in membership resulted in the merger of Locals No. 158, 426, and 738 as early as 1930. The severity of the depression's impact caused both withdrawals from and a dearth of new affiliations with the Building Trades Council. By 1932 the unions of bricklayers, tile setters, carpenters, and plasterers were all independent of the council, which became hardly more than a shadow organization. The electrical workers sought to strengthen their position through an ordinance setting standards of performance for men in their craft, but the City Council rejected the measure, perhaps because the Times interpreted it as a move to control employment in the electrical field. By the end of 1932 at least 50 percent of the workers in the building trades were unemployed in spite of the lowering of union wage scales in the depression years. Public works gave them some hope, but relatively little employment was available even in this area as 1932 drew to a close.

Organizing activity, of course, vanished. Only a few strikes occurred, some of them led by left-wing organizations which viewed them primarily as protests against capitalism and the conservative economic policies of President Hoover and of the official AFL leadership. With thousands of skilled and unskilled workers idle, employers could dictate their own terms.

In Santa Monica, some members of Local #1400, one of the oldest locals in the state, would follow lumber trucks out to the job sites, looking for work. Many faithful union members hid their union cards and took nonunion work wherever they could find it. In 1932, the vice president of the California State Federation of Labor, Clyde Isgrig, declared that: "The widespread apathy apparent among wage earners toward organizations designed to better their economic conditions in this [Los Angeles] district is appalling and is indicative of dire consequences, which will retard both organized and unorganized workers alike."¹²

The depression's crushing effect on union activity and membership was similar in other parts of California. San Francisco initially was shielded from the full onslaught of the economic collapse: the city's leading bankers established a \$100 million fund to guarantee that no depositor would lose his money deposited in any local bank. In 1932, however, shipping and industry sharply declined and about 70,000 workers lost their jobs.¹³

Some of the city's workers, particularly the building craftsmen, were rescued from disastrous unemployment by large projects such as the construction of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge in 1933-36. The Industrial Association, however, still was enforcing the open shop, and its task was made much easier by the depression. The Association continued to recruit nonunion workers and penalize employers who adopted a union shop. Not until 1935 would the building trades unions find it possible to regain substantial control in the industry.

The depression also struck the less urbanized parts of California, aggravating the already severe impact of continuing farm distress. In San Jose, Carpenters' Local #316 suffered a major loss in membership, and barely survived the depression. Officers served without pay, and its Ladies' Auxiliary sold chances on home-made quilts, or held fund-raising parties and food sales, in order to help pay the dues for some of the members. In 1935, when construction picked up, the Local started to grow again.¹⁴

The realities of the depression compelled many of the AFL business unionists to become more active politically. It was becoming clear that organized labor, and the wage and other standards which workers had achieved through unionization, could be saved only through governmental action. For skilled building craftsmen, the major prospect for employment lay in the public sector, on large-scale projects such as the Los Angeles Aqueduct. During the depression, Los Angeles voters approved a new bond issue to finance construction of dams and aqueducts, and the Metropolitan Water District projects gave work to an estimated 10,000 persons, including many carpenters, over the coming six years. A new federal office building was constructed in Los Angeles, at a cost of almost \$6 million, and, in 1931, some men got work on a road building project launched by Los Angeles County.¹⁵

In March of 1931, the State Federation of Labor, in a departure from long-standing tradition, called for unemployment relief and insurance, a ban on immigration (which now included

a substantial influx of Mexicans), a five-day week with a shorter workday, immediate grants to the most needy, and improved coordination among governmental agencies in public works planning. Reluctantly, the national AFL and UBCJA leaders abandoned their fervent opposition to federal unemployment compensation legislation, although Hutcheson never was enthusiastic and, obviously, was responding only to overwhelming rank-and-file pressure. In 1932, labor achieved its greatest legislative victory when Congress enacted the Norris-LaGuardia Anti-Injunction Act, which severely limited the power of federal courts to enjoin strikes and boycotts and outlawed the infamous "yellow dog" contract.

In Los Angeles, the gains realized through passage of the Norris-LaGuardia Act were vitiated somewhat by the appointment in 1932 of a strongly antiunion chief of police, James E. Davis. The Police Department's so-called "Red Squad," under Captain William Hynes, served as the municipal strikebreaker and harassed all groups which were identified as "radical." Throughout the 1930s, the department collected dossiers on union leaders, politicians, and any others deemed by it to be in some sense subversive: Even a future highly conservative mayor, Samuel W. Yorty, was listed in the files for his currently left-wing activity. The city administration remained favorable to the open shop until 1938, when incumbent Mayor Frank Shaw was recalled and replaced by reformer Fletcher Bowron.

On the national level, President Hoover implored employers to hold the wage line and voluntarily share the available work among employees who would otherwise be displaced. Philosophically, however, he was too rigidly conservative to approve a federal relief and public works program. He insisted that state and local governments and private charities could meet the pressing needs of the unemployed, and regularly proclaimed the end of the depression. Despite occasional modest and temporary upturns in the economy, unemployment continued to rise. The Democrats gained control of Congress in 1930, but, under conservative and uninspiring leadership, they offered little in the way of an effective alternative program.

In 1932, the Democratic Party nominated New York Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt for the presidency, and most of the country's labor leaders supported his bid. This was a tough test of Hutcheson's Republican loyalty, but he endorsed Hoover's reelection and became chairman of the Republican Party's labor committee. A fellow Republican in union ranks, John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers, was one of the few to join "Big Bill" in support of Hoover. Hutcheson again was isolated within the labor movement, but this was a familiar position for him. He still distrusted government and disliked "liberals."

Roosevelt soundly defeated Hoover in the election. In those days, the inauguration of a new president took place in March, more than four months following the election, and the nation was in crisis during this "lame duck"

period. Early in 1933, unemployment climbed to its highest level in history. Some Americans feared revolution, at a time when the labor movement was in shambles and was clearly incapable of protecting the interests of the workers or the unemployed. The nation looked to the federal government, and a new and untried president, for leadership. With both hope and anxiety, the American people awaited the coming of the Roosevelt administration and an innovative program of recovery and reform which soon would be known as the "New Deal."

Chapter VI

Turmoil In The Forests: Carpenters, The CIO, And The New Deal

The coming of the New Deal marked a new and exciting chapter in the history of the labor movement. For the first time since 1920, a progressive and relatively pro-labor president occupied the White House. President Roosevelt brought his own engaging style of politics, with an elan and buoyancy which contrasted sharply with the dourness of his predecessor. His eloquence lifted the spirits of the American people, and gave them renewed confidence that a forceful leader was again at the helm.

The first administration of Franklin Roosevelt was divided into two policy phases: (1) A period of recovery legislation, centering on the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA), from March 1933 to May 1935 when the Supreme Court ruled Title I of the NIRA unconstitutional, and (2) a period of reform and social legislation designed to extend greater protection and economic security to the workers and the masses of people, from the spring of 1935 through 1936. The first 100 days of the new administration primarily were spent in dealing, successfully, with the immediate financial and banking crisis, and then Roosevelt turned to the basic problems of industrial and agricultural depression.

The National Industrial Recovery Act had two major titles: One established a National Recovery Administration (NRA), whose purpose was to help develop industrial "codes of fair competition" governing prices, wages, hours and working conditions, and the other set up a Public Works Administration, under Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, which was

designed to initiate major public construction projects throughout the country. A separate measure authorized the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), under social worker Harry Hopkins, which provided immediate cash assistance to unemployed and poverty-stricken Americans.

The NRA represented a departure from the classical economic tradition. The "conventional wisdom," to that time, had been that depressions should be remedied by the application of tough medicine--falling wages and prices, which, assertedly, would eventually revive the economy through the operation of the law of supply and demand. In 1933, this approach was unacceptable to powerful segments of the business community, as well as to labor and the Roosevelt administration. Some influential businessmen, such as Henry Harriman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, called for an end to "cutthroat" competition. They sought, in its place, a method for industrial self-regulation to assure "fair" prices. This was, of course, the analogue to labor's historical insistence on preservation of "fair" wages. The NRA codes, ideally, reflected a trade-off between organized labor and some parts of business: each sought protection from price-cutters in the product and labor markets.

Support for this concept came from diverse sources: Sections of industry (usually the larger enterprises and trade associations), the unions, and, within the administration, the industrial planners such as economists Rexford Guy Tugwell and Leon Henderson. Opposition was equally vocal, and equally diverse in origin. Small businessmen, often identified as the price- and wage-cutters, were joined by some "classical" liberals, such as Justice Louis D. Brandeis, who believed in free competition and distrusted the role of big business in codemaking.

An allied group opposed the NRA on the practical grounds that, whatever its original merits conceptually, representatives of consumers and labor lacked an effective voice in the drafting and administration of the codes. Philosophically, the exponents of "fair" competition drew upon St. Thomas Aquinas, the opponents upon Adam Smith.

The NIRA contained a provision, Section 7(a), which proved to be of critical significance to organized labor. This section granted workers the right to organize into unions of their own choosing, the first time that employees outside the railroad industry had been legislatively assured that right. Although there was no specific machinery for enforcing the right to organize, union organizers promptly seized upon Section 7(a) and made it a vital part of their campaign strategy. They trumpeted to the workers that "President Roosevelt wants you to join a union," and millions of them did. The near-dormant labor movement suddenly regained its strength.

Ironically, President Roosevelt and some of his advisers had originally hesitated about endorsing the right to organize in such terms, fearing that renewed strikes might dampen the recovery. The president was persuaded by New York's progressive senator, Robert F. Wagner, and by some of the union representatives, such as the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' president Sidney Hillman and the Railway Brotherhoods' counsel Donald Richberg, to include the provision in the Act. The remainder of the legislation was largely oriented toward business, suspending the anti-trust laws and permitting much collaboration among firms in each industry. Some protection for labor was deemed to be equitable. Ironically, this "afterthought" was to be the most historically significant and lasting part of the bill.

Building construction was one of ten key industries selected as major targets for the codemakers. Firms which were signatory to these codes could display the NRA emblem, called the "Blue Eagle," which identified them as practitioners of fair competition and decent treatment of their employees. Americans were encouraged and exhorted to patronize only those establishments displaying the "Blue Eagle."

The drafting of an acceptable construction code proved to be difficult. Neither Hutcheson nor any other construction union leader participated in the development of the initial code, and its language mainly reflected the input of the major builders' associations. The unions sought a master code that provided for a thirty-hour, five-day week, with a guarantee that they would be consulted in the formulation of subsidiary codes. The temporary code, as adopted, established a 48-hour week, an eight-hour day, and wages well below the 1929 level. The building trades unions protested vehemently, and finally conferred at length with Roosevelt himself in January of 1934. The president ordered the existing code to be scrapped, and put a labor member of the NRA, Major George Berry, in charge of drafting a new code, in consultation with the unions.

The second code constituted a victory for the unions. It called for a compromise forty-hour week, a minimum wage of 40¢ an hour, and creation of a 21-member National Construction, Planning and Adjustment Board, on which ten union representatives were to sit. Hutcheson took no direct part in the drafting of the code, nor was he appointed to the new board, since the UBCJA was not then a member of the AFL's Building Trades Department. However, a threatening development initiated by President Roosevelt, and AFL president Green's plaintive pleas, soon induced Hutcheson to bring his union back into the department.¹

Roosevelt had long been annoyed by the continuous jurisdictional strife among the building trades unions. He was firmly convinced that stabilization of this chaotic industry was one of the keys to a sound economic recovery. When the president noticed that the draft code contained no provision governing the prevention of jurisdictional strikes, he ordered that the newly-created board make this the first order of business. This was, needless to say, worrisome to Hutcheson. There was no love lost between Roosevelt and the conservative Republican UBCJA leader, and Hutcheson feared that his union's jurisdictional supremacy might be weakened.

The net result of Roosevelt's intervention was creation of a National Board of Jurisdictional Awards, under the NRA. This move gave additional power to the formerly weak Building Trades Department, and "Big Bill" rushed to rejoin. Still at odds with the smaller unions, the UBCJA and some allies soon proceeded to form a dual LTD, and the two departments feuded until 1936 when a "shotgun wedding" was performed. Hutcheson promptly seized control, never again relinquishing it. But by this time, a far more serious "enemy" had appeared on the scene, joining President Roosevelt as a force to be reckoned with. From this point on, the traditional jurisdictional struggles with other AFL unions subsided, replaced by a series of encounters with a burgeoning movement known as industrial unionism.

In 1935, a few days following the physical scuffle between Hutcheson and his old friend, John L. Lewis, on the floor of the AFL convention, Lewis and several other AFL union leaders founded the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO). The major purpose of the CIO was to organize the millions of workers in

mass-production industries along industrial rather than craft lines, and Hutcheson, along with the other old-guard business unionists, viewed this as a dangerous threat to their existing jurisdictions. After two years of internecine struggle, a full-scale war erupted within the American labor movement, when the CIO-affiliated unions seceded from the AFL and formed a powerful rival federation--the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

Organizing drives had been given new momentum by passage of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935. Following the judicial invalidation of the NRA, Senator Wagner pressed for, and the president finally signed into law, sweeping legislation to protect labor's right to organize and to bargain collectively with employers, accompanied by the establishment of a National Labor Relations Board with power to enforce that right. Workers now were free to choose, without employer interference or domination, any employee organization. The choice could be made in a representation election supervised by the NLRB, and the union selected by a majority in the unit would become the exclusive bargaining agent for all employees. With this potent legislative support, the CIO launched a far-flung organizing campaign in the automobile, steel, rubber, oil, textile, and many other industries.

This vast movement represented a potential challenge to craft unions such as the UBCJA. Hutcheson personally disliked the principle of union representation elections under governmental supervision, but he had to live with it. Under his leadership, it had been many years since the United Brotherhood had organized workers in this way. Indeed, Hutcheson had specifically ordered that the union's field representatives be called "business representatives" and not

"organizers." The union had relied upon the boycott and union-label weapons to keep both employers and employees in line.

Although the carpenters' jurisdiction in the building trades never was successfully invaded by the CIO, Hutcheson assumed the leadership of the anti-CIO counterattack. Ironically, the union already had moved independently in the direction of a partial industrial unionism, which later prompted Professor Christie to dub its jurisdictional policy "craft-industrialism."² Reaching out to encompass machine woodworkers, millwrights, shipwrights, and others of varying skill levels, the UBCJA had extended its jurisdictional claims far beyond construction carpentry.

Mindful of the menace it confronted, the carpenters' union struck back. Thus pressured into action, the union emerged from its depression-induced inactivity and membership started to grow again. Despite Hutcheson's misgivings and forebodings, the competition ultimately proved to be beneficial. Whenever the CIO even approached the Brotherhood's jurisdiction, the leaders reacted immediately and strongly. Fearful of encroachment by newly-organized CIO international unions, the UBCJA moved into industrial areas which it had never before sought to organize. In the process, the union itself became relatively more industrial in character.

The union's secretary, Frank Duffy, reported in 1936 that membership had grown to 301,875, up from 242,000 in 1932. This, however, still was below the pre-depression level of 346,000, and of the 1936 total, about 131,000 were so-called "nonbeneficial" members who did not have full membership status. Only 161,000 of the union's members were construction carpenters.³

Most of the numerous "nonbeneficial" members were the recently-organized lumber and sawmill workers of the west. These new members, mainly located in Washington, Oregon, and California, came into the Brotherhood after bitter struggles among rival unions. The circumstances of their entry illustrate the union's aggressive tactics in this period of turmoil, as well as the profound effects of the rise of the CIO and the enactment of New Deal legislation.

Organizing Lumber And Sawmill Workers

In the period 1933-36, the carpenters' union suddenly found itself in a perplexing dilemma. Tens of thousands of lumber and sawmill workers in the Pacific Northwest and in California were knocking at its doors, clamoring for admission. Nothing like this had been experienced before in the entire history of the United Brotherhood.

Normally, a trade union would welcome this surge of membership, but the nature and background of these applicants created some problems for the union's leadership. These were not skilled building craftsmen, but, rather, exceedingly large numbers of unskilled and semiskilled workers with a record of militancy and independence. Many of them had the reputation of being "radical" in their views and affiliations. The lumber and sawmill workers had been the backbone of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), familiarly known as "Wobblies," who had conducted many a bitter strike in the Northwest. Obviously, the votes of this vast new membership could outweigh those of the construction carpenters and the other skilled craft members, creating the possibility of a drastic change in union policy and leadership. Yet the growing demands for affiliation could not be stilled.

The American Federation of Labor first had chartered the lumber and sawmill organizations as "federal unions," which were directly administered by the Federation. By policy, the members of these federal unions soon would be parceled out to the various international unions which claimed jurisdiction. The UBCJA had that claim, but it was not exercised in 1933 and 1934 when the initial surge was occurring. No real efforts were then made to organize the workers as full members of the United Brotherhood. Clearly, Hutcheson was not anxious to bring these clamoring hordes aboard.

In 1935, the demands no longer could be ignored. AFL president Green turned over the federal locals to the carpenters' union, and Hutcheson sent Abe Muir, a veteran General Representative, into the Northwest, with instructions to bring the unruly workers under control and prevent a strike. Throughout the spring and summer, Muir labored unsuccessfully to carry out these instructions. He tried to impose a settlement on the strikers, but the highly independent lumberjacks resisted. Muir lifted the charters of insurgent locals, reorganized the local councils to bring them under his domination, and arranged to put the more skilled workers into separate craft district councils. The lumber workers countered by forming what amounted to a dual organization: the Federated Woodworkers' Union. However, they tried to stay within the framework of the United Brotherhood.

The issue came to a head at the 1936 UBCJA national convention, the first one in eight years. Sixteen delegates, representing about 72,000 workers,

appeared at the convention with a list of demands, centering on the assurance of a full vote on matters affecting the lumberjacks, representation on the union's General Executive Board, and return to them of most of their twenty-five cents per month per capita tax. Duffy, in behalf of the GEB, made it clear that, as nonbeneficial members, they had no real standing at the convention and had been invited and seated only as nonvoting observers. After some further discussion, the delegates returned to the Northwest unsatisfied and discontented.⁴

Hutcheson, at the 1936 convention, made it crystal clear that the lumber and sawmill workers either would stay in the carpenters' union, on the union's terms, or their organizations would be crushed. If they left the UBCJA, he said, all support would be withdrawn and the firms with which the carpenters had contracts would be asked not to employ any nonaffiliated workers. Firms which refused to cooperate would be put on the "unfair" list. The union was prepared to boycott any firm which recognized a union outside the Brotherhood.

Formation of the CIO, in 1935, had further complicated matters. Lewis first had demurred when approached by representatives of the dissident lumber and sawmill workers, who were seeking possible CIO affiliation. At that time, the CIO was heavily involved in organizing the automobile and steel industries, and Lewis also emphasized that he was primarily concerned with "organizing the unorganized." In 1937, when the CIO was transformed into a permanent federation, the tens of thousands of workers in the Pacific Northwest and in California defied Hutcheson and, in July, formed the CIO-affiliated International Woodworkers of America (IWA). Thus began one of the bitterest interunion fights ever experienced.

Hutcheson and the other carpenters' union leaders were enraged at this defiance. They launched an immediate counterattack, culminating in a boycott against the products of all lumber camps and mills which negotiated with the IWA. Fortunately for the UBCJA, the IWA came under the leadership of Harold Pritchett, a Canadian-born left-winger who appeared to follow the Communist party line. The IWA was wracked by its own internal dispute between the far left and the anti-Communist factions, and became vulnerable to charges of Communist domination.

Between 1937 and the American entrance into World War II late in 1941, the violent struggle centered in the states of Washington and Oregon, where most of the Douglas fir trees are grown. But the fighting inevitably moved into the redwood and pine forest regions of northern California. The majestic redwood trees grow to heights exceeding 360 feet, and date from the time of the dinosaurs. Their timber produces an incomparably beautiful and durable building material, which in this period made them a particularly inviting target for lumber companies. A 100-year conservation campaign, supported at various times by personalities as diverse as Phoebe Hearst (mother of William Randolph Hearst) and Presidents Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt, has finally given them much protection, through new conservation methods, establishment of Redwood National Parks and other protected areas, and other means. No similar protection was afforded to the lumberjacks, who were caught in a crossfire between the militant CIO and the highly determined UBCJA.

The violent strike in the isolated lumber town of Westwood, near Susanville in northern California, was a microcosm of the issues and tactics characteristic of the bitter and prolonged dispute. In the

mid-1930s, Westwood was the very model of a "company town." It was owned and run, literally, by a single family, the Walkers, who controlled the Red River Lumber Company. The merchants, city officials, police, and everyone else in town were beholden to the Walker family. The family owned or leased all the local stores, and company employees were pressured, not very subtly, to patronize only the town merchants. Westwood was reached by only one highway, which rarely brought strangers into town. When a newcomer unwisely ventured into Westwood, he was treated with deep suspicion. The life of any union organizer was unsafe.⁵

In theory, the employees of the Red River Lumber Company had a "union," but it was phony. The workers, with active company encouragement, belonged to a chapter of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen. For years, the so-called "4 L's" organization had been known as an outright company union, so identified by both the AFL and the CIO. Ted Walker, a vice president of the lumber company, was himself a member of the chapter's board. Passage of the National Labor Relations Act threatened to pose new problems, because this legislation outlawed company-dominated unions and established procedures for certifying a genuine union representative of the workers.

The arrival, in May 1937, of a CIO organizer created a major stir. The company had already anticipated its troubles with the National Labor Relations Board, replacing the discredited 4 L's with a slightly more subtly dominated organization called the Industrial Employees Union (IEU). This fooled nobody, and the CIO representative promptly organized Local #53 of the Lumber and Sawmill Workers, IWA. The new

IWA union won enough members to press for quick recognition, which, of course, the company denied. Its gains had been impressive, however, in the face of employer and community opposition and the financial hold exerted by the Walker family over everyone concerned.

But the power of the paternalistic Walkers remained overwhelming. When an NLRB representation election finally was held, in March of 1938, the IEU won by a two-to-one margin. Just three months later, the company announced a 17.5 percent wage cut, which was too much even for the IEU membership. The IWA resurged into prominence, with some strong worker support. In July, it called a strike and established a picket line at the lumber company.

The picketing started peacefully, but the company suddenly closed the plant, allegedly to prevent "serious bloodshed." Four days later, the IWA held a well-attended meeting, which resulted in creation of a joint committee of IWA and IEU members to meet with management. Before the committee could meet, scheduled for the next morning, a group of vigilantes physically attacked the strikers and openly drove them out of town. The vigilantes were led by the company's General Superintendent and its Logging Superintendent. They were armed with pick and axe handles which belonged to the company. The owner of a company store provided free ammunition, and disabling streams of water from powerful hoses, already attached to the hydrants, were directed against strikers. Armed men barricaded the highway, illegally controlling the traffic in and out of town.

The law enforcement officials refused to stop the violence. Indeed, many of them flagrantly helped the vigilantes, a natural alliance because all of the

peace officers and special deputies were or had been employees of the Red River Lumber Company. The Sheriff of Lassen County was present during the violence, but assisted the vigilantes. The small town was now an armed camp.

IWA members who had not already fled were brought to "trial" in a kangaroo court. The "courtroom" was the bed of a pick-up truck which was clearly marked as the company's property. Squads of armed men were dispatched to find and deliver remaining IWA members, whose guilt was summarily determined by the mob. Single men were told to leave town immediately; family men were given two hours. The crowd shouted its indictments and judgment. The spirit of Madame Defarge lived again.

By now, the Walker family members were beginning to realize that they had gone too far. They summoned J. Paul St. Sure, one of the state's most distinguished management attorneys and labor experts, who in 1951 would become the head of the Pacific Maritime Association (the organizational voice of waterfront employers). St. Sure agreed to represent the company, but he was appalled when he arrived in town and saw the results of the vigilantism. He observed the barricades, the armed men, and even the kangaroo court. In fact, he later confirmed the existence of all the illegal actions described, and many more.

St. Sure tried to persuade the Walkers to restore law and order and to reopen the lumber mill. They first resisted, but a short speech by a courageous young striker, at the kangaroo court, turned the tide. In the hearing of St. Sure and members of the family, as well as the mob, he simply said: "I was on the picket line for the sole purpose of trying to get some of the wages that were taken away from us

restored. I have a wife and youngsters and I have to live, and if any of the rest of you had guts, you'd have been in the picket line with me."

The crowd suddenly was silent. St. Sure turned to Willis Walker, and, noting the unpredictability of mobs, said: "All that's required now is for him to point his finger at you and say, 'There's the man you should run out of town.'" Walker, obviously shaken, left the scene. The company's Board of Directors, entirely composed of Walker family members, was convened, and all of St. Sure's proposals were agreed to. The mill was reopened, and jobs even were offered to the 500-600 workers who had been driven out of town. Naturally, there were few takers. The head of the IWA local still lay seriously injured in a Red Bluff hospital, suffering from a brain concussion and internal injuries.

The company, now mindful of its legal obligations and fearful of both criminal and civil suits, contacted the California State Federation of Labor and suggested its willingness to accept the formation of an AFL local. The Secretary-Treasurer of the Federation, Ed Vandeleur, was delighted. He promptly dispatched two organizers to Westwood, S.T. Dixon of the Federation and Don Cameron of the UBCJA, who immediately formed Local #2836 of the AFL Lumber and Sawmill Workers. The former IEU members flocked into the new AFL local.

In Susanville, members of the Sierra Nevada Woodworkers Union voted to affiliate with the AFL. The AFL now had momentum in the area, but the CIO made one last effort. Some of the "refugees," led by two CIO organizers, returned to Westwood. The atmosphere was tense, but the Sheriff finally and reluctantly allowed them to enter, saying that he could

not guarantee their safety. Only a few people showed up at their meeting, and the IWA local disappeared. The strikers brought a law suit for \$3 million in civil damages, but the case was tied up in the courts for months and nothing was gained.

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) delayed another representation election, claiming that IWA members still were being intimidated and that the company was favoring the AFL. The AFL accused the NLRB of bias in favor of the CIO.⁶ At this time, the national AFL was pressing for amendments to the National Labor Relations Act, citing allegedly prejudiced decisions. The Westwood case was among those cited, suggesting to some observers that the AFL was exploiting the situation to embarrass both the NLRB and the CIO. The sharp differences between the two federations were spilling over to the political arena. In California, liberal Governor Culbert L. Olson was supported by the CIO, and some of the AFL officials sought to discredit him. The Westwood dispute already was putting Olson on the spot.

The AFL still was worried by the possible effects of the wage decrease. In February, 1939, the AFL Westwood local called another strike, demanding restoration of wages and a closed shop (assuming NLRB certification). Again there was some violence, and both St. Sure and Vandeleur rushed to Westwood to deal with the new problem. Vandeleur decided that something had to be done promptly about the wage cut, or the strike could not be successfully ended. He phoned St. Sure and told him that he was going to call a meeting and announce, without company authorization, that the mill had agreed to restore half of the wage cut. The ploy worked. The company acquiesced, and the strike ended. The long-delayed NLRB election was held in May of 1941, resulting in an

impressive victory for the UBCJA local. The union-shop agreement brought about 2,200 members into the union. The union finally had come to Westwood, and from this time onward, relations were reasonably smooth.

Some Lessons From The Westwood Strike

The Westwood dispute illustrates the key elements in organization of the lumber industry. The workers were militant and prepared to organize, even in the face of brutal employer opposition. They initially sought affiliation with the American Federation of Labor, but the AFL's craft union structure and philosophical antagonism to their spirit of militancy and independence presented insuperable problems. The international union which claimed jurisdiction--the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America--could not grant the local control and autonomy which they demanded. The more militant CIO could better meet their demands, but the carpenters' union could not allow its jurisdiction to be thus invaded.

The masses of workers flocked into the International Woodworkers of America (CIO). The employers fought back violently, aligned with local law enforcement officers, American Legion chapters, and vigilantes. Although they preferred the open shop, they finally realized that unionization was inevitable, and the more moderate UBCJA became the most acceptable alternative. The IWA could make effective use of the NLRB's certification machinery, but the carpenters' union responded by boycotting firms which signed IWA contracts. Many employers found themselves in an impossible dilemma: They were required by the National Labor Relations Act to recognize only the union selected by a majority of employees, but

the UBCJA might then boycott those establishments which supplied them or used their products. The teamsters' union often joined the carpenters in enforcing a boycott, cutting off the transportation of materials. The competition between rival unions has continued to this day.

From the viewpoint of the UBCJA, there were reasons beyond the formal preservation of jurisdictional integrity to bring the lumber and sawmill industry under its control. Technological and organizational progress was bringing new methods and equipment to the lumber mills, and many mills manufactured a finished product ready for installation. In place of the rough-cut timber formerly produced, materials such as door and window sills, floors, and trim were emerging from the sawmills. Skilled workers were joining the unskilled and semiskilled in the industry. These workers readily belonged in the carpenters' union.

The problem, from Hutcheson's standpoint, was that most of the lumber and sawmill workers seemed to prefer industrial unionism. In order to organize the skilled workers, he might have to accept the lesser skilled. Were it not for the existence and competition of the aggressive CIO, the UBCJA might simply have followed its traditional practice of separating out the skilled craft workers and putting them into locals. But there was too great a danger that the CIO would organize the entire woodworking industry, including the planing millmen and other crafts.

The solution was to organize the workers initially as nonbeneficial members of the UBCJA, paying lower dues in exchange for fewer benefits and loss of convention voting privileges. Taking advantage of its boycott strength and some employer support, the

Brotherhood regained membership in the industry. At the beginning of the next decade, the violent hostility between the IWA and the UBCJA had lessened somewhat, and in a few areas there was even some evidence of limited cooperation. The United Brotherhood claimed about 35,000 lumber and sawmill workers in total, while the IWA had about 100,000. Naturally, the carpenters' union membership was concentrated in the sawmills. Almost all of the forest workers belonged to the IWA.⁷

The 1940 UBCJA convention again considered some of the issues growing out of the lumber and sawmill disputes on the west coast. Of greatest relevance was the convention's action in granting voting rights to representatives of 35,000 nonbeneficial members, who were lumber and sawmill workers. The union now reported a total membership of 319,848, with 227,742 beneficial and 74,436 nonbeneficial members. Many of the forest workers had left the United Brotherhood, and construction carpenters and other skilled workers had increased their membership, in both relative and absolute terms, since the 1936 convention. The remaining lumber and sawmill workers presumably had demonstrated their loyalty to the union. They no longer posed an internal threat to the UBCJA's leadership and policies, and there was no reason why they should be denied voting representation.

In 1939, 1940, and 1941, the proceedings of the State Council of Carpenters were replete with attacks on the CIO. The UBCJA now asserted complete jurisdiction over all woodworkers. At the 1941 state convention, Abe Muir made this position quite clear: "We want it to be known that the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America represents all of the people in the woodworking crafts, from the man who works in wood from the stump to the completed

job. The quicker we get them all organized, the better we will be able to protect our interests."⁸

Scars from these bitter disputes, and the tactics used by the various unions, have remained to the present day. In the early years, the lumber and sawmill workers were "second class" members of the UBCJA. Although they finally achieved full voting membership, some of them continue to regard themselves as "different" from the "carpenters." The feelings of difference may be exacerbated by the fact that the forest workers are geographically isolated in certain areas of northern and central California, often distant from the urban areas where the construction carpenters have their greatest strength. Whatever the residual feelings may be, the lumber and sawmill workers unquestionably have benefited from unionization. From a position of weakness and dependence, they have moved to one of power and bargaining leverage.

Chapter VII

Challenge To The Open Shop

In California, as in the nation as a whole, the carpenters' union rebounded strongly in the second half of the 1930s. The New Deal's large-scale public works program, combined with favorable legislation, gave the construction unions a much-needed boost. The basic pro-union impulses of San Francisco's workers again came to the surface, and southern California resumed its population and industrial growth. The Industrial Association of San Francisco and the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association of Los Angeles, however, would not give up easily.

In 1935, a key issue, both nationally and locally, was the wage scale to be maintained on projects administered through the new Works Progress Administration (WPA). The federal government had initiated the WPA as a work relief program, hiring the unemployed to work on many short-term construction and other projects. The Roosevelt administration initially proposed to pay subsistence wages (or what was then called a "security wage"), but the unions, led by the building trades, raised a vigorous protest. A compromise ultimately was reached, under which the hours worked by skilled and semiskilled workers on WPA projects would be reduced so that the hourly rate equaled the prevailing wage. The unions hailed this change, believing that it set a valuable precedent. Throughout the remainder of the decade, the carpenters' union largely concentrated on

the task of insuring that the various public construction projects hired union labor and observed union standards.

Late in the decade, the UBCJA, under Hutcheson's aggressive and highly pragmatic leadership, again came into head-on conflict with the Roosevelt administration. In a highly controversial action, the United States Department of Justice, in late 1939 and early 1940, moved against the United Brotherhood and other building trades unions. The head of the Department's Anti-Trust Division, Thurman Arnold, firmly believed that certain practices adopted by those unions constituted a "restraint of trade" as defined by the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. Specifically, Arnold's chief targets were the jurisdictional strike and accompanying secondary boycotts, the practice of refusing to work on materials produced out-of-area in lower-wage shops, and "featherbedding" (requiring employers to hire unneeded labor). A federal grand jury brought eleven indictments against the carpenters' union.

The key case involved a jurisdictional dispute between the International Association of Machinists (IAM) and the UBCJA, centering upon millwrights employed at the Anheuser-Busch brewery in St. Louis; the carpenters' union had launched a nationwide boycott against the company's products when the work had been awarded to the IAM. The weapons against which Arnold moved were those which had been extensively used by the union on the west coast. P.H. McCarthy had pioneered the policy of boycotting the products of out-of-town mills, and the UBCJA was then wielding the boycott weapon

with immense force in its west coast dispute with the International Woodworkers of America.

The U.S. Supreme Court did not agree with Arnold and the Justice Department. In May of 1941, the Court fully sustained the Brotherhood's position, noting that the practices cited were legitimate defenses of the union's jurisdiction and its labor standards. The circumstances of this case, naturally, did not improve the already hostile relations between President Roosevelt and Hutcheson. In the 1940 election, Hutcheson again endorsed the Republican presidential candidate, Wendell Willkie, but the overwhelming majority of workers supported the winner, President Roosevelt.

The war between the AFL and the CIO reached a disastrous peak in this period. The fratricidal hostility consumed union resources and energies which could have been devoted more productively to organization of the unorganized and the building of a stronger bargaining relationship with employers. Some AFL leaders treated the CIO as a greater enemy than the open-shop movement, and collaborated with employers and conservative politicians in opposition to CIO-affiliated unions. On its side, the CIO was torn by factional and ideological strife between its far left and its noncommunist progressive elements. The continuing warfare posed severe political hazards for President Roosevelt and his "New Deal" administration, which faced the more conservative Congress elected in 1938. Both the National Association of Manufacturers and the American Federation of Labor demanded far-reaching amendments to the National Labor Relations Act, for different reasons.

In California, Governor Olson, who had been elected in 1938 as the first Democratic governor in this century, was much embarrassed by the dispute. The more conservative AFL leaders accused him of being pro-CIO and "radical" in his sympathies, while some of the more leftist CIO officials found him insufficiently progressive. A deep split within the State Federation of Labor was visible at its 1939 convention, when the incumbent Secretary-Treasurer, conservative Edward Vandeleur, was opposed for reelection by Alexander Watchman, president of the San Francisco Central Labor Council, who favored a degree of cooperation with the CIO. Vandeleur's victory prolonged the internecine warfare and weakened Olson's political support.

Little of this interfederation rivalry was observable in the construction trades, where the carpenters' union retained a firm hold. The CIO never made an effective effort to penetrate the building trades, although District 50 of the United Mine Workers, John L. Lewis' union, was an omnibus "catch-all" organization which accepted building tradesmen and a miscellany of other unrelated workers into its ranks. In northern California, as we have seen, there was heated warfare in the sawmill and lumber industry, and occasional strife in the shipbuilding and piledriving trades. In southern California, there was some tension in the furniture manufacturing and lumber trades, but the CIO made little headway. The AFL Furniture Workers' Local #1561, for example, vied with the CIO United Furniture Workers Local #576 for contracts with several furniture manufacturers.

In general, the UBCJA's leaders were pleased by the progress made in the 1935-39 period. Union representative Don Cameron commented, at the 1936 convention of the State Council of Carpenters, that more progress had been made in the previous twelve months than had been experienced in the entire five years between 1930 and 1935. At the 1939 convention, Abe Muir, of the international's General Executive Board, noted that "...when the California State Council of Carpenters was organized, San Francisco and Oakland were not organized and were virtually open shop towns operating under the American Plan, while today, it would take a fine tooth comb to find a really bad situation. Conditions have been improved in Los Angeles, where men who had worked in open shops for 25 years were now out on strike."¹ In the 1938 election, organized labor, in league with progressive forces throughout the state, had defeated a broadly-worded antipicketing initiative proposition.

A major deterrent to success, however, was the continuing absence of unity in labor's ranks. Strife would continue until the AFL-CIO merger in 1955, but, in just two years, an event of monumental impact would impose at least a temporary unity upon the labor movement.

Passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act, in 1938, also strengthened labor in the late 1930s and early 1940s. This bill revived the concept of "fair" competition in the labor market, establishing in interstate commerce a minimum wage of 40¢ per hour, a maximum of forty hours per week (with required payment of time

and one-half for overtime work), and strict regulations on the employment of child labor. The orthodox business unionists, such as Hutcheson, never favored governmental intervention of this type, claiming for their unions the total responsibility for defining and protecting labor standards. The more progressive union spokesmen joined with segments of the business community, such as northern and western textile manufacturers, in supporting legislation which would curtail competition from low-wage employers. While skilled craftsmen were not directly affected by minimum-wage laws, a rise in wages at the bottom would have a chain reaction, inducing demands for wage adjustments at higher levels to maintain historical differentials.

This establishment of a floor under wages and a ceiling over hours made it easier for employers in California to accept unionization. A major reason for their past resistance to the union shop had been a reasonable conviction that they could not maintain union standards of employment and still meet the competition of nonunion firms, in or out of state. Now, the Fair Labor Standards Act gave them some defense against interstate competition. Indeed, the greater the degree of unionization in the local labor market, the stronger was their protection from "unfair" competition. Therefore, some of the traditionally antiunion employers began to accept not merely the inevitability, but even the desirability, of uniform union standards throughout the industry. There were holdouts, of course, but fewer employers resisted to the bitter end. Even the M & M subtly changed its strategy, continuing to support the open shop

but urging employers to maintain "fair" wages and working conditions as a means of forestalling unionization.

Two other factors pressured many employers to abandon resistance to the carpenters' union. Although the National Labor Relations Act had been passed in 1935, major employers, regarding it as unconstitutional, defied it for two years. Not until the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the act's constitutionality, in 1937, did employers generally begin to observe its mandates. By 1940, it was clear that unions, with governmental protection, were here to stay. Having seen the militant CIO in action, through "sit-down strikes" and other aggressive tactics, building trades employers were prepared more often to opt for the carpenters' union as a reasonable alternative.

Southern California: The Open Shop Is Challenged

As the country emerged from the worst of the depression, the Southern California unions began to regain some strength. For the first time in many years, the open-shop employers had reason to worry. Economic conditions improved markedly in 1935. The aircraft and radio industries were growing, and construction was rebounding. Between 1930 and 1940, the population of the county of Los Angeles rose by about 600,000, from roughly 2.3 to 2.9 million.

Fearful of the union resurgence, the M & M launched a new open-shop campaign, in Los Angeles. In editorials, the Times warned that

union membership was rising rapidly. In 1933, the first six months of an extensive AFL organizing drive brought about 15,000 workers into the labor movement. The terrified open-shop forces reacted by forming large numbers of company-dominated unions, euphemistically called "employee representation plans."

During the depression, the Los Angeles Building and Construction Trades Council had declined so drastically in membership that it barely existed. The unions of boilermakers, blacksmiths and machinists did not even belong to it, and while the carpenters' union still was affiliated, its own membership losses were so severe that it could contribute little to the maintenance of the Council. The Council's treasury was depleted for much of the time.²

Slowly, the building trades unions began to rebuild. Movement was snailpaced in 1933 and 1934, because construction had not yet recovered completely and competition from the many nonunion immigrants remained intense. Union wage rates varied considerably among the various trades. Carpenters received \$10 a day for an eight-hour day, working thirty-two hours per week.

Both the NRA construction code and the governmental "prevailing wage" laws helped the carpenters' union. In Greater Los Angeles, county and city governments and other public agencies were doing virtually all of the major building, and the unions persuaded them to use union rates as the basis for determining prevailing wages in the public sector.

Table 1

Union Wage Rates and Working Hours
in the Building Trades
Los Angeles 1934-1935

| Occupation | Rate per hour | | Hours per week | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|--------|----------------|------|
| | 1934 | 1935 | 1934 | 1935 |
| Asbestos workers | \$1.25 | \$1.25 | 40 | 40 |
| Bricklayers | 1.00 | 1.00 | 40 | 40 |
| Building laborers | .625 | .625 | 40 | 40 |
| Carpenters | 1.00 | 1.00 | 40 | 40 |
| Cement finishers | 1.25 | 1.25 | 44 | 44 |
| Elevator constructors | 1.125 | 1.125 | 40 | 40 |
| Elevator constructors' helpers | .788 | .788 | 40 | 40 |
| Hod carriers | .75 | .75 | 40 | 40 |
| Inside wiremen | 1.00 | 1.00 | 40 | 40 |
| Lathers | 1.25 | 1.25 | 30 | 30 |
| Marble setters | 1.00 | 1.00 | 40 | 40 |
| Painters | 1.00 | 1.00 | 40 | 40 |
| Plasters | 1.25 | 1.25 | 30 | 30 |
| Plasterers' helpers | 1.10 | 1.10 | 40 | 40 |
| Plumbers | 1.125 | 1.10 | 40 | 40 |
| Sheet metal workers | .875 | .875 | 40 | 40 |
| Steam fitters | 1.25 | 1.25 | 40 | 40 |
| Stonemasons | 1.00 | 1.00 | 40 | 40 |
| Structural ironworkers | 1.125 | 1.125 | 44 | 44 |

SOURCE: "Union Scales of Wages and Hours in the Building Trades in 1934 and 1935," Monthly Labor Review, XLI (Nov., 1935), pp. 1166-1177. Cited in Perry and Perry, op. cit., p. 291.

The Long Beach earthquake of 1933, which did much damage to school buildings and other public construction, was a boon for the carpenters. Hundreds of buildings had to be rebuilt or replaced. In connection with a \$20 million school reconstruction bond issue, in 1934, the unions pressed for insertion of a union prevailing rate clause in subsequent building contracts. The building trades unions also demanded that union workers be given preference in employment. When the Los Angeles Board of Education demurred, the Central Labor Council opposed the bond issue, and took some credit for its failure to obtain the necessary two-thirds majority at the polls. A prominent union spokesman was elected to the school board in 1935, and the unions supported a successful bond issue that year. Organized labor continued to press for the payment of union prevailing wages.³ In 1935, the Los Angeles Central Labor Council reported that new construction stimulated by the earthquake, the WPA and PWA, and repeal of prohibition (which had led to the location of some breweries in the area) had benefited the building trades unions.

Only the millmen conducted a strike in 1935. Local #884 of the UBCJA was one of the largest unions in the city, with most of its members employed in cabinet and store fixture manufacturing. The local demanded wages ranging from 40¢ to \$1.16 2/3 per hour, depending on level of skill, and a five-day, thirty-hour week. Arbitration first was agreed to by the union and the twelve largest firms, but the Times intervened in protest. A temporary walk-out was called, followed by a major strike in June when 1,000 men walked out and stopped

operations at the fifteen biggest firms. The M & M now gave support to a newly-formed manufacturers' association, and Captain "Red" Hynes took leave from the Police Department to advise the employers on how best to protect property and strikebreakers. By August, however, fifteen large firms signed contracts granting wage increases ranging from 80¢ to \$2 a day, and smaller mills also had made concessions. The union claimed a partial victory.

Throughout 1936 and 1937, strike activity still was concentrated in the woodworking industries. Expiration of the 1935 agreement brought a new crisis for Millmen's Local #884, as its old adversary, Weber Showcase and Fixture Company, led another employer counterattack. Weber refused to recognize the union as bargaining agent for its employees, becoming a focal point for a union drive in 1936. The union asked \$1 an hour for skilled workers, 60¢ for laborers, 45¢ for the first six months of apprenticeship, and \$1.10 for installation work; a forty-hour week with provisions for overtime; elimination of all work on Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays; and union recognition. A strike followed, finally focusing on seven large companies which completely rejected negotiations.

Predictably, the M & M entered the picture. Practically every major labor dispute in Los Angeles, in this period, was rendered more complex by the intervention of the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association. The Association had its own "code of ethics," which it consistently sought to impose on employers. Employers were pressured to maintain the open shop at all costs, and were even expected to

contribute toward the expense of its maintenance. Therefore, there often were intricate negotiations between the M & M and employers in a key industry, as well as negotiations between those employers and the union.

The strike lasted about a year. The employers' association hired guards and strike-breakers, and the union enforced secondary boycotts through mass picketing. Some large businesses were induced to stop buying the products of, or supplying, some of the struck manufacturers. A settlement finally was reached in June of 1937, providing for: Hourly wages of \$1 for skilled craftsmen in manufacturing, \$1.10 for work at construction sites, time and one half for overtime, double time for Sundays and holidays, an effective apprenticeship system, and union recognition. Weber Showcase remained nonunion, but, in general, it was a union victory. The employers' association later dissolved. In May, 1938, Locals #884 and #1291 were consolidated as Local #721. The struggle with Weber continued unabated until 1939, when the company signed an agreement covering wages and hours for millmen, cabinetmakers, painters, sheet metal workers, and teamsters.⁴

Through 1937 and 1938, the Los Angeles County Building and Construction Trades Council actively fought against the open shop in the building trades. Initiation fees were temporarily reduced, and "flying squads" of union members from different locals would patrol construction sites, persuading nonunion workers to join the appropriate craft union. Usually they functioned on Saturdays, because they were also trying to enforce a forty-hour week. When

contractors attempted to work crews on Sundays, to avoid the increasingly effective ban on Saturday work, the unions picketed work sites on Sunday, thus annoying real estate salesmen. Naturally, the M & M resisted strongly, helping form an open-shop builders' association. The organizing drive had some success, but most residences still were being constructed by non-union labor. The unions warned that these houses were jerry-built, reflecting inferior craftsmanship.

Union officials regarded 1937 as the most successful year in the building trades since 1929. Among the firms which were unionized that year was the William Simpson Construction Company, one of the oldest and largest of the open-shop firms, which capitulated after a brief strike during construction of the new Columbia Broadcasting System building in Hollywood. By early 1938, over 400 building contractors had union contracts, and many workers in lumber mills, the Venetian blind industry, furniture factories, and all the boat yards and boat shops in the county were members of unions affiliated with the District Council of Carpenters.

In 1937, the District Council of Carpenters finally was cooperating with the Building Trades Council in organizing drives, the previous friction having been overcome. Some key successes were recorded in the lumber industry, especially when the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Local #2788 signed a contract with an old enemy, Hammond Lumber Company. A strike at other lumber yards was averted by a verbal agreement calling for a 15 percent wage increase, a forty-four-hour week, and time and a half for overtime.

However, when this agreement expired in June of 1938, the Lumber and Allied Products Institute opposed union demands, which included continuation of the forty-four-hour week, unchanged wage rates, time and half for Saturday work, and a closed shop. The employers firmly rejected the closed shop, and, in July, the union called a test strike at Owens-Parks Lumber Company. The failure of this strike induced the union to drop its closed-shop demand. A subsequent agreement established hourly wages ranging from 65¢ to \$1.10, an eight-hour day, and time and a half for overtime including Saturdays. Although the union did not obtain the closed shop, the new agreement called for preferential hiring of union members.

The Venetian Blind Workers Local #1763, affiliated with the District Council, was chartered in 1937. It negotiated two agreements with the manufacturers' association, providing for wage increases, elimination of piecework, improved working conditions, seniority rights, and, in the second agreement, a forty-hour week. Columbia Mills was the only firm which resisted, and a strike was called in early October. The dispute was characterized by much violence, with the company obtaining a temporary injunction against picketing and finally reopening with strikebreakers. An organization called The Neutral Thousands, actually an M & M "front," organized an independent union. Management filed a damage suit against the union, which was thrown out of court early in 1938. Local #1763 failed to secure an agreement.

The activity of The Neutral Thousands in this dispute typified M & M strategy in the

late 1930s. A succession of "front" organizations--Southern Californians, Inc., The Neutral Thousands, and Women of the Pacific--regularly intervened in behalf of the open shop, or carried on extensive and expensive propaganda campaigns. Club women, housewives, and "civic leaders" were recruited to head these supposedly spontaneous groups. They often professed a concern with "monopolistic" practices which allegedly burdened consumers with higher prices, reduced production and productivity, and inferior or interrupted services. In reality, the targets of such organizations were organized labor and the union shop.

A United States Senate subcommittee, headed by Wisconsin's progressive senator Robert M. LaFollette Jr., held public hearings in 1939 and 1940 on the tactics of and sources of support for these organizations. The reports of the subcommittee showed, in detail, that the various "independent" groups actually were organized and financed primarily by the M & M and by other employers' associations, with considerable help from the Los Angeles Times. These exposures diminished their effectiveness, and although they remained active through the next decade, the organizations were slipping into obscurity and impotence.⁵

In the building trades, union membership picked up substantially. In 1939, membership in the Los Angeles Building and Construction Trades Council and the number of union-shop agreements reached record heights. Flying squadrons of union members discouraged Saturday work and promoted union affiliation. An agreement was reached with the large and previously

nonunion Guy Atkinson construction company, which was building Hanson Dam in the San Fernando Valley. New stimulus was provided to construction by the slum clearance and public housing programs authorized by the 1938 national housing legislation, chiefly sponsored by Senator Wagner. Publicly-supported building projects still offered much of the employment available to union craftsmen, since residential construction remained predominantly nonunion.

The Lumber and Sawmill Workers Local #2788 finally signed up Weber Showcase and Fixture, but had little success with the Graves Lumber Company. In the summer of 1939, a major dispute erupted between the union and the Lumber and Allied Products Institute, which sought wage cuts for cabinet, sash, and door work; no further reductions in hours except as required by the Fair Labor Standards Act; decreased earnings for decreased hours; and no union shops. The strike finally ended in late July, on terms negotiated by a special mediator appointed by Los Angeles Mayor Fletcher Bowron. A new one-year contract provided for an immediate 4 percent wage increase, with an additional one percent to be effective on October 24; a forty-hour week, also to become effective on that date; time and one-half for overtime; and union preference in employment (but not a closed shop). Both Locals #2788 and #2607 signed the agreement.

As the decade of the 1930s came to an end, the Los Angeles labor movement was making impressive strides. In February of 1937, the State Council of Carpenters reported that the two largest locals in the state were Locals #25 (central Los Angeles, chartered on July 1, 1930, as a result of merger of veteran locals

#158 and #426) and #946 (the Hollywood studio local, discussed in Chapter IX). The open shop had not yet been overturned, but it was being directly challenged. Public construction was well organized; the forty-hour week was pervasive; and wages had rebounded to pre-depression levels and were still rising. The M & M open-shop campaign was discredited. Some of the nonunion employers, including the Times itself, observed union standards of wages and working conditions in their establishments, realizing that "unfair" standards could not be sustained or justified in the face of growing worker militancy.

From the standpoint of the construction unions, the most far-reaching and historic accomplishment was the signing, in 1941, of the first Master Agreement with the Associated General Contractors (AGC), covering trades in ten southern California counties: San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Inyo, Mono, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Imperial. The contract, effective May 12, 1941, to April 30, 1942, established wage, hour, and other labor standards for highway, engineering and building contractors and 21 AFL unions, along with all District Councils and Building and Construction Trades Councils involved.

According to the Southern California chapter of the AGC, it was late in 1940 when, "for the first time in history, the general contractors of southern California gave serious consideration to the advisability of entering a union labor agreement with the A.F. of L. Building and Construction Trades Unions. Months

of discussion and analysis followed and finally, during the first part of 1941, negotiations were started seriously."⁶ Three men took the lead in negotiating the precedent-setting agreement: Frank J. Connolly, manager of AGC's southern California chapter; John MacLeod, president of Macco Construction Company, who chaired the Joint Contractors Negotiating Committee; and Cornelius J. ("Neil") Haggerty, then president of the California State Federation of Labor, who was a member of Lathers' Local #42 in Los Angeles and later, from 1960 to 1971, the president of the Building and Construction Trades Department of the national AFL-CIO.

The undue complexity of the diverse wage structure, covered by negotiations with separate unions for limited geographical areas and specialized types of construction, induced the contractors to seek greater uniformity. Their initial goal was "to produce a labor agreement which would cover every union and occupational classification in all types of construction, throughout the whole of southern California, at uniform rates."⁷ This ambitious goal could not be fully attained in the first year. In a move which set a long-term precedent, the San Diego unions and contractors decided to negotiate their own agreement. In addition, the Los Angeles area contractors finally limited the principle of uniform wages to the six major trades which were employed directly by general contractors: Laborers, Carpenters, Truck Drivers, Operating Engineers, Cement Finishers, and Reinforcing Iron Workers. Wages for the subtrades, such as Electricians and Plumbers, were fixed in separate agreements, but, with some

Table 2

Union Wage Scales
Selected Building Crafts
Los Angeles County
July 1, 1941

| <u>Craft</u> | <u>Rate Per Hour</u> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Boilermaker | \$1.50 |
| Bricklayer | 1.50 |
| Carpenter | 1.175 |
| Millwright | 1.375 |
| Cement Finisher | 1.25 |
| Electrician | 1.375 |
| Structural Iron Worker | 1.50 |
| Machinist (Heavy Duty Mechanic) | 1.375 |
| Painter | 1.10 |
| Plumber | 1.375 |
| Roofer | 1.125 |
| Sheet Metal Worker | 1.25 |

added provisions, conditions established for all the trades became part of one master contract for the area.

During the first year, 168 General Contractors throughout southern California signed the agreement. About \$400 million worth of building contracts were performed under the agreement, without major difficulty. Approximately 100,000 craft workers were covered by the historic contract. At the end of the contract year, the employers hailed it as a significant and mutually beneficial advance in labor relations. The U.S. Department of Labor adopted the agreement as the basis for determining wages on all federal construction projects in southern California, and almost all other public agencies followed suit.

In addition to establishing uniform wages, the new agreement provided for a standard work week of forty hours (highway and engineering projects could operate occasionally on Saturday at straight time, only under very limited conditions), stipulated shift and overtime schedules for all crafts, and recognized the AFL unions as the exclusive bargaining agents for all employees. All covered workers had to be, or to become, union members. The principle of arbitration was set forth as a substitute for strikes and lockouts, applying to jurisdictional disputes as well as to all other types. From this time onward, major work stoppages were much less common.

The signatory employers still hoped that their counterparts in San Diego could be persuaded to join negotiations for a master agreement covering the entire southern half of the state. In February of 1942, in anticipation of

the expiration of the first year's contract at the end of April, the southern California chapter of AGC invited the San Diego chapter to participate jointly in negotiations for a new agreement. Each chapter then appointed seven representatives to a Joint Contractors Negotiating Committee, and the manager of the San Diego Building and Construction Trades Council, K.G. Bitter, participated in negotiations in behalf of that area's construction unions. By this time, of course, the United States was at war, and negotiations were made even more complex by the many problems associated with the war effort. Despite this, another satisfactory agreement was reached, providing about a ten percent wage increase for the six basic trades and an effective resolution of other issues.

The independence displayed by the San Diego unions may have reflected the fact that some local agreements already had been reached with the AGC in that county. In February of 1939, the representative of the San Diego District Council of Carpenters, Henry Smith, reported at the state convention that: "An agreement with the Associated General Contractors has been in effect in San Diego County for the past fifteen months. Our relations with this group has been the means of bringing about better conditions, not only for carpenters, but for all of the Building Trades, and we are at this time in negotiation for improvement to the existing agreement and to bring other Building Trades Unions under its terms."⁸

Smith also reported progress in relationships with San Diego's lumber yards and mills.

He noted a new agreement with the Lumbermen's Service Bureau, representing 36 yards and mills, which had just been negotiated by Millmen's Local #2020. Many carpenters were employed at the All-American Canal Project in the Imperial Valley, where the piledrivers won a closed-shop agreement. As in other areas, the homebuilding industry lagged far behind. Ads, radio talks, and other media campaigns had been launched to persuade both builders and homebuyers that union-built homes were safer, better constructed, and more durable.

In subsequent conventions, Smith continued to note the difficulties encountered in organizing residential construction. The union had some successes in public construction, and the large contractors, he said, had been cooperative. "In the small residence field there has been very little, if any, improvement. In the larger centers subcontracting of labor has increased and is making it extremely difficult for legitimate contractors to pay a decent wage and employ our members. Efforts to organize this small home work are being made constantly, but are met with stiff opposition on the part of the nonunion builders, who themselves have become better organized during the year for the sole purpose of reducing wages."⁹

In his 1941 report, Smith was more optimistic, largely as a result of construction activity triggered by the accelerating defense program and a severe earthquake in 1940. "I believe it is safe to say that during the past year a greater percentage of the construction work in the Fifth District has been done under Union conditions than in any similar period in

our history."¹⁰ Federal housing projects, military construction, and an expansion program at Consolidated Aircraft Company were generating new employment for carpenters. Boatbuilding also was beginning to boom. Smith perceived some problems arising from all of this burgeoning governmentally-supported activity.¹¹

Our great problem in connection with the Federal work is the education of the large number of new members, most of them without previous knowledge of the principles of Unionism. We have tried to keep the overtime work at a minimum, which has been a real problem with so many of our own members anxious to get in as many hours as they possibly can.

Smith also reported, with satisfaction, that the District Council had renewed its agreement with the AGC. "About thirty-five hundred carpenters now working in San Diego are receiving the benefit of improved conditions and a dollar increase in wages." The millmen had negotiated a wage increase in their own contract, and working conditions in the mills, he added, were "excellent." Clearly, the defense program was proving to be a boon to an area which previously had been predominantly open-shop and a source of much travail for the carpenters' union.¹²

Northern California: The Union Shop
Is Regained

It was not until mid-decade that the San Francisco building trades unions regained much of their previous strength. The depression, as suggested earlier, had decimated union membership and further emboldened the open-shop Industrial Association. Membership trends in Local #22, still the largest local in the city, illustrate the depression's impact. On December 31, 1925, on the eve of the massive 1926-27 strike, the local reported 1,405 paid-up members plus 164 in arrears. Exactly four years later, after the strike's termination and on the eve of the Great Depression, paid-up membership had fallen to 763, with 73 in arrears. On June 30, 1933, membership had reached the low point of 284, with 109 in arrears. (See Table 3).

Section 7(a) of the NIRA, in 1933, and, more importantly, the PWA and WPA public works programs and the National Labor Relations Act in 1935, vastly stimulated unionization in San Francisco. In 1934, the longshoremen's union, led by Australian-born radical Harry Bridges, challenged the waterfront employers and induced the local labor movement to participate in an unprecedented general strike. Even Local #22 gave support to the longshoremen, in sharp contrast with its behavior during the crucial waterfront and teamsters' strike in 1901. Although there was tension between the highly militant Bridges and the more conservative AFL leaders, organized labor managed to achieve a high degree of solidarity. By the end of 1936, paid-up membership in Local #22 had rebounded to 1,045, with only 29 in arrears.¹³

Table 3

Membership of Carpenters Local Union #22

| | <u>Members</u> | <u>In Arrears</u> |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| December 31, 1925 | 1,405 | 164 |
| June 30, 1926 | 1,273 | 321 |
| December 31, 1926 | 1,020 | 258 |
| June 30, 1927 | 933 | 136 |
| December 31, 1927 | 842 | 147 |
| June 30, 1928 | 778 | 107 |
| December 31, 1928 | 792 | 103 |
| June 30, 1929 | 758 | 96 |
| December 31, 1929 | 763 | 73 |
| June 30, 1930 | 691 | 100 |
| December 31, 1930 | 635 | 97 |
| June 30, 1931 | 573 | 95 |
| December 31, 1931 | 510 | 112 |
| June 30, 1932 | 409 | 179 |
| December 31, 1932 | 320 | 180 |
| June 30, 1933 | 284 | 109 |
| December 31, 1933 | 336 | 58 |
| June 30, 1934 | 467 | 82 |
| December 31, 1934 | 462 | 136 |
| June 30, 1935 | 471 | 116 |
| June 30, 1936 | 569 | 55 |
| December 31, 1936 | 1,045 | 29 |

The base of strength for the carpenters' union continued to lie in the public sector. San Francisco's famous Cow Palace was built with PWA funding, and Local #22's aggressive business agent, Joseph O'Sullivan, made sure that union carpenters were given preference on that project. In his recollection, the initiation fee for union admission was quite

reasonable, only \$10 at that time, and he could bring in many new members through these large-scale projects. Construction at the San Francisco Presidio and at the fairgrounds also employed union labor, as did nearly all city and state construction jobs. Almost all of the carpenters employed by the City of San Francisco, he recalls, were union members.¹⁴

Construction of the massive San Francisco-to-Oakland Bay Bridge and the Golden Gate Bridge was completed in the 1933-1937 period, providing work for thousands of building craftsmen. These bridges were unparalleled engineering and construction achievements. The Bay Bridge, begun on July 9, 1933, and opened on November 12, 1936, spans 12 miles across the bay, with two decks for automobile, bus, truck, and railway traffic. The lower level of the bridge is 216 feet above the water at the central pier. Where the east and west crossings meet, at Yerba Buena Island, the largest tunnel in the world was constructed. The tunnel, 76 feet wide and 58 feet high, had to be blasted out of 140 acres of the island's rock. The depth of the bedrock in the bay required that the foundations for the bridge be laid at a depth unsurpassed in the history of bridge-building.

The building of the Golden Gate Bridge was an even more remarkable enterprise. Started on January 5, 1933, and opened on May 27, 1937, this bridge is the longest single span in existence. Its towers rise above the water to the height of a 65-story building. Building the foundation of the south tower, construction workers had to work on barges which were tossed

continually by swells as high as 15 feet. Gigantic cables had to be spun between the two towers, each containing 27,572 strands of wire. Each tower carries a vertical load of 210 million pounds from each cable. The structure is a monument to the skill, dedication, and physical endurance of the construction workers.

The building of Treasure Island, in the bay just to the north of Yerba Buena Island, also represented an impressive construction achievement. Originally built as the site of the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition, the island was literally fashioned from 20 million tons of sand and mud dredged from the bay and deposited over tons of quarried rock. The result was a 400-acre artificial island which supported the newly-constructed Exposition buildings and, later, a terminal for the Pacific Clipper airships.¹⁵

These various engineering miracles, constructed with government funds, brought renewed strength to the building trades. Added to the stimulus already provided by the successful 1934 strike, the federal construction and work relief programs, the recovering economy, and the new legislative endorsement of collective bargaining, as reflected in the National Labor Relations (Wagner) Act, this extensive local construction activity made the 1935-36 period one of rapid growth and progress for the carpenters' union.

Local #22's resurgence in 1935-36 coincided with a major change in leadership. In a hard-fought election, O'Sullivan successfully

challenged an incumbent business agent, Arthur Nelson. Scars from the 1926-27 strike were visible during the campaign: Nelson, according to O'Sullivan, had "scabbed" during that critically important strike. O'Sullivan and his brothers, tough and belligerent, had spent their time beating up scabs.

O'Sullivan proved to be an assertive, independent, and controversial leader. He worked in the trade and served as business agent at the same time, earning \$49.50 a week as a carpenter and \$60 as a union representative. Aside from \$50 a month to cover the insurance and other expenses on his car, he received no expense allowance. He regularly socialized with members, and prospective members, dealing with problems and building up a following. The entertainment expenses, he notes, were more reasonable at that time: liquor was only 15¢ a shot.

He was aggressive and wide-ranging in developing work for the members. He made special arrangements with contractors and superintendents, and got work for the men in shipyards, mills, and wherever it was to be found. In the process, he sometimes invaded the "turf" of other locals, leading to complaints that he was raiding.¹⁶

Much of O'Sullivan's effort was devoted to the improvement of working conditions at construction sites. He secured cold drinking water, mechanical toilets, and tool shacks. Together with Dave Ryan, head of the District Council of Carpenters, he met with foremen, over sandwiches and liquor, and made it clear

that charges would be brought against anyone paying less than the \$9-a-day union scale. He was true to his word. Under-scale jobs were cited to the State Labor Commissioner.

Unlike several other building trades unions, the carpenters' union kept the books open, admitting into membership all those who were deemed to be "qualified mechanics." Even the Chinese were considered worthy of membership in San Francisco at this time. In joint organizing campaigns, O'Sullivan would always take carpenters into the union, but the plumbers' and electricians' unions were not so liberal. He finally issued an ultimatum: Either all the trades on the job would be organized, or he would no longer participate in the campaign.

O'Sullivan regularly patrolled the jobs, talking with the members and soliciting new memberships. After 1936, the local's membership jumped sharply. He got an agreement from the employers to allow union stewards on the jobs, and membership eventually rose to about 3,000. His schedule was busy: The apprenticeship committee met every Tuesday night; The District Council of Carpenters every Wednesday night; The Building Trades Council every Thursday night; and Local #22 every Friday night. Every Friday, he reports, between 30 and 50 men would be inducted into the local. There were never less than 350 members at a meeting, according to his estimate.

The major problem area for the union continued to be residential construction. Every Sunday, without exception, O'Sullivan and some other union members would picket the nonunion homebuilding sites. The men, he says, never got a penny for this Sunday picketing. Although the number of union jobs rose, much of the homebuilding industry remained nonunion. The union experienced greater success in other parts of the industry. By the end of the decade, almost all of the planing millmen, stair-builders, and cabinetmakers were unionized. Piledrivers' Local #34 was firmly in control of all work in its jurisdiction. The 1938 State Council proceedings reported that: "The entire San Francisco district is now operating under signed union agreements covering all branches of our craft in that district."¹⁷

It was in this period that a rapprochement was achieved between the UBCJA District Councils and the Building Trades Councils. In the mid-thirties, the Bay Cities' District Council in San Francisco and the East Bay District Council in Alameda County reaffiliated with their respective Building Trades Councils. Jurisdictional strife persisted, but it gradually declined in degree and importance. Unquestionably, the growing threat posed by the CIO caused the various AFL unions to abandon much of their fraternal squabbling and turn their jurisdictional guns against the new common enemy.

The open-shop movement experienced little more success in other parts of northern and

central California. The huge Central Valley Water Project was built primarily with union labor, under union working conditions, although the carpenters' union fussed with the PWA over a newly-established classification of "Rough Carpenter" which carried a wage rate of only 82 1/2¢ per hour. Eventually, the union secured its standard rate of \$9 a day, with the "Rough Carpenter" category abolished.

By 1941, virtually all of the mill work in northern California had been unionized. The Santa Clara County District Council signed up the Pacific Manufacturing Company, a long-time nonunion firm, as early as 1936, and also managed to secure agreements with general contractors, for the first time since 1921. Redwood Manufacturing, in Pittsburg, had presented a persistent problem for the union, but the proceedings of the 1938 state convention noted that Redwood finally had capitulated. New Millmen's Local #1956 was chartered to represent its mill workers. Diamond Match Company, in Chico, stubbornly resisted the union, but progress was made after 1938. Millmen's Local #1495 was formed in Chico, and succeeded in improving labor standards for mill workers at Diamond Match; in 1940, a new agreement offered a ten percent wage raise to millmen and five percent to laborers. Under pressure from its eastern headquarters, however, the company still rejected a union shop. In Fresno, another difficult area, the millmen finally secured a forty-hour week.

The shipbuilding and the pile drivers' locals were equally successful. In the East Bay and San Francisco area, where shipbuilding was

centered, both the Bethlehem and Moore Dry Dock firms were organized, and a 1936-37 agreement established daily wages of \$7.40, for an eight-hour day, for caulkers, shipbuilders, boatbuilders, and millmen at all the union yards. The 1937 proceedings reported that the Pile Drivers, Bridge, Wharf and Dock Builders "have been successful during the past year in establishing their \$1.33 scale [for 6 hours] on practically all public and private work throughout the northern part of California."¹⁸ The San Francisco pile drivers soon raised the rate to \$1.40.

In northern California, the carpenters' union fought bitterly with the CIO, particularly in the shipbuilding and piledriving trades. The leaders, almost uniformly, deplored the presence of both the CIO and the NLRB, denouncing all petitions for representation elections in those areas where the UBCJA already had negotiated with employers.

The CIO did make some inroads among the members of the piledrivers' Local #34 and the shipbuilders' Local #1149. In many ways, the piledrivers were like the lumber and sawmill workers. Many of them were itinerant, moving from one area and one job to another, and many were single men, rooming and socializing together. A great many were militant and independent, with many former Wobblies numbered among them. In 1937-38, Local #34 assessed the members 5¢ per month to aid the CIO organizing drive in California. Few actions could have more enraged Hutcheson and the other international officers. The General Executive Board threatened to revoke the local's charter.

Some pro-CIO members within the local formed a "Committee of Ten," and issued their own working cards, called "Blue Cards." About 700 of these special cards were issued, representing an overwhelming majority of the membership. The UBCJA expelled members of the "Committee of Ten," including the local's business representative, and the District Council assessed its members \$1 a month to underwrite a fight against the "Blue Card" members. The shipwrights and caulkers, however, gave support to the embattled Local #34. A compromise was reached in a few weeks, with the "Committee of Ten" members reinstated and the business representative, Jack Wagner, regaining his post. The local retained its AFL affiliation, and the carpenters' union eventually beat back the CIO challenges.¹⁹

The growing need for skilled construction labor, triggered by the expanding defense program and the government's residential housing programs, gave new impetus to the union's drive for higher wages. From Eureka to Monterey and Salinas, labor standards improved and membership boomed. In 1941, UBCJA state board member William P. Kelly, from northern California, was able to report that: "During the past year employment of our members in the Third District has probably reached the highest level in recent years. The principal factors responsible for this improved condition have been the Emergency Defense Program, the F.H.A. [Federal Housing Administration] and the Low Cost Housing Projects."²⁰ Throughout the state, commercial and public construction, millwork, shipbuilding, and the bridgebuilding and pile-driving trades were reasonably well organized, but residential construction remained an unresolved problem everywhere.

Prelude To War

As the decade neared its end, the threat of war in Europe became the world's foremost preoccupation. In early spring of 1939, the terrifying Nazi German war machine overwhelmed little Czechoslovakia, and then confronted Poland in the east. In August, Germany and Russia, in a surprise move that shocked the free nations, signed a non-aggression pact. Great Britain and France agreed to come to Poland's aid in the event of a Nazi invasion. On September 1, German troops crossed the Polish border and the most destructive war in history had begun.

The German armies crushed Poland in less than a month. Soviet Russia opportunistically seized the eastern half of Poland, sharing the spoils with its new "ally." A six-month actionless "phony war" ended in the spring of 1940, first when the Germans overran Denmark and Norway and then when German armies invaded Belgium, Holland, and France. France fell on June 10, and, in league with his partner, Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, Germany's Adolf Hitler now controlled the entire European continent. Only Great Britain stood in his path to world domination. A vast aerial assault on British cities was launched, continuing through the rest of 1940 and 1941. Britain did not collapse, as Hitler had anticipated, and in June of 1941 the German troops again turned eastward and invaded Russia.

At home, throughout 1940 and 1941, the American people were embroiled in a bitter debate over this country's role in relation to

the European war. Step by step, the nation moved closer to involvement. By late 1941, the United States had become the "arsenal of democracy," committed to supplying munitions and materials to the still-beleaguered British. But noninterventionism remained strong, and most Americans continued to oppose a declaration of war.

At the outbreak of the European war, the United States was woefully unprepared, both militarily and economically. The vital machine tool industry had not yet recovered from the ravages of depression, and aircraft production was still in its infancy. The nation depended upon its navy, and its 3,000-mile distance from Europe, for protection. The army was below third-class in quality and quantity, small, untrained, and ill-equipped. Industry was not geared to the requirements of a defense effort, or the role of supplier to the free world.

In the late summer of 1940, Congress, at President Roosevelt's urging, enacted the first peacetime draft law in history. This legislation had a lasting impact on the economy and the labor market, eventually drawing most of the country's male youth into the armed forces. The growing need for skilled labor cut the still-considerable ranks of the unemployed, finally creating the full employment which had eluded America in peacetime. The carpenters would play a critical role in the rebuilding of the nation's military capacity and the production of war materials.

California was the center of two of the most important defense industries: aircraft and shipbuilding. Southern California's burgeoning aircraft industry was the target of

a major CIO organizing drive, which signed up most of the workers at the large Douglas Aircraft plant in Long Beach and North American Aircraft in Downey. The campaign was characterized by violent strikes and much turmoil. In the background was a continuing ideological conflict within the United Automobile Workers, between the pro- and anti-Communist factions. CIO organizers also targeted the shipbuilding industry, with less success. They made some inroads in southern California, but the shipwrights' Local #1149 of the UBCJA preserved its strength in the Oakland-San Francisco area.

One fundamental national issue, of much long-range significance for the labor movement in general and the carpenters' union in particular, was coming to the fore in this period. As the defense program gained momentum and the need for labor accelerated, the exclusion of blacks and other minorities from job opportunities became of increasing concern. Employers and unions, throughout the country, regularly discriminated against minorities, either denying them access to any jobs in the trade or segregating them into the lower-paid and less desirable occupations. Even when performing the same work, blacks usually were paid less than their white counterparts. The craft unions were especially flagrant offenders.

As the first major building craft to be organized nationally, under the leadership of the idealistic McGuire, the carpenters had first pursued a relatively enlightened policy in relation to the admission of blacks. As we have seen, blacks were granted voting membership privileges at some of the earliest conventions of the union, although the black members

were in segregated locals, mainly in the south. Substantial numbers of blacks possessed carpentry skills in the post-Civil War period, and were brought into the union so that they would not become strikebreakers or threats to union standards in the trade. In many cases, black and other minority workers could get decent work only in a strikebreaking role, and this fact inevitably aggravated the prejudices of white workers and tensions in the workplace.

In 1902, the UBCJA had hired a black organizer, assigned to the task of organizing black carpenters. The action generated opposition within the union, but Frank Duffy later pointed with pride to the existence of black locals in thirteen cities, noting pragmatically that it was better to have blacks within the union, subject to its standards and discipline, than outside it and potentially a tool of the employers.²¹ However, technological change already was eroding the membership of blacks in the United Brotherhood. The existing black carpenters had been trained primarily in home-building and cabinetmaking skills, on wood construction. As new processes and materials were developed, these skills became less relevant, and minorities rarely were trained in the newer skills. The available jobs, especially at the higher skill levels, went to whites. By the 1930s, blacks were largely frozen out of the skilled construction trades, though they were well represented in the so-called "trowel" (laborer) trades.

The policies of the Roosevelt administration had a mixed impact on minorities in the construction trades. Both the PWA and the WPA

insisted on equal pay for equal work, allowing no differentiation in wages paid on the basis of race. This was, of course, an eminently fair principle, but it sometimes had the ironical and unintended effect of displacing the employed blacks. It was, as noted before, a common practice to employ blacks only on jobs which paid less than comparable jobs occupied by whites. When wages were equalized, the whites then were prepared to take the jobs formerly held by blacks.

On the other hand, substantial numbers of blacks were employed on WPA and PWA projects. When the public housing programs were initiated in the late 1930s and early 1940s, more construction jobs opened up for minorities, who were slated to occupy much of this housing. Hiring practices in connection with the construction of military camps and installations varied widely from one area to another, but some blacks secured work on these projects. The Roosevelt administration's record on civil rights was spotty, at best, but generally it was a noticeable improvement over the record of previous administrations, including the basically racist Woodrow Wilson administration. The president's wife, Eleanor Roosevelt; the Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes; and certain other administration spokespersons were outspoken opponents of racial discrimination.

Throughout most of industry, however, discrimination still was rampant in 1941. The veteran leader of the AFL-affiliated Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, A. Philip Randolph, pressured President Roosevelt to do something concrete about this pervasive problem, but the president, preoccupied with military and foreign policy issues and unwilling to

offend the powerful southern Democrats, was reluctant. Randolph threatened a mass march on Washington, setting a mobilization day of July 4.

Fearful of the potential damage to America's world image, Roosevelt capitulated and, on June 25, issued Executive Order #8802, creating the first Committee on Fair Employment Practices. Employers and unions were mandated to "provide for the full and equitable participation of all workers in defense industries, without discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin." The Order had no teeth, and was widely defied. The southerners in Congress, led by Mississippi's John Rankin in the House and Theodore Bilbo in the Senate, proclaimed that this would lead to "mongrelization of the races." Nevertheless, the Order was important symbolically, and during the war, blacks made more economic progress than during any previous period in the nation's history.²²

None of this seemed to have a visible impact on the percentage of blacks among carpenters. According to the U.S. census, blacks constituted 3.9 percent of all carpenters in 1950, exactly the same percentage as in 1940 and up only from 3.5 percent in 1930. The relative peak of black representation occurred in 1910--4.3 percent (see Table 4).

The picture was even more dismal in the state of California. In 1940, only .34 percent of carpenters in the state were black, and the percentage rose only to 1.9 percent in 1950 (see Table 5). The few black carpenters were

Table 4
Employed Persons
Percentage of Blacks, U.S.
Selected Occupations
1890 - 1950

| <u>Craft</u> | <u>1950</u> | <u>1940</u> | <u>1930</u> | <u>1920</u> | <u>1910</u> | <u>1900</u> | <u>1890</u> |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Bricklayers | 10.9% | 6.0% | 6.9% | 8.1% | 7.5% | 9.0% | 6.1% |
| Carpenters | 3.9 | 3.9 | 3.5 | 3.9 | 4.3 | 3.7 | 3.6 |
| Cement finishers | 26.2 | 15.2 | 15.8 | 15.4 | 13.0 | 10.5 | 10.3 |
| Electricians | 1.0 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.6 | NA | NA |
| Painters | 5.2 | 3.8 | 3.6 | 3.2 | 2.9 | 2.1 | 2.0 |
| Plumbers | 3.3 | 2.2 | 2.0 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.2 | 1.1 |

SOURCE: U.S. Census, cited in F. Ray Marshall, op. cit., p. 157.

* * * * *

Table 5
Employed Persons
Percentage of Blacks, State of California
Selected Occupations
1940 and 1950

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u>1940</u> | | | <u>1950</u> | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------|---------------|--------------|----------|
| | <u>Calif.</u> | <u>Black</u> | <u>%</u> | <u>Calif.</u> | <u>Black</u> | <u>%</u> |
| Craftsmen, Total | 316,915 | 1,603 | .51 | 577,133 | 12,113 | 2.1 |
| Carpenters | 42,059 | 144 | .34 | 78,220 | 1,499 | 1.9 |
| Electricians | 15,096 | 27 | .18 | 26,056 | 257 | 1.0 |
| Painters | 25,525 | 169 | .66 | 37,246 | 1,009 | 2.7 |
| Plasterers and Cement finishers | 6,590 | 164 | 2.49 | 12,380 | 1,204 | 9.7 |
| Plumbers | 10,384 | 35 | .34 | 20,624 | 313 | 1.5 |
| Cabinetmakers | 6,601 | 19 | .29 | 10,844 | 111 | 1.0 |
| Construction Laborers | 25, 370 | 878 | 3.4 | 46,432 | 8,455 | 18.2 |

SOURCE: U.S. Census.

concentrated in the urban centers, mainly San Francisco and Los Angeles, but in 1940, a mere 7 blacks were employed as carpenters in cosmopolitan San Francisco. The number rose to 546 in 1950, undoubtedly as a result of war-related activity. This represented only 3.5 percent of all carpenters in the San Francisco metropolitan area, as enumerated in the 1950 census.

A consideration of the origins of the San Francisco carpenters' union locals might be instructive. Ethnicity was important in determining the composition of the locals, reflecting self-segregation primarily. National minorities--Irish, Scandinavians, Germans, Latins, British, Canadians--were well represented, but all groups were white. Union associations often reflected social relationships off the job, and whites and nonwhites rarely mixed. Established apprenticeship and training programs tended to strengthen the lily-white character of union membership. It was customary for apprentices, formal and informal alike, to be selected preferentially from among the sons or other relatives and friends of union members. White journeymen invariably chose white apprentices.

The debates over these complex domestic issues were taking place in an increasingly tense international environment. The Germans represented an omnipresent threat in Europe, but much of the tension in 1941 was being generated in the Far East. Imperial Japan, allied in an Axis with Germany and Italy, was already at war with China and was threatening to move against other areas in Asia and the Pacific,

possibly including British and American possessions. Delicate negotiations were proceeding in the fall of 1941, with the United States hoping to avert a war in the Pacific zone. America's defense program finally was gaining some speed, but the nation was far from ready for a major war. On the other hand, the interventionists, perhaps now including Roosevelt himself, might welcome an incident which would justify full entrance into the expanding struggle.

The "incident" came on December 7, when Japanese planes bombed Pearl Harbor in a sneak attack. From this moment to the end of World War II in August of 1945, all domestic issues, including labor problems, would be viewed in the context of war policy. Many of California's carpenters entered military service, and all those who remained at home were asked to contribute importantly to war production and construction. Along with the rest of the American population, the carpenters now were in a war for national survival.

Chapter VIII

The Carpenters At War

When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, the shock of the attack united all Americans in a common effort to defeat enemy forces in two hemispheres. The role of laboring men and women in what seemed an overwhelming task made it, as President William Green of the AFL proclaimed, truly "Labor's War." Green pledged: "The American Federation of Labor has enlisted in our nation's industrial armies for the duration. We of the American Federation of Labor will give of our sweat and blood so that this war, which has been thrust upon us by the bloodstained military masters of Germany, Italy, and Japan, shall end in a complete triumph for the United States and our Allies."¹ UBCJA President Hutcheson assured President Roosevelt: "Now that our country has been attacked it is the duty of every American to help in every way he can...I...offer for myself and the members of the Brotherhood our cooperation and service in any way that it may be needed."²

Already, union members, some 2,000 of them belonging to California AFL building trades unions, were working throughout the world on an international network of defense construction projects to expand fuel, flight, and housing facilities at our overseas bases. In 1938, the U.S. Navy Bureau of Yards and Docks, headed by Admiral Ben Moreell, had assigned the Navy's Civil Engineer Corps to work with private contractors, using civilian labor, toward the

development of five major lines of defense. These later became the "roads to victory," aimed at Germany through the North and South Atlantic, and at Japan, through the North, Central, and South Pacific.³

In the days immediately following Pearl Harbor, the Japanese moved swiftly against the Central Pacific bases of the United States. The AFL union men on Wake Island, Guam, Cavite, Corregidor and Midway turned from their construction work to take part in a series of desperate attempts to hold the islands for the United States, fighting side by side with the few Marines stationed there. The country's first World War II movie, Wake Island, portrayed the events preceding that island's surrender: The marine commandant (Brian Donlevy) and the foreman of the civilian crew (MacDonald Carey) feud about the necessity of prewar air-raid drills--until the Japanese attack, when they join forces. "At the end of the movie, the surrender is not shown. Stars William Bendix and Robert Preston make a last stand in their foxhole; an explosion covers them with smoke, and in the last frame a grinning Japanese runs up and fires his machine gun down in the foxhole. Never to show Americans surrendering became a tradition in the war film."⁴

In real life, the surviving workers were taken prisoners of war. Those who lived through such grueling experiences as the Bataan death march in the Philippines were set at hard labor in camps in China, Japan, and Santo Tomas, "a name which connotes abuse and atrocity."⁵ The California building trades unions were especially concerned. The California State Council of Carpenters demanded

legislation for full compensation for the Pacific island workers. William P. Kelly, of the Third District, told the 1943 Annual Convention that "it will be to the everlasting credit [of members on Guam and Wake Island] that they fought side by side with the Marines until they were finally forced to give up by lack of fighting equipment."⁶ The State Federation of Labor, under President C. J. Haggerty, persevered through a long and protracted chain of disputes as to responsibility for the workers' welfare. The men were civilian employees of private contractors; they were protected by workmen's compensation laws, but not by the Navy, which had no legal responsibility for either their welfare, their wages, or their dependents.

The contractors, whose contract had been "breached by a third party," were not obligated to the men; their cost-plus-fixed-fee government contracts made this nearly impossible. In the following weeks and months, Haggerty took the men's case to Washington, to urge and support legislation which would give the workers the same protection as civilian employees of a government agency. The national AFL lent its support: President Green and Secretary-Treasurer George Meany wired Hatton Sumners, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, to join "...those who refuse to yield wrists to political shackles...to support Bill S-2329--a measure that will bring justice to innumerable Union workers who--because they are prisoners of the Japs--cannot raise their voices in protest, nor act in their own behalf."⁷ Finally, in early February, 1944, Congressional appropriations for the construction workers and their families' financial needs were made, but men were kept imprisoned until the end of the war.⁸

The Seabees

After the Pacific losses, U.S. strategy for recovery of the bases made it clear that construction skills were needed more than ever. Yet civilians could not be expected to perform the under-siege building and repair actions necessary. Admiral Moreell secured permission from Washington to enlist a new kind of Navy man, one whose background was that of a trained, skilled craftsman, who would also be able to fight. The first Construction Battalions of the Navy were authorized in December, 1941. Moreell went to the craft unions to recruit. By the end of 1942, these C.B.'s, or Seabees, as they were soon nicknamed, were stationed along the five "roads to victory" against the Axis, from the Caribbean to Newfoundland, Iceland, Great Britain and Scotland in the Atlantic; in North Africa and the Mediterranean, and in the Pacific from Pearl Harbor and the Solomons to the Aleutian Islands and Alaska. Their job was to build, repair, and maintain the advanced bases, from which the U.S. Navy, Army, and Marines attacked the enemy. Their insignia was a flying bee, fighting mad--"with a sailor hat on his head, a spitting Tommy gun in his forehand, a wrench in his amidships hand, and in his aft hand a carpenter's hammer."⁹ The Seabees' motto was: Construimus Batiuimus - "We build; We fight."

Naval Commander J.R. Perry appeared before the Executive Council of the AFL Building and Construction Trades Department to emphasize the Seabees' need for experienced craftsmen. The Navy was recruiting men between the ages of 17 and 50. Color blindness, teeth impairments,

and flat feet did not matter; morale, experience and skill did.¹⁰ Within a short time the Seabees were 100,000 strong; eventually 247,000 men were in active service. These largely were family men, eligible for draft deferments and high wages in shipyards and war plants, who chose to volunteer. Many of them were from California locals, and recruitment continued through the unions all during the war.

The first Seabees received very little military training, but were rushed to the South Pacific to begin the push to recapture the Solomons, the first step in the offensive war against Japan. The Seabees were sent first to Espiritu Santo, 500 miles from Guadalcanal, where the Japanese were building a major air base, later renamed Henderson Field. In three weeks they had hacked a 6,000 foot coral-surfaced runway out of the jungle. The B-17 bombers arrived, and the next day the bombing of Guadalcanal began. "The battle for the Solomons was joined and the Seabees began their long journey across the Pacific, a journey that would bring them to hundreds of islands where they would build hundreds of bases and which would end with the Seabees landing on the home islands of Japan."¹¹

It was on Guadalcanal that the Seabees first came under enemy fire, in August, 1942. The Marines had a tiny beachhead around Henderson Field when the Sixth Seabee Battalion arrived. According to Commander Joseph P. Blundon:¹²

The Japs were shelling the field with howitzers, as well as bombing it night and day; and it was our job to keep the holes filled up while we finished the grading,

laid the Marston mat (a steel pierced; plank used to surface the mud field), and built hardstands and revetments (a hardstand is a hard-surfaced parking lot for one or more planes; revetments are walls of earth piled up on three sides of the hardstand to protect the plane from flying shrapnel).

The men in our battalion had not been together more than ten days before we left the States. We had been given our medical shots, a little hasty military indoctrination, and then we had been formed into a battalion and rushed to the South Pacific ...We had one '03 rifle for each two men ...But all of us were experienced construction men. We realized at the outset that the battle was going to turn on how fast we filled up holes and how fast we could develop that field. When the Jap bombers approached, our fighters took off; the bombers blasted the airstrips; and then if we couldn't fill those holes before our planes ran out of fuel, the planes would have to attempt to land anyway, and they would crash. I saw seven of our fighters crack up in one bitter afternoon.

We pitched our camp at the edge of the field to save time. We dug our foxholes right up alongside the landing area. We found that a 500-pound bomb would tear up 1,600 square feet of Marston mat, so we placed packages along the strip, like extra rails along a railroad. We figured out how much sand and gravel was required to fill the average bomb or shell crater,

and we loaded these measured amounts on trucks and placed the trucks under cover at strategic points. We had compressors and pneumatic hammers to pack the fill into the craters. We organized human assembly lines for passing up the pierced plank and laying it.

Then, when the Jap bombers approached every Seabee, including even our cooks, manned his repair station. Our 'crater crews' were lying in the foxholes right at the edge of the strip. The moment the bombers had passed over, these men boiled out of the holes and raced for the craters. While they were tearing away the twisted steel plank, our trucks roared out of hiding to dump their earth and gravel into the holes. The men with compressors and pneumatic hammers leaped into the holes and began packing the dirt as it came in. Our human assembly lines began passing in the new steel plank and laying it. Every man had to keep his eye peeled for Jap strafing planes, and when the Jap dived in, our men dived for the close-at-hand foxholes....

We found that 100 Seabees could repair the damage of a 500-pound bomb hit on an airstrip in forty minutes.... In twenty-four hours on October 13 and 14, 53 bombs and shells hit.... During one hour on the 14th we filled thirteen bomb craters while our planes circled around overhead waiting to land.

Our worst moments were when the Jap bomb or shell failed to explode when it hit. It still tore up our mat, and it had to come out. When you see men cho e down their fear and dive in after an unexploded bomb so that our planes can land safely, a lump comes in your throat and you know why America wins wars.

It took months (there was ground combat until February, 1943, and continued air attacks), but Guadalcanal was finally secured and used as a base for other South Pacific offensives. An idea of the complexity of World War II warfare, and why it sometimes seemed to proceed very slowly, can be gained from a report on one year of operations of a Seabee battalion--one of twelve--which worked on Guadalcanal from December 26, 1942, to December 9, 1943. According to Commander Frye, of the 26th Seabee Battalion: "The 26th landed with no construction material and eight jeeps, to take over the limited and badly worn equipment of the Sixth Battalion."¹³ During the Seabees' year on Guadalcanal, in addition to the completion of some 200 structures, from housing facilities to radio stations; they constructed and maintained 35.5 miles of three-and four-land roads and 21 miles of secondary roads, built through swamp and jungle within enemy artillery and sniper range, during enemy bombing. They graded a large LST landing area, and moved 6,500 yards of earth to cover torpedo and ordinance magazines.

They constructed and maintained eleven new bridges, rebuilt or redecked five major bridges, manufactured 8,603 lineal feet of culvert from discarded oil drums and used it for highway construction, and loaded and hauled 191,423 cubic yards of gravel and 88,990 cubic yards of coral. They built seven docks and a 180-foot Marine railway for beaching tank lighters. They poured 100 concrete anchors complete with eye bolt and three feet of chain. They completed 55,750 barrels of storage capacity for gasoline and fuel oil, and 27,000 feet of pipeline. They handled 34,269,043 gallons of aviation gasoline without accident or delay. They installed facilities for furnishing light and power to airfields. They built 47 miles of primary and secondary power lines. They installed 10,000 feet of lighting, conduit and fixtures at one strip and 12,000 feet at another, and 11,600 feet of wood conduit at another.

They maintained two power houses on a 24-hour basis. They operated the Tojo Ice Plant (an earlier Seabee creation), and produced 563,000 pounds of ice for hospitals. They handled 115,000 tons of freight from ships. They built the Guadalcanal-Bougainville-Tokyo Railroad--6,443.5 lineal feet of railroad, including sub grading bolting crossties to rails, installing, sidings, switches, spurs, etc. Logging crews cut and prepared 2,300 piles and poles and supplied logs for 950,000 board feet of lumber. For radio masts, they supplied 42 special logs running up to 90 feet in length.

They installed 630,000 feet of wire for a communications system, and operated it. They installed seven exchange trunk lines, 61 miles of underwater line, twelve miles of overhead wire, 230,000 feet of army field wire, and 240,000 feet of submarine cable and fitting.

Commander Frye commented: "...much of this work was performed during the rainy season and under unusually strenuous conditions of weather and combat. The battalion was consistently bombed, strafed, and fired on by enemy artillery and by snipers." Of the original 956 men, 509 were infected with malaria; 427 were evacuated for wounds and malaria, and only 529 were left at the year's end.¹⁴

The feats of the Seabees in the building of air fields and supply and storage stations are matched only by tales of Seabee ingenuity, in which determination to get on with the job turned fuel drums into sewers and breakwaters and tractor radiators, and palm trees into telephone poles. When coral destroyed truck tires so they could no longer hold air filled tubes, the Seabees would fill them with a mixture of palm-tree sawdust and cement for hundreds of miles of extra wear. One California Carpenter's Mate repaired a condenser with tinfoil from cigarette packs, waxed paper from a fruit-cake, and a flatiron. He alternated the tin-foil and paper, ironed it out, and stuffed it into a beer can. Soon the engine was running again.¹⁵

The "Doodlebug" was one of the Seabees' more ambitious creations. It was designed for the first landing on the island of Tinian in 1944. The landing was to be made over steep cliffs, very heavily guarded. Out of materials salvaged from a Japanese sugar mill on Saipan, the Seabees built ten Doodlebugs, each of which consisted of a tracked landing vehicle, or amphtrack, with a ramp built of a sectioned tank ladder, able to support a Sherman tank. The craft was able to barrel across open water to the cliffs with ladder upright and extended, draped with supporting steel beams, a heavy platform of crossties, and bundles of steel matting hanging over the stern to maintain balance; a crew of four Seabees was perched on top--an awesome sight. Each Doodlebug smashed its ladder into the cliff, the top portion of the ladder swung over the top of the cliff, and the amphtracks and the Seabees backed off, all within two minutes. Tanks and trucks quickly poured up over the cliffs, hundreds within the first hour. Tinian was subsequently secured, the landing "...perhaps the smoothest of all our amphibious undertakings...."¹⁶

It was at Normandy, in France, however, that the Seabees and the Navy met their greatest challenge. The failure of the Allies' raid at the port of Dieppe forced the realization that the European invasion must be over the open beaches, not via the ports. Here the problem was one of the English Channel tides, with half a mile between high-tide and low-tide marks, and 4,500 feet between the high-tide mark and ship-depth. Every pound of Liberty ship cargo had to be brought up one mile through heavy surf. The Seabees had used floating causeways in the landing in Sicily;

these were not strong enough to hold up in the strong Channel surf on the Normandy beaches.

The Seabees thus were set to work creating an artificial harbor off the coast of France. To break the action of the surf, huge hollow sections of concrete sea wall, called "phoenixes," were towed across the Channel, floated into place, and then sunk by opening their sea-cocks, to form a breakwater. Steel "bombardons," 150 feet long, were floated inside the breakwater, to further reduce wave action. An arrangement of "Loebnitz Piers," giant barges with concrete-filled steel legs at each corner which floated up and down with the tides but remained very stable in rough water, and steel bridge sections secured to boatlike pontoons called "whales," were then formed into a ship-to-shore bridge.

Before this elaborate man-made harbor could go into action, however, the beaches had to be taken. On D-Day, June 6, 1944, the Seabees took part in the invasion: aboard giant "rhino" ferries made of pontoons assembled into barges and powered by huge outboard engines, they were able to put ashore the necessary trucks, jeeps and Sherman tanks. Men were brought to shore via smaller "rhino" tugs. Within 28 days, the Seabees had landed hundreds of thousands of tons of material and 1,000,000 Allied fighting men. The Allied offensive against the Germans had begun.¹⁷

As the Allied forces moved across the European continent, the Seabees were called to assist in one more offensive, the move across

the Rhine into Germany. This time, the Seabees, who had worked naked in the mud on Bougainville, had used Italian uniforms at Salerno, and usually wore jeans, were ordered by General George S. Patton to wear Army uniforms to assist in the operation which shuttled thousands of troops into the heart of Germany.¹⁸

As the war wound down in the Pacific, the Seabees were to participate in one final act. During the summer of 1945, the USS Indianapolis had arrived at Tinian with components for a newly developed weapon. The Seabees unloaded, stored and guarded the elements as scientists assembled the weapon in a Seabee-built shed. On August 6, 1945, the new weapon was mounted in a United States Air Force B-29 bomber called the Enola Gay. The Enola Gay took off from Tinian's North Field, which the Seabees had built; the mission ended with the dropping of the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, thus sealing the fate of Japan, and beginning a philosophical debate which extends to this day.¹⁹

World War II On The Home Front

While the carpenters contributed their share of manpower overseas, as Seabees, Marines, Army, Air Force, and Navy men, the carpenters at home were equally caught up in the war effort.

In the first weeks, as the fighting escalated, California State Federation of Labor Secretary Edward D. Vandeleur had joined with the Railroad Brotherhoods and the CIO in a pledge of labor unity, that all differences

would be adjusted and disputes submitted to mediation without work stoppage. However, Vandeleur warned: "Labor can do two things that will bring damage both to the cause of the United States in the war, and to itself and to industry. One of them is to suddenly decide to have more strikes, and the other is to abandon our principles and our purposes entirely."²⁰ It was clear that labor must forego its hard-won right to strike over labor issues for the greater good of the nation; at the same time it must maintain the victories of earlier union men in regard to rights, autonomy, and integrity on the job. Thus, the events of the war years for the carpenters can be seen as being characterized by two themes, one of dedication and often of sacrifice to the national survival, and another of carrying on the recurrent struggles the labor movement's principles demanded.

California, because of its climate and coastal location, as well as its shipyards and harbors and aircraft industry, became a natural center for military preparation and embarkation, and for war production. The shipyards of the San Francisco Bay area, the aircraft industry and the shipyards of Greater Los Angeles, and the developing aircraft and munitions industries in the San Diego area were the foci of wartime production expansion programs which made vast changes not only in workers' everyday lives, but in the whole demographic and economic structure of the state.

Traditional Roles: The Carpenters As Builders

The early years of the war saw the carpenters engaged in building the new wartime face of California. Carpenters' employment had always been heavily dependent upon demand, with most union members having occasional unemployment between jobs, and inherently seasonal. The pattern of the war years was different. At first, through 1942 and early 1943, when construction of bases, war industry, and housing for workers was at an all-time high, most California carpenters had plenty of work--employment in construction reached 180,000, the highest level ever. Then, demand was to drop sharply in construction, as it reached new heights in production.

During the construction phase of the war, there were three basic needs. First, there was the need for new and expanded military installations, including Roosevelt Naval Base, the Port Hueneme Pacific Naval Air Base and Supply Depot, Camp McQuaide, Camp Ord, Camp San Luis Obispo, Camp Roberts, the Ventura Army Camp, Fort MacArthur, Muroc Lake Anti-Aircraft Bombing Range, the San Diego Naval Air Base, Alameda Air Base, the Presidio Military Reservation, Mare Island Navy Yard, Sacramento Army Base, the Oakland Army Supply Depot, March Field, Hamilton Field, Moffett Field, and Mather Field.²¹

Second, the building of new and expanded vital industries increased government construction expenditures, so that in 1942 these stood at the highest levels ever recorded. Shipyards and factories were producing at many times the prewar rate by the end of 1943.

Third, the growth in population in the state was enormous: some 1,320,000 people from 1940 to 1944. About 610,000 additional families had to be housed during these years; residential construction remained a high priority throughout the war, although materials were very scarce. Only about 300,000 of the family dwelling units built were permanent. The rest were makeshift: 74,770 temporary homes were built with public funds, including 4,451 government-owned trailers. 20,000 families lived in private-owned trailers. 40,000 more families doubled up. 174,360 previously vacated units were occupied, reducing the vacancy ratio from 8.6 percent to about 1 percent. 10,400 units were added by converting existing structures.²²

New communities, like Westchester and Lakewood near Los Angeles, sprang up, created by methods of construction in which the old-time carpenter, who saw a whole house through from foundation to roof, was replaced by armies of quickly-trained specialists who moved from building to building and street to street to complete their finite tasks of window and door framing, etc. Many of the temporary dwellings were prefabricated houses, which the carpenters' union at first opposed. In 1942, President Cambiano and Secretary D.H. Ryan urged the State Council of Carpenters to "...do everything possible to discourage the building of these alleged dwellings, ...these glorified dog houses...these temporary shacks, (as they were) a useless waste of good material."²³ As the months went by, the housing shortage grew worse and the union gained jurisdiction over the manufacture of prefabricated units; the carpenters

went to work on such projects as needed, at union wages. In 1946, President Cambiano protested again, however, in relation to a government proposal to spend \$600,000,000 for prefabricated housing units for veterans, saying that even if carpenters were paid construction scale on the "cheap oversize doghouses referred to in the program as building units," the houses would still be a detriment to the community and to the residents.²⁴

Public housing projects, including Linda Vista at San Diego--the largest housing project in the nation to that date at more than 3,000 units-- provided much work for the building trades.²⁵ In addition, some projects permanently affected demographic patterns. Los Angeles was a thoroughly segregated city in World War II. Blacks drawn to the state by the jobs in war industries could not all be accommodated in Little Tokyo, which had been vacated by the Japanese. Several hundred moved into housing projects built by the federal government in Watts. Further construction of public housing accelerated the ghettoization of the community. Three projects were built during the war. The earliest, Hacienda Village, was designed by prominent California architects Richard Neutra, Paul Williams and Welton Becket. Built in 1942, its trees shaded single-story units. Two others followed, Jordan Downs and Imperial Courts, which were of more conventional design. Population density far exceeded that planned; by 1946, blacks were 2/3 of the population of Watts, twice their proportion in 1940.²⁶

One of the best known construction projects of 1942 was built with volunteer union labor. The Hollywood Canteen was the joint project of 42 unions and guilds connected with motion pictures or radio in Los Angeles. Beginning on opening night, October 3, 1942, servicemen came to the Canteen to dance with, talk to, get an autograph from, or be served sandwiches by such "pin-up" luminaries as Jane Russell, Betty Grable, Hedy Lamarr, Joan Crawford, Marlene Dietrich or Rita Hayworth. Stars such as Eddie Cantor, Roddy McDowell, Deanna Durbin, Anne Shirley, Fred MacMurray, Jean Gabin, Anthony Quinn, Dinah Shore, Joan Leslie and Bob Hope entertained nightly.

Name bands provided music seven nights a week, 52 weeks a year: Harry James, Duke Ellington, Ted Lewis, Horace Heidt, Matty Malneck, Charlie Spivak, and others; "Kay Kyser and his band haven't missed a single Saturday night," wrote gossip columnist Hedda Hopper. In the first two months, she reported, the Canteen had "served more than 250,000 soldiers, sailors and marines with 300,000 sandwiches, 60,000 gallons of orange juice, 150,000 packages of cigarettes, 800 pounds of butter, 3,000 pounds of coffee."²⁷

Bette Davis, John Garfield and director Mervyn LeRoy had the original idea: "Give us a place where the personalities of Hollywood can go out to give the boys who are about to embark a royal farewell, and those who have just come back from some campaign an equally royal welcome."²⁸ Mrs. Jack Warner, wife of the producer and studio executive, helped to organize the coalition to do the work, for it wasn't the

stars "who took an old barn of a place, reconstructed it, redecorated it, and made it the comfortable, fine-looking room that it is."²⁹ It was, in fact, Studio Carpenters Local #946, in cooperation with the other studio unions and the IATSE. Whenever lumber and other materials were needed, Local #946 president James Skelton phoned Mrs. Warner for help, and she came through invariably.

The studio carpenters at this time were still working a six-hour day, although the War Labor Board was soon to insist that they return to the eight-hour day (#946 was able to secure a nine-hours' pay scale for the eight hours). Before the afternoon shift went to work in the studios, they came to work on the Canteen at Sunset and Cahuenga, reconstructing partitions, making booths and refinishing the bar. When the morning shift got off work, they came to the Canteen to continue. The evening shift arrived in the late afternoon before their studio work. Thus the project was completed very rapidly.³⁰ Throughout the war, the Hollywood Canteen served 25,000 servicemen a week, often as many as 5,000 a night.

Producing For War: Carpenters In The War Industries

By the end of 1942, much of the building for defense was being completed. Building construction nationwide was down 37 percent. President Cambiano urged members to go to work in the shipyards and factories to produce the goods needed to win the war.

Perhaps the most dramatic industrial growth was in the California shipyards. Carpenters had worked in 1941 and 1942 in construction on the various yards; as the yards increased production, construction carpenters joined the effort. The Carpenters Union had long since merged with the Shipwrights, Caulkers and Joiners of America, which, as the first labor organization in California still surviving, had been active in the Bay Area for nearly a century. Local #1335 in the Wilmington and San Pedro Yards and Local #1149 in the Bay Area, the largest local in the Brotherhood at that time, absorbed other locals' members into their jurisdiction, laying and lining keels and bilge blocks; shoring, fairing and lofting; installing ladders, stanchions and life boards; and other shipwright work.³¹

Thus the carpenters, the shipwrights, and other members of the AFL Metal Trades unions were justifiably proud when on WWII's first Labor Day, 1942, one of the early Kaiser "Liberty" ships, the "Peter J. McGuire", was launched from the Richmond shipyards. UBCJA President Hutcheson came from Indianapolis to give the major address: The ship, "...symbolizing free labor...was to join the growing armada of democracy that will link the world's arsenal, America, with the far-flung fighting fronts. Members of labor unions will load these ships, sail them, and fight with them, just as they have built them...."³²

The christening of the "Peter J. McGuire" was doubly significant for the shipyard workers, in that McGuire is generally credited as the originator of Labor Day, in addition to

being one of the founders of the United Brotherhood. In May, 1882, he had proposed to his fellow delegates of the Central Labor Union of New York City that one day in the year "...should be designated as a general Holiday for the toiling millions...to honor 'those who from rude nature have delved and carved all the grandeur we behold.'" This day should be known as Labor Day, and held on the first Monday in September, half-way between two national holidays, the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving. In September of that year, 1882, the first Labor Day Parade was held, with bands and banners, up Broadway to Union Square, up Fifth Avenue to Forty-second Street in New York City, with a picnic and dancing afterwards.³³

Sixty years later, Labor Day, 1942, was a more solemn occasion. President Roosevelt announced to American workers, who then had few U.S. victories to celebrate, "This is indeed labor's grave hour.... Production of war materials here is now the greatest in our history, but it is not yet enough."³⁴ As in the other defense industries, production in the shipyards soon fell into full swing, with workers on shifts around the clock. But as production increased, the shortage of workers on the West Coast seemed to reach crisis proportions. The demand for workers stirred up old rumors of a dreaded "labor draft". A local Army officer in San Francisco threatened to conscript workers for military construction, but Local #22's Joe O'Sullivan arranged with unions and contractors to get the work done voluntarily.

Women Enter The Workplace: The Carpenters
And A Sexual Revolution

On October 2, 1942, a momentous decision of a special California State Council of Carpenters was announced: women were to be admitted to membership. The delegates bowed to the weight of necessity and a fait accompli: there were no young male apprentice carpenters (some 75 percent of them had entered the armed services), and the women workers were "already engaged in carpenters' work on various projects."³⁵

All delegates agreed that there should be no discrimination, on the part of either the unions or the employers involved, in the placement of women workers on the job, "...that they will come into the organization on the same basis as the men--with the same wages being paid, together with the same initiation fees, benefits and privileges."³⁶ Some weeks after the California carpenters acted, the National War Labor Board, set up by President Roosevelt to implement labor policy for the duration, directed unions and companies to negotiate contracts which established the principle of "equal pay for equal work" for women, as well as the means by which the principle was to be effected.

There had already been criticism of the high pay of some war workers. Thereafter, the pay of "Rosie the Riveter" and her sisters in the factories and shipyards became a favorite target for some critics of labor, including social columnist Alma Whitaker of the Los Angeles Times. Miss Whitaker took "Rosie" to task

for "arrogance and extravagance" in spending her \$75 a week (48 hours at \$1.20 an hour) on "maids, furs, and pianos." It was well known, Miss Whitaker announced, that it takes "three generations of wealth before one can learn to be graciously, decently, rich." An outraged real-life Rosie, Mrs. Charlotte Benowitz, replied with an accounting of her \$52 weekly take-home pay. A sizable amount went to War Bonds, to the War Chest (the Community Chest campaign had joined with the USO and the United Nations Relief agencies), and to "mother" back home. Of the rest, "Rosie" pointed out, all the pre-war domestics were now working at her side in the factory, and she and her working sisters were proud of their work clothes, their tools, and the work they were doing. In closing, she asked "And what are you doing for Victory, Miss Whitaker?," advising her to stop harassing war workers and instead write articles to support more child care centers for working mothers, decent low-cost housing, hot meals for war workers, and price controls.³⁷

The contribution of the women war workers to the winning of "Labor's War" cannot be over-emphasized. There were large increases of women in the labor force; the total number of California women at work increased by 58 percent from 1940 to late 1944. In 1941, job openings could be filled by the pool of unemployed California males and by migrants; by 1942, women were the major source of new labor supply. The number of women in manufacturing rose 350 percent, from 67,000, in April, 1940, to 301,000 in mid-1943. And, as it was the aircraft industry which expanded most rapidly, the aircraft factories were the first to hire women as production workers in large numbers. It was also in the aircraft industry that there was the largest increase: from 600 female workers in January, 1941, to 102,700 in June, 1943.³⁸

The "Spruce Goose": The Ultimate Wooden Aircraft

Although many of the aircraft plants were organized by the Machinists, and some by CIO unions, the carpenters union was successful in the organization of a number of companies engaged in the manufacture of wood planes early in the war, including the Tim Aircraft Company in Saticoy and Hughes Aircraft at Culver City, near Los Angeles.³⁹ Local #1553's first contract with Hughes, in 1942, began a unique bargaining relationship for the union. Today the local is an Engineers and Space Technology local; members are engaged in the production of a broad range of electronic and space technology projects. In 1942, plans were underway for the most ambitious aircraft project of the war, the great Hughes Flying Boat, or the "Spruce Goose," as it is often called.

As American workers stepped up production of the Liberty ships, Nazi U-boats in the North Atlantic became more skilled at picking off one Allied transport ship after another. In August, 1942, innovative engineer-industrialist Henry Kaiser announced a partnership with Howard Hughes, the well-known aircraft designer, motion-picture producer, pilot, and executive, to produce 500 cargo-carrying airships which would deliver vital war supplies to all the Allied fronts.

Kaiser, supported by the War Production Board, proposed to convert his vast shipbuilding facilities to the production of the "flying freighters." Hughes, "fresh from his latest

engineering triumph, the passenger plane Constellation," was to design the aircraft. Three prototype airships were to be built prior to mass-production.⁴⁰

In November, 1942, Kaiser-Hughes Corporation contracted with the U.S. Government to build three HK-1's (Hughes-Kaiser first aircraft), of materials non-critical to the war effort. Although metal planes were being mass-produced as fighters and bombers, the use of wood as a basic material in aircraft construction was long established. Metal was in short supply, and the vast size of the planned cargo ships made weight an important consideration. Thus, the planes were to be made of wood.⁴¹

Hughes and his engineers assembled materials and workers for the construction of models and the three prototype airships in the Culver City plant. Many of the workers were already members of the United Brotherhood--some from construction, some from showcase and cabinet shops which had closed down with the war, some from the studio local. Within a few years the Hughes local, #1553, had a large membership; today it is the largest in the Brotherhood.

The story of the design and construction of "the Spruce Goose" is a tribute to unique standards of perfectionism and craftsmanship. The ship, larger than any ever before built, was painstakingly put together. "Time was never important; we never had a specific timetable; they wanted a perfect job."⁴²

The Flying Boat was the prototype for wide-body aircraft, the first aerodynamically feasible large airplane. It was built to take off and land on water, steadied by two huge pontoons, or floats, with a hull large enough to accommodate a 60 ton Sherman tank, or 750 troops. Its design enabled it to lift one-third of its own weight, more than any other craft to date. Fully loaded, it weighed 400,000 pounds.

Despite the nickname, very little spruce was actually used in the construction of the plane, except for longerons in the wing sections. Some poplar was used in the side skin, balsa was used in the leading and trailing edges of the floats, but most of the wood was Wisconsin birch. The wood came into the factory as sheets 1/64" thick. It was taken from the lathe as the log was turning, selected for its close grain, and imperfections were clipped out and spliced together. Hughes was familiar with a plywood-like process called "Duramold," used by Fairchild in the manufacture of the wooden British Mosquito bomber, in which the very thin sheets of wood were glued together to create a particularly strong "skin." The Duramold sheets were made in the Culver City plant, often by women, who laid up seven, eight, or more thicknesses of wood as thin as paper in large concrete dies. The sheets were scarfed and laid alternately at 45 degree and 90 degree angles for extra strength. The glue used to join the wood was set under pressure of heat, since it would flow and set just once, giving the effect of a very strong plastic. The skin was then applied to the frame by hand. The entire process was completed without the use of any butt joints or nails.

The wingspan of the ship is still the greatest of any aircraft--some 320 feet. The wings were constructed in two parts and bolted together inside the hull; catwalks within each wing made it possible to reach each engine in flight. The control surfaces of the wing were covered with a linen-cotton Type A aircraft cloth, the pieces first being machinesewn together and then sewn on by hand over the predominant ribs by a "rib-lacing" process. Then began a seven-coat "doping" procedure to shrink the fabric to the frame. As each coat was applied, by brushing or spraying, a sample panel was also brushed or sprayed and then weighed. A Gardener viscometer measured the proper viscosity of the dope; engineers tested it during the process every ten minutes.

The same care taken with the construction of the hull and wings extended to the engineering, electric and hydraulic systems of the plane, which was powered by eight 3,000 horsepower engines. Each engine swung a 17-foot-diameter propeller. The plane was designed to cruise at 200 mph, with a range of about 3,000 miles. Hydraulic pumps provided power for the control systems, with three electric generators for backup.

In addition, two 50 horsepower motors, battery-run, were available so that the plane could be controlled for thirty minutes in the event of complete engine failure. Each engine had its own oil source, a 31 gallon tank. There was a 283 gallon auxiliary tank; when the engine got down to 13 gallons, it was on a float system to refill automatically. The plane also had the first hydraulic breakaway

system to seal off all fuel, oil, and hydraulic lines; in the event an engine was shot off or fell off it cut down immediately. The Spruce Goose was the first with a 110 volt DC electrical system, as well as a combustible air detector system. Fire control was via a CO² line to all eight engines and the leading edge of the wing. Thirty-six bottles of CO² could be controlled by the pilot.

Flotation was always a particular concern of Howard Hughes, who had used ping-pong balls on the test flight of the Lockheed Lode-Star. The huge Flying Boat's first flotation scheme included hundreds of large white, translucent beach balls, packed into the floats and the hull. These were replaced in the fifties with styrofoam billets.

As many as three or four thousand workers were engaged in the project at any one time, but the perfection demanded by Hughes so lengthened production time that, by 1944, it was clear the "boat" could not be expected to contribute materially to the war effort. Henry Kaiser pulled out of the project, but Hughes convinced the government to complete the plane. In June, 1946, the hull, floats, and wings were trucked to Pier E, at the Long Beach Harbor. Finally, in the fall of 1947, preparations were made for a test flight of what was by then a most controversial aircraft: the main question was, would it fly, or was this, indeed, a grand boondoggle, as some critics alleged?

The flight crew was assigned; on November 2, Arnold Rickabaugh, one of the crew, who had stayed with the plane from the lofting, or the

laying of the center-line, was out on the harbor on a "sea-mule" gathering up logs which might endanger the plane. Stan Soderberg was also out on the water. Hughes and a load of celebrities and reporters had just completed two "taxi-tests" up and down the harbor. Hughes called it a day, and most of the reporters left the plane. Soderberg watched the vertical stabilizer shift into the wind, as the hydraulic mechanic crawled into the wing and unlocked the flaps manually to 15 degrees, the take-off position. The plane taxied again down the water; at about 70 mph it "ballooned off the water," rising gently to some height, flew for a distance, and landed again, a perfect flight. Later, when Hughes was asked whether he was surprised at the flight, he replied "I like to make surprises happen."⁴³

Rickabaugh and Soderberg were to stay with the Spruce Goose for many more years. It never flew again. Until 1954 it was kept ready for flight at a moment's notice. Finally, after thirty-four years at Pier E it was moved, via a huge Navy crane, to its present home, next to the Queen Mary, still in Long Beach Harbor. Now it is available to the public, one of the finest examples of the wood craftsman's art.

"Little Steel" And The "Slave Bill"

As production rose, so did profits. Prices also increased; between January 1, 1941, and May, 1942, the cost of living rose 15 percent. Despite controls, prices continued to creep up. Early in 1942, the State Council of Carpenters demanded a wage increase to offset

these rising costs of living,⁴⁴ but the War Labor Board, which now controlled wage increases, did not act until May, 1942, when wages were stabilized for the duration. Wages for all workers earning \$5,000 a year or less, which covered the vast majority of all working people, were frozen. The freeze was based on the Board's decision in the "Little Steel" wage dispute between the Steel Workers Organizing Committee and the "Little Steel" companies - Bethlehem Steel, Republic Steel, Inland Steel, and Youngstown Sheet and Tube. Any wage increase conforming to the 15 percent guideline was allowed; further raises were considered only to eliminate inequities or sub-standards of living. Both the AFL and the CIO offered their complete cooperation.

However, as prices and profits continued to rise at the expense of wages, organized labor grew critical of the freeze. By the end of March, 1943, the cost of living was up 23 percent. There was no question that many employers could well afford to raise wages, for many California corporations were reporting high profits. (Later, in April, 1946, the Survey of Current Business was to report that total corporate profits after taxes for the wartime period were up 175 percent). In May, 1943, the AFL publicized a survey on workers' status, showing that only those in four war industries had wages averaged enough to buy a minimum health and efficiency living for a family of four, "while corporate profits after taxes are exceeding even the peak 1942 figures, and the number of persons receiving incomes over \$100,000 has increased 43 percent."⁴⁵

Wages remained frozen throughout the remainder of the war, despite continued protests by labor leaders and efforts such as those of the labor members of the War Labor Board, who petitioned the Board to modify the freeze. The members refused to act to allow "hidden" wage increases to selected industries until Roosevelt acted on an overall modification of the Little Steel formula. Although average workers' incomes were up 30 percent by the war's end, most of this increase was due to continuous employment and overtime wages. Representatives of carpenters' union locals remained in almost continuous negotiations with the regional WLB's, securing limited increases already negotiated with employers.

Criticisms of labor were not limited to disparaging remarks about high wages. As State Federation Secretary Vandeleur had foreseen, many of the principles and rights guaranteed by the Wagner Act came under fire during the war period, under the guise of patriotism. The California carpenters had to join with other workers to maintain hard-won rights at home, as well as to outproduce and outfight the Axis forces abroad.

In Washington, while right-wing California Congressman Leland M. Ford pushed for such anti-union legislation as the Smith-Vinson bill, the California legislature passed Bill 877, dubbed by labor the "Slave Bill," which outlawed secondary boycotts for the duration. In early 1942, the sponsors of this "Hot Cargo" bill had played upon public concern over the importance of keeping defense production going,

and the desire to control joint actions by unions. Labor charged that workers were thus "deprived of freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of action," guaranteed by the Constitution.⁴⁶ Quickly, the AFL and the CIO unions struck an alliance with the Payroll Guarantee Association, backer of the highly controversial "Ham and Eggs" pension proposal, which guaranteed paychecks or pensions for all beginning at age 21. A quid pro quo was arranged: The "Ham and Eggs," strong among the state's older population, would join organized labor in a referendum on the "Slave Bill" in the coming election, while the unions would support the proposed "Ham and Eggs" initiative on the same ballot. Labor, and its new allies, urged a "No" vote on Proposition #1, the referendum on the antiunion measure. The measure could not go into effect until it had been approved in the referendum vote.

Mass meetings to rally support to defeat the proposition were held throughout the state, at such sites as the Shrine Civic Auditorium in Los Angeles, for "all members of all Labor unions, AFL, CIO and the Railroad Brotherhoods, all 'Ham and Eggs,' and all members of the California State Grange."⁴⁷ A hard campaign was waged, with many bitter words exchanged. Labor editors decried the "nefarious schemes and poisonous whispers, hypocrisy that fits Fascist treachery" of its traditional enemies, "the so-called Merchants and Manufacturers Association, the Associated Farmers, the Los Angeles Better Business Bureau and the State Chamber of Commerce."⁴⁸

The unions pleaded for support, noting that "those who work are turning out the tools, those who work are at the lathes, in the mills, in the shipyards, in the aircraft plants, wherever there is work to be done and duty to be met, there is where you will find them. They are the workers who see to it that there is no pause, no stoppage, nor shortage for the fighting forces...."⁴⁹ Despite these pleas, the proposition passed on November 3, 1943, by a small margin. Immediately the labor movement adopted a five-point plan to test the legality of the measure. The State Legislature defeated legislation to make the "Slave Bill" permanent. Eventually, in August, 1945, the measure was declared unconstitutional by the California Supreme Court, and for two short years until the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947, California workers were free to support other union brothers and sisters in labor struggles.

Most of the financial support in the battle had come from the building trades unions; of about \$90,000 raised, \$20,000 had come from the carpenters' union. Later it became apparent that as many as 50 percent of union members in the state had not been registered to vote.

The "Right To Employment" Amendment: The Open Shop Surfaces Again

As the war continued, production goals were surpassed. Despite this, anti-union agitation persisted. Adding to problems created by labor's lack of success in changing the War Labor Board's decision on the wage freeze, Congress passed the restrictive Smith-Connally

Bill, which mandated early strike votes. There was recurrent pressure for the labor draft, which would have invalidated collective bargaining; labor compromised by agreeing to cut labor mobility, to prevent pirating. In California, on Labor Day, 1944, workers looked forward to victory overseas, but California Federation Secretary C. J. Haggerty warned of a coming battle quite different from those being won in the South Pacific.⁵⁰

The open shop movement had surfaced again, in the form of the "Right to Employment" amendment to the State Constitution, to be voted on in November. Once more, as in 1942, opposition to labor's rights was couched in terms of the alleged threat to production and the war effort. Labor's strategy was developed early in the campaign. The hard memory remained of the passage of the "Slave Labor" bill two years earlier; the unions had learned to count on every potential vote. Special efforts were made through the locals to register all union workers new to California. A hundred thousand applications were made for ballots for California servicemen outside the state.

In addition, opposition to Proposition 12, as the "Right to Employment" amendment was called, was marshaled on a broad bias. Among those who came out against the amendment were Mayor Roger Lapham of San Francisco, Mayor Fletcher Bowron of Los Angeles, the Right Reverend Thomas J. O'Dwyer, Catholic Archdiocesan Director of Charities and Hospitals (who called Proposition 12 "un-Christian and misleading"), the Presbyterian Synod of California (which said Proposition 12 jeopardized job

security and was vicious and disruptive), Governor Earl Warren, Hollywood stars Edward G. Robinson and Jane Wyman, and even George O. Bahrs, President of the San Francisco Employers' Council and the President of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Most of the San Francisco papers, including the Chronicle and the News, opposed the amendment, as did the Oakland Tribune, the Santa Barbara News Press and the Sacramento Union.⁵¹

The main fight on Proposition 12 was made in Los Angeles. The chief proponents were union-baiter Paul Shoup, the Los Angeles Times, and a group loosely alluded to in labor circles as "M and M henchmen."⁵² The United AFL Committee for Political Action organized "Flying Squadrons of 1944 Minute Men" to distribute literature at meetings and public events, and to speak before clubs and political rallies. These squadrons were the first line of defense against Shoup and his "practitioners of last-ditch unAmericanism." Labor charged that Shoup's "venom spitters" were bent on bringing wages and working conditions to "take-it-or-leave-it serfdom," through such tactics as the canvassing of Los Angeles homes with service stars hung in the window, where they proclaimed that returning servicemen would have to take dictation from organized labor in order to get work when they returned home.⁵³ Los Angeles Local #25 called for an avalanche of NO votes.⁵⁴

When the votes were in, Paul Shoup and his "sneak-measure Proposition 12" were defeated by a 7 to 5 margin.⁵⁵ This time, labor had been

able to stress its production record, the necessity for uninterrupted war production schedules, and the interference the open shop would cause. However, within the month, Shoup, his associates, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Selvin, and the Women of the Pacific had laid new plans for further anti-labor legislation.

At the close of World War II, the California carpenters had participated along with their fellow countrymen in thousands of individual efforts and small sacrifices. They had raised Victory Gardens, saved scrap and salvage, counted ration stamps, cut their cigarettes, coffee and rum consumption, observed dim-outs and black-outs and a 35 miles-per hour speed limit, and served as air raid wardens and civil defense volunteers. They had invested millions of dollars in War Bond and Stamps through payroll savings plans and their union locals. Members and members' sons fought and died in every branch of the Armed Services, on every fighting front. At home, the carpenters had helped in the literal reconstruction of the housing and industrial structure of the state, permanently changing the economic development of California. Union membership had grown spectacularly. Their efforts, and those of their working brothers and sisters, provided the ships and aircraft and supplies which won the war for the Allies.

At the same time, they remained conscious of the ongoing need to protect their right to share in the prosperity which full employment and high levels of production had brought, without sacrifice of the principles which underlie the labor movement. WWII was a time of

labor unity for the carpenters, who joined with the other AFL unions and the CIO in attempts to hold the line in regard to workers' rights and needs in the cost of living disputes, the secondary boycott "Slave Labor" legislation, and the "Right to Employment" proposition, jurisdictional disputes were minimized and submitted to arbitration or mediation during a period of national crisis. As the war ended, California and the carpenters entered a new phase, another period of growth which would result in some setbacks, but an eventual triumph for organized labor in the state and nation.

Chapter IX

The Carpenters In Movieland

No movie plot could be as fascinating or complex as the actual history of unionism in "Hollywood." From the uncertain beginnings of the motion picture industry during World War I to the period of its greatest strength and influence immediately after World War II, labor relations remained turbulent. The usual jurisdictional tensions among rival unions in a technically and organizationally complicated industry were intensified by political, ideological, and economic conflict. At the very center of this struggle was the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, which played a key role in the continuing drama.

Lured to southern California by the warm climate and abundant open space, movie business pioneers like Jesse Lasky and Adolph Zukor soon were joined by creative artists such as director D.W. Griffith and performers Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. (who banded together in 1919 to form United Artists Studio). Even before the end of the war in 1918, the industry had become the focus for major organizing campaigns, initiated by the American Federation of Labor centrally and by its affiliated international union in the field of live performance, the International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees (IATSE).

The IATSE had been founded in 1893 as an organization primarily of theatrical stagehands, and Los Angeles Local #33 was chartered simultaneously (performers later were organized by Actors Equity, an affiliate of the Associated Actor and Artistes of America, which unsuccessfully tried to unionize movie actors in the 1920s). The IA extended its jurisdiction into the motion picture industry in 1908, when it first organized theater projectionists in some leading cities. In subsequent years, its control over projectionists gave the IA a potent jurisdictional and bargaining leverage, since it could order projectionists not to screen movies made with non-IATSE labor.

The IA promptly asserted its jurisdiction over off-camera work in the new Hollywood studios, on the assumption that moviemaking was merely an extension or new form of stage production. This immediately brought it into conflict with the carpenters' union, whose members also had flocked into the studios during the war and postwar periods. The feud centered primarily on the question of whether "set erection" belonged to the building trades or to the IA, although there were scores of other equally knotty issues involving the electricians, machinists, teamsters, and many unions in addition to the UBCJA.

By its nature, motion picture production is infinitely more complex than live drama. Movies can be made either on a set or on location, with crews often moving back and forth from set to location in accordance with the requirements of particular scenes. Special skills are needed in camera technique, lighting, scenery and costume design, makeup, set

decoration, film processing and editing, animation, and set erection. With the advent of sound in 1927, an entirely new technical branch of the industry came into being.

As the movies shifted from the relatively simple sets of the early days to increasingly spectacular ones, inter-union rivalries intensified. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of choice jobs were at stake: as one example, the massive sets for D.W. Griffith's 1916 epic, "Intolerance," covered ten acres of land near Sunset Boulevard, with walls and towers rising 135 feet into the air. This alone represented six months' work by carpenters, masons, concrete worker and painters.

A 1919 agreement between the UBCJA and IATSE awarded all studio construction to the carpenters, limiting IA jurisdiction to that work necessary to fit up the stage back of the proscenium, as well as work in theatrical shops and storerooms."¹ Invariably, these agreements were subject to varying interpretations, and in 1920 and almost annually thereafter, the carpenters' union protested that IA members were performing construction work properly belonging to the building trades. The 1920 AFL convention ordered the IATSE to suspend the issuance of charters covering carpenters, painters, and other building tradesmen, and in mid-1921 the AFL Executive Council recorded that the IA finally was obeying. Nevertheless, the issue arose once again in the 1921 convention, with UBCJA's president Hutcheson threatening a walkout of his union unless the IA were disciplined.

In view of the continuing strife, the two unions reached an apparent agreement in 1925 under which much of the studio construction work was awarded to the IA (twenty years later, Hutcheson was to assert vigorously that this agreement never had been approved by the UBCJA international officers and had been entered into only by a local whose charter subsequently had been revoked). Discontent persisted, and when, in 1933, the IATSE called a major strike in a dispute initially involving the sound technicians, the AFL carpenters, electricians (IBEW), and other craft workers eagerly took the jobs vacated by the IA strikers. From this time to 1936, most of Hollywood's craft workers belonged to unions other than the IATSE. The stagehands (in Hollywood parlance, the "grips") were accepted into the carpenters' union Studio Local #946. All set construction was performed by UBCJA members.

The situation began to change again in 1934, with the arrival of a new IATSE president, George Browne. Together with his personal representative in Hollywood, a racketeer named Willie Bioff, Browne autocratically dominated the IA until the two men were sent to jail in 1941 on a ten-year conviction for extortion. While he was a business agent for a projectionists' local in Chicago in the early 1930s, Browne had joined with his sidekick Bioff to extort impressive sums of money from the large Balaban and Katz theatrical exhibition chain. An indiscreetly loud conversation between these two, in a gangster-owned Chicago club, alerted the Capone mob (then led by the notorious Frank Nitti) to their scheme. From that point onward, the mobsters regularly

shared in the income from these extortion rackets. Well over a million dollars were paid by the motion picture producers to Browne and Bioff, and indirectly to their racketeering allies, in order to assure "labor peace" in Hollywood and maintain "satisfactory" wages and working conditions. One of the leading studio executives, Nicholas Schenck, also went to prison in 1941 for failing to report some of these bribes on his income tax returns.²

Using the muscle provided by his control over the projectionists, Browne called a strike in 1935 which restored IATSE's power. Under a contract signed early in 1936, his union secured a ten-percent wage increase and, most importantly, a closed shop in the industry. IA membership rose to about 12,000, and the building trades again were frozen out, though set erection continued to be carpenters' work. Rank-and-file dissension persisted, however, with many workers turning to "rump" organizations in order to express their grievances and their discontent.

Enter Herb Sorrell And The Conference Of Studio Unions

Opposition to the Browne-Bioff regime came both from inside and outside the IATSE. Within the union, a faction of IA members, called the "IA Progressives," fought for greater union democracy and militancy in negotiations with the employers. At the same time a loose federation of other Hollywood-oriented unions (including some building trades, but not yet the UBCJA), under the title "Federated Motion Picture Crafts," sought support and recognition.

Into this chaotic situation now came a unique and memorable personality, Herbert Sorrell of the painters' union. Wholly self-taught, a full-time worker since the age of twelve and a former prize fighter whose specialty was the one-punch knockout, Sorrell was aggressive, incorruptible, and smart (despite his self-description of "dumb painter"). In 1937, he became the business agent for the Hollywood local of the AFL painters' international union, and almost immediately, the picket captain and key leader in a violent strike. Until the late 1940s, this feisty painter was the acknowledged chief strategist for the building trades and their allies in the motion picture studios.

The six-week 1937 strike, aimed at securing a twenty percent wage increase, involved the non-IATSE unions associated with the "Federated Motion Picture Crafts" (FMPC), and was by far the bloodiest dispute ever experienced in Hollywood. Sorrell proved so efficient as picket captain at Warner Brothers studio in Burbank that he was made overall strike commander. Frank Nitti and the IA, he reported in his memoirs, brought in goons from Chicago to beat up strikers and crush the strike, but Sorrell, typically, was prepared. He tossed picket lines across the main studio driveways, in violation of the law; obtained names and addresses of sixteen "scabs" (strikebreakers) and systematically arranged for the breaking of the right arms; stalled cars in front of Paramount Studios and blocked the entrance; and, using his boxing skills, personally dispatched any number of strikebreakers (a favorite tactic was to knock one down in the gutter, place both his legs up on the curb, and stomp on them).

The IATSE leaders, terrified by the implications of a successful challenge to their dominion, stopped at nothing to break the FMPC strike, luring some dissident locals back into the fold through promises of wage increases and other benefits. In his memoirs, Sorrell described a negotiating session with Pat Casey, negotiator for the Motion Picture Producers Association, which also was attended by Bioff of the IA. Bioff, he said, dismissed Casey from the room and promptly proceeded to bargain with Sorrell as if he were a representative of the employers, detailing what conditions the painters and other trades could expect to get.

Sorrell personally was offered \$56,000--ten percent of the proposed wage settlement--as assurance that he could persuade the strikers to return on those terms. Sorrell refused to talk to Bioff further, claiming he might have killed the IA chieftain, but told Casey he would submit the proposal to his members. He did just that, publicly explaining that he personally had been offered \$56,000, but told them he still was dissatisfied with the ten percent wage increase offer and would continue to hold out for twenty percent. The strike finally was settled, with a compromise fifteen percent increase and a favorable arbitration clause.³ He also obtained about a forty percent increase for the set decorators, a group which had been virtually ignored previously.

Using his painters' local as a base, Sorrell now proceeded to organize other studio crafts: cartoonists, office workers, set designers, publicists, and other crafts. Organization of the cartoonists was a major and unprecedented victory, because it brought the

unions directly into conflict with Walt Disney. Disney was one of the most aggressively anti-union employers in the industry, who regularly underpaid his animators. Sorrell first unionized the Leon Schlesinger studio (which produced cartoons for Warner Brothers), securing a healthy wage increase, but with an absolute pledge to Schlesinger that the same scale would be won at Disney. Disney ultimately and reluctantly capitulated, after Sorrell allegedly had persuaded friends at the Bank of America, Disney's major funding source, to pressure Disney into signing.⁴

Sorrell's success spurred the formation, in 1941, of the Conference of Studio Unions (CSU), a confederation of non-IA unions plus, from time to time, the film technicians' local of IATSE. The guiding principle of the CSU, according to Sorrell, was union democracy: the CSU would accept into membership only those unions whose officers had been elected by the membership. Local autonomy also was demanded: local unions must be empowered to negotiate and strike. Traditionally, the IATSE contracts had been negotiated in the East, between top officials of the IA and the Motion Picture Producers Association (MPPA), usually represented by Pat Casey. Only AFL affiliates were admitted into the CSU, although the CIO gave it tacit support.

Throughout the war, tension persisted between the CSU unions and the IA. In 1944, a War Labor Board panel ruled that the producers should negotiate with the painters' union concerning wages and other conditions for the set decorators, but both the IATSE and the MPPA resisted the ruling. The National Labor Relations Board then entered the dispute, holding

hearings preliminary to an election to determine the union preferences of the set decorators. But before the hearings were completed, the CSU struck, in March of 1945.⁵

The 1945 And 1946 Strikes

When the United States entered World War II late in 1941, the labor movement pledged a "no-strike" policy for the duration. The policy had the enthusiastic support of the American Communists and their political allies, who, naturally enough, were concerned about the uninterrupted maintenance of supply lines to Russia.

In the spring of 1945, the CSU violated this pledge, much to the consternation both of the AFL hierarchy and of the Communists. The immediate issue focused on 77 set decorators, for whom Sorrell sought bargaining rights through the painters' local. William Green, AFL president, pleaded with Sorrell to end the strike. Sorrell flew to Washington and met momentarily with Green in front of a hotel, after having decked a teamsters' union heckler with one punch. Sorrell persuaded Green to sign an agreement, of unknown text, and promptly returned to Los Angeles.

In accordance with CSU policy, all the CSU unions joined the painters' union in striking, with four exceptions: screen publicists, office workers, cartoonists, and story analysts. Sorrell attributed this dissension to Communist influence within the locals, as the Communist Party was bitterly opposed to the strike.

Harry Bridges, West Coast CIO leader, and two other CIO officials with known left-wing sympathies, Philip ("Slim") Connelly and Mervyn Rathbone, visited Sorrell and asked him to call off the strike. Sorrell had been one of Bridges' most fervent defenders and admirers, but he told the team, in no uncertain terms, to stay out of CSU business. The team visited other striking unions, with the same demand. Sorrell lost all respect for Bridges, as a result of this encounter. In this case, as in all similar ones, Sorrell consistently refused to follow the Communist line, despite the constant charges that he was a Party member.⁶

The carpenters' union was not among the dissidents. To the contrary, both the local and the international leadership gave the strike full support, although the UBCJA was not yet in the CSU and the union had not supported the 1937 strike. UBCJA President Hutcheson and Sorrell were friendly: "William Hutcheson, of the carpenters, and I got along very well together. He supported me in every way he could. I was fighting for his carpenters; his carpenters were fighting for us. We were fighting for each other," Sorrell stated in his memoirs.⁷ Though the proximate cause of the strike centered on the set decorators, the carpenters had a much bigger stake in the result. IA members continued to hold jobs which previously had belonged to the building trades.

The Hutcheson-Sorrell alliance was, undoubtedly, one of the strangest in the annals of labor history. Hutcheson was a staunchly conservative Republican, an unyielding opponent of industrial unionism and the CIO, and a stern disciplinarian of fractious UBCJA locals.

Sorrell was a strong progressive, though no ideologue, and a member or sponsor of several organizations which were sometimes deemed to be "Communist fronts." Each of them, however, was a pragmatist, and they had a common enemy: the IATSE. As Sorrell later put it in the title of his oral history memoirs, "You don't choose your friends." Furthermore, their personalities seemed compatible: the pugnacious and aggressive Sorrell was much like "Big Bill," who also was a scrapper.

The head of the carpenters' Studio Local #946, James Skelton, was equally a faithful ally. Honest, forthright, and reliable, Skelton had been local president until he was elected business agent in 1945. He had known Sorrell since the early war years, and when the 1945 strike appeared imminent, Sorrell asked him what the carpenters were likely to do in the event of a new strike. Skelton replied: "I'll tell you what I'd do personally: I'll never go through another union's picket line. If I get a chance, and if the General Office doesn't object, I'm going to recommend to the men that they join you because we've had our problems too, and, further, it's not good for a union to cross another union's picket line."⁸

Sorrell phoned Hutcheson, and the UBCJA president assigned the head of the State Council of Carpenters, Joe Cambiano, to serve as his representative in Hollywood. Cambiano's major role, from this point on, was to arrange funding for strike expenses, attorneys' fees, bail bonds for jailed strikers, and similar support. Most of these expenses were borne by the carpenters' union, since the international

president of Sorrell's own union, L.L. Lindeloff, was not fond of the highly independent head of the Hollywood local. Maurice Hutcheson, Big Bill's son and a union vice-president (who later succeeded his father in the presidency), visited Hollywood several times to give verbal support.

Hutcheson also granted the required autonomy to Local #946. Skelton called a special meeting of the membership, urging support for the painters and saying, in effect, that if the painters are in trouble, so are the carpenters. By an overwhelming majority, the carpenters voted to join the strike. Local #946, under Skelton's leadership, promptly joined the strike committee. Subsequent meetings were held in either the painters' or the carpenters' hall.⁹

In May 1945, the NLRB election was held, but every ballot was challenged by one or another of the parties. The CSU strike intensified, reaching a violent culmination in September and October. Sorrell chose Warner Brothers as the major target, counting on what he described as the "dumbness" of the studio police chief there. Police chiefs at other studios, he said, were smarter, and would have handled their defenses better. The Warner chief was so stupid that he would bring strike-breakers in through the main gate, although there were several studio gates, and this tactic would, of course, facilitate more effective picketing. The CSU placed 500-600 pickets in front of the studio, and blood was shed on all sides. Firemen turned powerful water hoses on the pickets; strikers turned over the cars of

strikebreakers; and police, wielding tear gas guns, clashed repeatedly with strikers. On a day known as "Bloody Monday," thousands of strikers and supporters fought with other thousands of "scabs" and police, with scores of injuries. Sorrell was one of the many arrested, and went to jail on a charge of inciting a riot (he later said that he enjoyed his several stays in jail, finding them restful and relaxing).¹⁰

In October, the NLRB announced that the set decorators had voted in favor of the painters' union, but the violence continued. Painters' president Lindeloff called for an end to the strike, as did the new head of the Motion Picture Producers Association, Eric Johnston. The AFL executive council ordered an immediate termination of the strike, local negotiations on jurisdictional questions, return of strikers to their jobs, and final disposition of any unresolved questions, if not resolved locally within 30 days, by a three-person committee to be appointed by the council. Sorrell insisted that all strikebreakers be fired from their jobs, and, on this basis, the strike ended on October 31 when 7,000 strikers returned to work.

In late 1945, the special committee, consisting of Felix Knight of the Railroad Carmen, W.C. Birthright of the Barbers, and William Doherty of the Letter Carriers, assembled in Cincinnati. The members paid a brief visit to Hollywood, and then issued a highly controversial report. The committee awarded jurisdiction over the set decorators to the painters' union, which pleased the CSU and displeased the

IA, but gave the so-called "set erectors" to the IATSE. Hutcheson was enraged, demanding to know how any committee could overrule clear decisions of the AFL in the past (the 1925 agreement, he said, did not count because his international office had not approved it) and announcing that he would not be bound by the award. He said the Hollywood UBCJA local was free to resume striking if it wished, but the local temporarily decided against it. In a later statement to a congressional committee, Hutcheson indelicately explained his refusal to abide by this award on the grounds that it was "just dumb words of dumb labor leaders who did not know the law of the land."¹¹

The award, indeed, was a strange one. None of the committee members had any direct knowledge of the movie industry and its labor problems, and their brief visit to Hollywood was hardly sufficient to remedy their ignorance. They had awarded set decoration to the painters' union and set construction to the IATSE, although by no stretch of logic or imagination could set decorators be regarded as "painters," nor did their work relate in any way to that of painters, while the construction of movie sets was clearly a normal building trades activity.

The committee, either from design or ignorance, had used the phrase "set erection". This was somewhat obscure, since it could have referred only to the assembly of already-constructed sets, a job which IA stagehands regularly performed. The IA and the producers, however, immediately gave the phrase a broader interpretation and implemented the award by firing building trades carpenters and replacing them with IATSE members. About 350 UBCJA members eventually left the studios.

Hutcheson and the CSU demanded a "clarification" of the award, and in the summer of 1946, the AFL executive council so ordered. The committee then issued an "interpretation" which reversed its previous ruling: "set erection," it said, consisted of the assemblage of sets, and all construction work belonged to the UBCJA. In later testimony to a congressional committee, each committee member was questioned on this point, and each affirmed that the committee had never intended to deprive UBCJA carpenters of work which they had traditionally performed.¹² By long practice, UBCJA carpenters had performed all set construction prior to actual filming; when shooting started, the IA grips took over, later dismantling reusable sets and returning them to the storeroom.

The IATSE and the producers stood firm, refusing to accept the "clarification." Indeed, they became more aggressive, announcing that any CSU member who refused to work on an IA-constructed set would be fired. This, in effect, threw down the gauntlet, and Sorrell and Skelton were forced to pick it up. When, on September 12, 1946, the studios began to discharge all carpenters who would not work on a so-called "hot" set, the CSU called another major strike which was characterized by as much violence as the 1945 outbreak. The IA had agreed to provide replacements for all the displaced carpenters. To do so, a new IA local--the Set Erectors Local--had to be established.

In late September and throughout October, thousands of CSU members and their sympathizers assembled outside all the major studios.

Warner Brothers, again, was a particular target, although other studios were picketed. Los Angeles County Sheriff Eugene Biscailuz declared the situation an "emergency," and brought in hundreds of extra police (Sorrell later charged that many of the deputies were paid by the studios). A local chapter of the American Veterans Committee (AVC), which sympathized with the CSU, sent many of its members in uniform, to join the pickets. Many CSU members also wore their military uniforms; the deputy sheriffs saluted, and then attacked in force.¹³ Casualties were severe, and Skelton was arrested and sent to jail along with Sorrell and dozens of others.*

By this time, Local #946 was a member of the CSU. When the studios had first started to replace UBCJA with IA carpenters, after the disputed award by the AFL arbitration committee, Sorrell had gone to Skelton and said: "Jim, we want to and we will support you, as before, but it would be a lot easier for me if you were in the CSU." Sorrell had contacted Hutcheson and assured him that CSU membership would in no way affect Local 946's affiliation with the international. Skelton went to the local's members, and they readily voted to affiliate with the CSU. The electricians

*Skelton once was arrested while drinking coffee with his wife during a short break from picketing; among the charges were "Disturbing the Peace," "Parading without a Permit," and "Blocking an Entrance." His later conviction was overturned by the State Supreme Court, which invalidated the ordinance requiring a "parade permit." It was at this time that Skelton learned to put some money in his shoes whenever an arrest is likely, so that he would have some money available while he was in jail. (Skelton interview).

(IBEW) and the independent machinists (IAM) were allies, but the teamsters' international union opposed the strike and disciplined the many local teamsters, who were sympathetic. According to Skelton, the teamsters' union imported goons from the East, who beat up many of the strikers until both Paramount Pictures and Local #946 forced them to desist.¹⁴

As the strike proceeded, finances became an increasing problem. Cambiano would bring checks made out to Skelton personally, in amounts as high as \$80,000 or \$100,000, and Skelton would deposit them in the local's account. According to Skelton, Hutcheson never hesitated when it came to providing money for the strike. The local raised money to pay for picketing, a mere \$20 a week per picket, and Charlie Chaplin was among the Hollywood figures who secretly contributed to the strike fund. The veteran secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles County District Council of Carpenters, Earl Thomas, was strongly supportive, and helped to arrange jobs for those strikers who were not on the picket lines; many of the strikers found temporary work on the docks. The Los Angeles Central Labor Council, however, was hostile and actively sabotaged the CSU and the strike.¹⁵

Sorrell and the other CSU leaders firmly declared that this was a lockout rather than a strike, while the producer and IA representatives were adamant that it was indeed a strike. Eric Johnston, in behalf of the MPPA, called upon the labor movement to end these "destructive" jurisdictional strikes, claiming that the employers simply were innocent victims of interunion squabbling. The Screen Actors Guild also depicted it as a jurisdictional dispute, ordering its members not to respect the

CSU picket lines (unless they felt in danger of personal injury).¹⁶ The CSU appealed to the Director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, Edgar L. Warren (later the Director of the UCLA Institute of Industrial Relations), to help prevent attacks on locked-out workers and get an equitable settlement.

Enter Roy Brewer, Ronald Reagan, And A New
Cast Of Characters

Willie Bioff's replacement in the IATSE was Nebraskan Roy Brewer, who was to become a key figure in Hollywood labor relations and in its politics. Assigned by IATSE President Richard Walsh to the post of IA business agent, in March 1945, Brewer came from a job with the War Labor Board; before that, he had been president of the Nebraska State Federation of Labor and, according to him, a loyal supporter of the great progressive senator, George W. Norris. He had the advantage of not having been associated with the Browne-Bioff regime, though his boss, Walsh, had been on the IATSE executive board in that period and had defended Browne consistently until his conviction and imprisonment.

Brewer was a shrewd tactician, who immediately established a warm relationship with the producers. He worked closely with them to destroy the CSU, and initiated a drumfire of "red" charges against Sorrell. Brewer publicly treated the strikes, and the whole CSU campaign, as a plot to give the Communists complete control over all of Hollywood. Red-baiting had been directed against Sorrell and the CSU before, but Brewer orchestrated it skillfully. It was, in fact the basis of his strategy, and it succeeded.

Brewer joined forces with the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals, an outgrowth of the abortive Screen Playwrights Guild which originally had been formed to fight "Communist" influences in Hollywood. Led by actors such as John Wayne, Ward Bond, and Adolphe Menjou; playwrights such as Morrie Ryskind; gossip columnist Hedda Hopper; and other active conservatives, the Alliance saw Communists everywhere and sought to purge from the industry all those who followed what it defined as the "Communist Party line." Any Hollywood progressive, however strong his or her non-Communist credentials might be, was subject to virulent attack by the Motion Picture Alliance. Ironically, there was no stronger anti-Communist in the country than "Big Bill" Hutcheson of the Carpenters, who perhaps rivaled Brewer in the ability and willingness to paint opponents with a "red" brush. Yet Hutcheson was a faithful supporter of the CSU.

The so-called "Un-American Activities Committee" of the California State Senate, headed by Los Angeles County State Senator Jack B. Tenney, conducted several investigations of "Communist" activity in Hollywood and elsewhere. Tenney had once been president of the Musicians' Union local in Los Angeles (his chief claim to fame was that he had composed the popular song "Mexicali Rose," which some witnesses before his committee hummed during their testimony). There he became known as a dedicated leftist until an internal union dispute resulted in his defeat as president. He blamed "Communists" for the defeat, and thereafter became known as a red-baiter. Brewer, the Alliance, and others fed Tenney information about Sorrell's alleged sponsorship of Communist causes.

As we have seen, Communists were active on the Hollywood scene, and Sorrell had been a member of various organizations which probably had been influenced by Communists and their "fellow travelers." He was, however, primarily a trade unionist, never an ideologue, and he always defied these influences whenever their goals conflicted with legitimate union interests. In his oral history memoirs, he frankly admitted that at various times he was attracted by some of the declared principles of the Hollywood left-wingers and might have joined the Communist Party if asked by someone he liked and trusted. He never did, he stated, but avowed that he had accepted contributions from Communists to the CSU treasury. Again, in his words, "You don't choose your friends." Given Sorrell's reputation for honesty, and his own record as a union leader, there is no reason to challenge the truth of his statements.*

In 1947, the "red" charges were repeated in hearings in Sacramento and in Washington, and a Communist Party membership card surfaced, allegedly signed by Sorrell in the name

*Skelton confirms that Sorrell did take some money from sources alleged to be "Communist," saying "What difference does it make where the money comes from? I'd take money from the Devil if necessary." He also describes an incident in which Sorrell had opposed the election of a woman CSU leader to the presidency of the strike committee because she was a former member of the Communist Party. According to Skelton, Sorrell never "acted like a Communist" at any time (Skelton interview).

"Herbert Stewart" ("Stewart" was his mother's maiden name). Handwriting experts affirmed that it was Sorrell's writing; Sorrell agreed that it was a persuasive facsimile, but denied under oath that it was his. He kept close records of his activities, including times and dates of meetings and social occasions, and thereby was able to disprove statements that he had attended Communist Party conferences.

At the Congressional hearings, two old adversaries, neither of whom had any reason to defend Sorrell, attested to his loyalty and lack of commitment to Communism. Painters' president Lindeloff said that he had known Sorrell well ever since 1937 and, while he might be radical, there had never been any reason to believe that he was a Communist. Pat Casey, recently retired after twenty years of service as chief labor negotiator for the producers, was equally clear: "I've dealt with Herb Sorrell since 1937 or 1938. In my opinion, he's not a Communist."¹⁷ Despite these impressive assurances, the "red" label stuck to Sorrell. His power in Hollywood rapidly declined.

Brewer, as IA representative, went on to become a leading enforcer of the notorious "blacklist" through which alleged Communists among Hollywood stars, writers, directors, and others were purged from the movies. He collaborated with Hedda Hopper and other Alliance members at times, administering what became

known as the "ritual" by which those accused of pro-Communist sympathies could again be sanitized.*

In 1947 and 1948, the new president of the Screen Actors Guild, Ronald Reagan, played a somewhat similar but much more subtle role. Returning from military service after the war, Reagan was a staunch and hyperactive liberal who rejoined the SAG executive board early in 1946 and, in March of 1947, succeeded fellow actor Robert Montgomery as SAG head; Reagan,

*In 1948, Brewer played a strange role in connection with the ADA and Democratic Party politics. In line with a new strategy (triggered by bans on union political activity contained in the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act) of the AFL to infiltrate the ADA and use it for political purposes, Brewer applied for membership in the Beverly Hills ADA chapter. Many anti-Communist Hollywood progressives belonged to that chapter, all of whom despised Brewer, and denied him membership. This issue almost tore the fledgling California ADA asunder, giving much pain to ADA state president Melvyn Douglas. The AFL officials temporarily formed a "rump" ADA group, designed to channel support to some AFL-endorsed candidates (including Douglas' wife, Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas, and other liberals).

ironically, was the first certifiable liberal to lead that highly nonmilitant group. He was wooed by the Communists, and, though he never fully succumbed to their blandishments, he later admitted that, in his words, "I was their boy!"¹⁸ He subsequently joined some progressive organizations and aligned himself with the anti-Communist factions, but he never joined the Motion Picture Alliance and remained a vocal liberal until the early 1950s. In 1947, he was elected to the state executive board of Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), the anti-Communist but firmly progressive organization from which Brewer was barred.

As board member and then as SAG president, Reagan tried to play the role of mediator in the IA-CSU dispute. During the strike-lockout, the Screen Actors helped negotiate the so-called "Treaty of Beverly Hills" (July, 1946), which achieved a temporary truce by granting all studio employees, except the actors, a 25 percent raise.¹⁹ This was only a break in the action, and, following the "clarification" issued by the three-man AFL committee in August, Reagan joined with actors Robert Montgomery, Gene Kelly, and Edward Arnold, and with Sorrell, Skelton, and other CSU leaders, in seeking a further clarification of the "clarification."

In their role as "mediators," SAG board members and officials attended the 1946 AFL convention, in order to arrange an adjustment of the jurisdictional dispute. They interviewed arbitration committee members, and Gene Kelly questioned committee chairman Doherty in detail. Sets often were constructed from the

ground up, on the soundstage: Did the committee intend, he asked, that this work be performed by IATSE members rather than by the carpenters (who had traditionally constructed these sets)? Doherty's reply revealed his total ignorance of the industry: This was an entertainment industry and the IA was an entertainment union, he said, and all such work therefore belonged to the IATSE. The "clarification," he added, had all been a mistake. Kelly was incredulous; he was a much firmer progressive than Reagan, and, perhaps, more sympathetic to the CSU position.²⁰

The Guild members also met with Hutcheson, who, in Reagan's view, was inflexible. In his 1965 autobiography, Reagan blamed Hutcheson and Cambiano for prolonging the dispute: If they had been willing to limit the Brotherhood's jurisdictional claims only to the set erectors and relinquish any further claims to studio construction being performed by IA members, he argued, the SAG might have persuaded Brewer and Walsh to compromise. Reagan did recall a kind of compromise shouted by Hutcheson as the actors were leaving: "Tell Walsh that if he'll give in on the August directive, I'll run Sorrell out of Hollywood and break up the CSU in five minutes. I'll do the same to the Commies."²¹

The AFL executive council refused to take a clear stand, agreeing only to publicize but not to enforce the "clarification" issued by the committee. The actors returned to Hollywood defeated and dejected. They met with Sorrell, and told him of their conversation with the committee members. Sorrell was skeptical, saying that he had been told precisely the reverse. The team then discussed

the possibility of taking Sorrell's private plane and personally visiting each individual member of the committee. Reagan suggested a simpler alternative: a conference call. The October 25th phone conversation had overtones of high drama, but, in the end, it proved to be counterproductive. The committee members did not seem to know what their own award meant. According to Reagan, they admitted to Roy Tinsdale (IBEW leader) that the "clarification" in the hands of the team had not been written by them, and Reagan later inferred that it had probably been written by Hutcheson or by someone else in the UBCJA or AFL hierarchy. However, a telegram arrived from the committee the very next day, allegedly containing the text of the "real" interpretation, and it simply duplicated the language of the existing one.²² During the phone conversation, the committee members had declared that the set erectors belonged to the IA, much to Skelton's and Sorrell's dismay. Instead of clarifying the situation, the phone call made it more confused than before.*

Reagan consistently claimed that he and the Screen Actors Guild were neutral, seeking only to end the labor strife and protect the welfare of the motion picture industry, but Guild members crossed CSU picket lines and thereby aided the producers and the IATSE. Had the Guild (and the teamsters' union) observed the picket lines, movie production would have suspended and the producers would have had to settle on terms satisfactory to the carpenters and other CSU unions. They could not have

*Skelton believes, and Reagan's autobiography confirms, that the idea for the phone call primarily came from the Guild, and he regards it as a "publicity stunt" (Skelton interview).

afforded a prolonged total shutdown: Americans were attending movies in numbers (90 million a week) far exceeding anything experienced in the past, or to be experienced in the future, and profits were soaring.

Reagan depicted Sorrell as an ambitious man who sought personal control over Hollywood labor, in behalf of the Communists and fellow travelers. In his own memoirs, Sorrell was harsh in his judgment of Reagan's role in the dispute: During Congressional hearings, "...we had stooge actors, stars, big stars, come in and talk for the motion picture producers. Ronald Reagan was one of the most vicious. What he didn't know about unionism would fill a bigger book than any of us would ever be able to read, but he used his prestige to deride locked-out craftsmen."²³

Skelton's impression is that the producers may have used their influence to assure Reagan's selection as SAG president, saying "I don't think Reagan was vicious, but he was strictly a producers' man." Father George H. Dunne, a liberal Catholic priest who sided actively with the CSU, is somewhat more charitable in his judgment, saying only that Reagan's "Rover Boy" activities "helped mightily to confuse the issues."²⁴

Father Dunne's description may be somewhat more representative of feelings among non-Communist Hollywood liberals at that time. Reagan still was regarded favorably by progressives, though many felt that he was ill-informed and naive in relation to the CSU. Generally he was pictured as a well-meaning Boy Scout, unwittingly fronting for knaves and reactionaries.

The End Of The "Strike" And The CSU

Throughout 1947, the strike-lockout continued, but with decreasing force and effectiveness. The "red" charges against Sorrell had taken their toll, and all studio craftsmen and technicians, including carpenters, had to carry IATSE cards before being allowed to work.

In September, a subcommittee of the House Labor and Education Committee, headed by conservative Republican Carroll Kearns of Pennsylvania, held hearings in Hollywood on the labor situation. Testimony was heard from all participants. Brewer renewed his red-baiting and both producer and IA representatives charged that Hutcheson was the major obstacle to a settlement, since he allegedly would not abide by any arbitration award that was not in his favor.

Father Dunne and Sorrell have expressed somewhat different perceptions of the committee's role. Dunne considered it unduly favorable to and protective of the producers, especially those who had regularly collaborated with Bioff and Browne, while Sorrell thought that Kearns and the committee's chief counsel, Irving McCann, generally gave the CSU a fair shake. In his memoirs, Sorrell related a conversation with McCann in which he asked the obviously anti-labor and reactionary counsel why he had been so hard on some of the producers and IA representatives in his questioning and unexpectedly fair in questioning Sorrell and the CSU attorney, George Bodle. McCann replied, "How can I be otherwise? You and Bodle are fine men--white--my type. The rest of them are all a bunch of damn Jewish attorneys."²⁵

Encouraged by new support from local Catholic priests, who could not reasonably be accused of being Communists (though the red-baiters still depicted the priests as Communist dupes), Sorrell determined to make a final effort for victory. Through the intercession of Father Dunne and other priests, the Catholic archbishop in Los Angeles, John J. Cantwell, was persuaded to call a meeting involving all parties. Held in a unit on the grounds of the Beverly Hills Hotel, the meeting was chaired by Monsignor Thomas J. O'Dwyer, a socially conscious church leader. Sorrell, per his usual policy, brought a spokesman for each CSU craft with him, but the carpenters' union was not represented at the meeting. Brewer and other IA representatives attended, as did Pat Casey of the MPPA.

Before discussion was long underway, Sorrell asked whether the other participants were empowered to commit their organizations, noting that the CSU people had that power. The IA officials replied that they were present merely as observers, and Casey explained that he was there because his Church had requested his presence and he felt it was his duty.

Knowing that the producers and IA were putting the blame on Hutcheson, Sorrell advanced a proposal which Father Dunne had suggested: If all parties would agree to binding arbitration by an impartial arbitrator, the CSU would pledge to obey any award that was made. If the UBCJA rejected the award and struck, the other CSU unions would not observe the picket lines. This essentially answered the IA and producer complaints, but they remained completely unresponsive. Enraged at what he knew was the arrogance and hypocrisy of these men, and further incensed by what he regarded as an insult to his Church, Casey immediately took O'Dwyer, Congressman Kearns (who

also was present), and probably McCann to the MPPA offices and showed them copies of the minutes of MPPA meetings. The minutes proved, beyond question, that the dispute actually was a lockout and not a strike, exactly as Sorrell had charged, and that Roy Brewer had developed the strategy as a means of forcing the discharge of CSU members. Brewer, indeed, had attended the MPPA meetings and directly collaborated with the employers.

The producers' statements that they were merely the innocent victims of a jurisdictional dispute were, therefore, shown to be lies: The employers were conspiring with the IATSE. The hitherto secret minutes were introduced into the Kearns' committee's records, but by this time it was too late. The producers and the IA had won, although CSU picket lines remained until late 1948 (Sorrell recalled later that the carpenters continued to picket until 1950).²⁶ As a reward for his honesty, Casey lost his job and "retired."*

Throughout 1947 and 1948, the "red" charges persisted unabated. Matthew Woll, an AFL vice president, called Hollywood the third largest center of Communist activity in the country, and accused stars such as Orson Welles of fronting for the Communist Party. Welles, in reply, threatened to sue for libel. Walt Disney attributed labor strife to "Communist" influences, even labeling the League of Women Voters a "Communist front." In 1948, another

*In his later oral history interview, Father Dunne revealed that Casey had confirmed the IA-MPPA collaboration, in a private conversation between the two men.(p.57)

Congressional hearing heard testimony from IA counsel Matthew Levy which was so extravagant in its accusations that Congressman Kearns had it stricken from the record.²⁷

The coup de grace which killed the strike and the CSU was passage of the anti-union Taft-Hartley Act in 1947. In its initial form, this Act denied strikers the right to vote in an NLRB representation election if they had been permanently replaced by the employer. The producers and the IA had conspired to force the discharge of UBCJA members and replace them with IA members, and, under this new legislation, only the IA members were entitled to vote in subsequent elections. The IA, predictably, was henceforth victorious, although the CSU had won most of the previous elections.

The Taft-Hartley Act also outlawed the "jurisdictional" strike, which further burdened the CSU and the carpenters in this circumstance. In truth, this was a jurisdictional strike only in outer appearance: behind the scenes, the employers and the IA were collaborating against the UBCJA. It was, in this sense, not really a strike at all but, rather, an engineered lockout. Ironically, the vast media coverage of the Hollywood "jurisdictional" strike had helped to inflame public opinion against the "strikers" and to stimulate the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act.

Skelton and Hutcheson now realized that the strike could not be won. The debts were piling up, and Skelton obtained a check from Hutcheson for \$40,000 to clear up the remaining deficit. Hutcheson was disappointed but resigned, although he was still angry with AFL

president Green for having appointed "three of the dumbest" AFL union leaders to the arbitration committee.

Herb Sorrell was brought to trial by his own international union, in a kangaroo court, and denied any further office in the organization. The Hollywood local defied the international and temporarily retained Sorrell as an officer, but it was subsequently punished and suspended. Sorrell became an unsuccessful car salesman and then an insurance agent. Shortly after the end of the strike-lockout, Skelton joined the staff of the carpenters' district council; Local #946 continued as a construction local until the early 1970s, when it sold its building to, and soon merged into, Local #1506. Brewer, after serving as blacklist enforcer for some years, left the IA and became a studio executive. Reagan steadily moved to the right after 1950, his "last hurrah" as a liberal being his support for Helen Gahagan Douglas in her race against Richard Nixon for the United States Senate that year. Later, he joined fellow SAG ex-presidents Robert Montgomery and George Murphy in Republican politics. The cycle was complete.

Chapter X

A New Era: "Changing of the Guard"

With the end of World War II, on August 14, 1945, the carpenters' union emerged from a period of challenge and growth to one of uncertainty and change. Tens of thousands of carpenters, and sons, brothers, relatives, and friends, returned from overseas to a vastly different country. The old "isolationism" was dead, crushed by the realities of an interdependent and complex world society. For the first time in history, the industrial and agricultural potential of the American economy had been tested to the full, calling forth the immense human resources which had been tragically wasted during the years of depression.

Americans had experienced suffering and sacrifice during the war, but there had been compensations. The country had been united as it had rarely been before, achieving an esprit and morale commensurate with the unprecedented levels of production and employment. Technological innovations and organizational advances had enormously stimulated productivity, as evidenced by the assembly-line methods of shipbuilding pioneered by Henry Kaiser. This was, however, a mixed blessing. Unless the level of renewed civilian demand could match the greatly increased productivity of industry, a major depression was again possible. Many Americans feared mass unemployment and economic chaos.

The fears of mass unemployment proved groundless. The key postwar problem, instead, was inflation, as prices surged upward following the premature removal of wartime price controls. Shortages were pervasive, especially acute in the housing field.

Scores of Hollywood films depicted, comically and dramatically, the human problems engendered by wartime and postwar unavailability of housing. Returning veterans, and their families, could not find suitable or adequate housing. Many had to double up with parents, relatives, or friends. The relatively few units that were available carried a highly inflated cost. President Harry Truman, Roosevelt's successor, and congressional Democrats fought for expanded subsidized housing, encountering vicious opposition from real estate and allied lobbies.

The dramatic price inflation, coupled with shortages of consumer goods and the lag of workers' income behind swollen corporate profits, inevitably led to a rise in strikes. More strikes occurred in 1946 than in any previous single year. Disputes which were identified as "jurisdictional" in origin, such as the much-publicized Hollywood strikes described in the previous chapter, especially annoyed the American people. Antiunion newspapers and politicians complained loudly and constantly, inflaming public opinion against the labor movement. Labor's record of production and cooperation during the war was largely forgotten, and every strike, however justified it might be on grounds of equity or economics, was blamed on "labor dictators" or, in the case of some CIO unions, "Communists."

The carpenters' union was profoundly and permanently affected by these postwar events. The extreme housing shortage, with rising costs of construction, provoked a major innovation in building techniques. The application of "mass production" to residential housing undermined the traditional individual craftsmanship of the carpenter, reducing him to the role of a specialist in what amounted to a "construction line." Step by step, the union would become more "industrial" in character.

Public hostility to postwar strikers led, in 1946 and 1947, to political and legislative changes which adversely affected organized labor. Antiunion conservatives were swept into office in the 1946 elections, riding the tide of antistrike and anti-labor sentiment. In California, former Major William F. Knowland, publisher of the conservative Oakland Tribune, was elected to the United States Senate, defeating Will Rogers, Jr., a popular ex-Congressman and war-hero son of the beloved humorist; liberal members of Congress went down to defeat as well. In the 12th Congressional District, the highly respected Representative Jerry Voorhis, a five-term incumbent, was trounced by a Navy veteran and political neophyte, Richard M. Nixon. The Congress which convened in 1947 was overwhelmingly hostile to unions and receptive to new legislation which would regulate union activities.

Two prominent Republicans--Ohio's Robert A. Taft in the Senate and New Jersey's Fred Hartley in the House--sponsored sweeping legislation to amend the National Labor Relations Act and apply drastic restrictions to strikes, boycotts, and organizing campaigns. The bill passed both Houses by wide margins, and a veto by President Truman was overridden. The provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act fundamentally influenced the course of organized labor over the coming decades. Some of the building trades unions, most notably the carpenters' union, felt the law's impact with special force. These unions were especially affected by new provisions related to jurisdictional strikes, secondary boycotts, union security, and representation elections.

The National Labor Relations Act, in its original form, defined a series of "unfair labor practices," by employers only, which henceforth were outlawed. All such definitions were designed to protect

the rights of workers to organize, to be represented in negotiations by a union of their own choosing, to be free from employer intimidation or control, and to bargain collectively with employers through a labor organization which, by their choice, is the exclusive bargaining agent in the designated employee unit. The Taft-Hartley Act amended the law to define a corresponding series of "unfair labor practices" applicable to unions. Its net result was to constrict the capacity of unions to put collective pressure upon nonunion or resistant employers, through sympathy strikes and boycotts.

Major provisions of the new legislation made it an "unfair labor practice" for any union to strike or boycott an employer for the purpose of forcing the recognition of a union which has not been certified by the NLRB, or the recognition of one union when another has already been certified, or the assignment of work to one union rather than another (the jurisdictional strike). These sections were aimed, rather directly, at certain of the tactics used by the carpenters' union in the Anheuser-Busch case (included in the antitrust prosecution described earlier) and, preeminently, in the west coast lumber and sawmill disputes.

Other provisions outlawed the closed shop (under which a newly hired worker must be a union member at the time of employment), and allowed the union shop (under which the employer may hire anyone, but the new employee must become a union member within 30 days after being hired) only under defined conditions. The union shop can be negotiated only by a union which is the recognized bargaining agent, and the union is required to maintain "reasonable" initiation fees and dues. Even under a union-shop arrangement, the employer still is not required to

discharge a nonunion employee, or an expelled union member, if he or she has reason to believe that membership was not available to the worker on equal terms or that he or she was terminated from membership on grounds other than failure to tender required fees and dues. Under Section 14(b), even the union shop can still be outlawed in any state which has enacted a so-called "right to work" law.

In the original legislation, a union shop could be instituted only if approved by a majority of eligible workers in a special election. The assumption of the bill's sponsors was that large numbers of employees would reject a union shop if given a free choice. Precisely the reverse proved to be true, much to the dismay of the antiunion forces. The union shop was approved in most of the elections, and the provision was discarded in 1951.

In practice, many employers and unions continued to observe "closed shop" agreements in industries such as building construction. The union-shop provision simply does not apply meaningfully to trades in which a typical worker moves frequently from one employer to another, under conditions of casual or intermittent employment. Some form of hiring-hall arrangement is needed, and many employers prefer to have a readily available supply of qualified and experienced craftsmen through the union. The arrangement gives some stability and regularity to an otherwise chaotic labor market.

In another provision, the law denied voting rights to strikers who had been permanently replaced by the employer. In any subsequent representation election, only the replacements were allowed to vote. This added provision, as we have seen, effectively defeated the studio carpenters in Hollywood in their struggle with both the IATSE and the producers.

Later provisions, contained in the otherwise antiunion Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959, liberalized two of the above restrictions. The union hiring hall again was legalized in building construction, with a proviso that a nonunion worker must join the union in seven days (except in "right to work" states). In addition, strikers were allowed to vote in representation elections until twelve months after the beginning of a strike. It is interesting, if not particularly useful, to speculate what might have happened in Hollywood if the striking (locked-out) carpenters had been allowed to vote.

Probably the most impactful provision of the Taft-Hartley Act related to the secondary boycott. The law prohibits unions from striking, or refusing to process goods, where the object is to force or require "any employer...or other person to cease using, selling, handling, transporting, or otherwise dealing in the products of any other producer, processor, or manufacturer...." This prevents the carpenters' union, or any other union, from enlisting the aid of other unions in strikes or boycotts, or seeking to pressure firms or individuals who do business with a struck employer. The premise of the bill's sponsors was that such other firms or individuals are "neutral third parties" who deserve to be protected from economically harmful actions. The unions respond, with much apparent justification, that such parties are directly aiding the employer in a labor dispute.

While the legislation could not prevent jurisdictional strikes or secondary boycotts in all practical situations, it nevertheless had a profound influence upon union policy. No longer could the carpenters' union lawfully use the powerful boycott weapon to enforce its jurisdiction, or to secure the

closed shop. Even more rigidly than before, it had to respect the claims and the jurisdiction of other unions which had been certified as bargaining agents by the National Labor Relations Board. To a far greater extent than in the past, organizing campaigns had to be conducted "from the bottom up," rather than "from the top down." Hutcheson, of course, was enraged, and particularly embarrassed because the law had been drafted and enacted by Republicans, members of the political party to which he had always been consistently faithful.

The law did have a salutary impact on the much-criticized jurisdictional strikes. Unions, in effect, were given the choice of ceding to the NLRB the power to determine jurisdiction, or setting up their own machinery for making such determinations. The preferred choice was clear. Special provisions thereafter were made, within the National Building and Construction Trades Department, for the nongovernmental settlement of these disputes.

Hutcheson undoubtedly regretted the invalidation of his traditional jurisdictional weapons. There is no evidence, however, that the law's provisions on work-assignment issues have seriously hindered the union's organizing campaigns or strike activities. Far greater problems have been the ban on secondary boycotts, and technological, economic, and demographic changes which have fundamentally altered the nature of building construction and the characteristics of the labor market.

"Mass Production" Comes To Construction

The breadth of the postwar housing shortage made it obvious that drastic new measures and methods were required in the construction field. The federal government supported some needed housing, but the vigorous opposition of the real estate industry severely

limited governmental activity. It was widely believed that the unprecedented shortage of residential housing could not be met with conventional building techniques.

Nationally, housing shortages were so acute that experts projected a need for construction of 1.5 million new units per year over a ten-year period. The problem was especially desperate in California. Hundreds of thousands of workers had come to the state during the war, settling down to stay. The State Reconstruction and Reemployment Commission noted, in 1945, that: "Because population growth and economic development have been more rapid in California than in other states, the construction industry is even more important in the economy of this State than in the Nation as a whole."¹

Some innovative builders sought a solution in the application of new construction techniques developed during the war. The theory was that houses could be built in much the same way as Henry Kaiser had turned out "Liberty ships." The chief pioneer was builder William J. Levitt, whose first mass-constructed suburban "Levittown" was built on Long Island in 1949. William Manchester describes the process:²

Levitt built homes as Kaiser had ships, on beltlines--17,500 houses in that first eruption, each like the other. On signal, his bulldozers moved across the landscape in echelon, pivoting at red flags. Street pavers followed, then electricians with light poles and men bearing stamped street signs. Next, house lots were marked off. Convoys of trucks moved over the

hardened pavements, tossing out prefabricated sidings at 8 a.m., toilets at 9:30, sinks and tubs at ten, sheetrock at 10:45, flooring at eleven. And so it went. Levitt's carpenters used only power tools; there wasn't a handsaw in town. Paint came from spray guns, and, at first, in just one two-toned "color scheme." Calculating that two thousand families could swim in a pool occupying the same amount of space as a tennis court, Levitt decreed eight pools and no courts. Everything was uniform. On Mondays wash was hung in 17,500 backyards; under no circumstances could it flap on Sundays. Picket fences were prohibited. Lawns had to be cut regularly. It was all in the deeds. Even pleasant innovations conformed to Levitt's game plans. Trees were introduced at the rate of one every 28 feet (2.5 for each house), and the distance from trunk to trunk was precise to the inch. Curbstones curved gently, but always at the same angle. Families struggling to assert their identity were limited to interior decorating and the pitch of the door chime. (It had to be a chime, though; buzzers and bellpulls were out). Architects and sociologists were aghast. To them this was the entrepreneur as a totalitarian. Yet the Levittowners didn't mind. To ex-GIs who remembered military regimentation, and their wives from Quonset huts and trailer camps, the hearths were no less warm for having been built according to standard specifications.

While few of them were as regimented as Levittown, the southern California "tract" homes and villages had similar characteristics of uniformity in design and construction. Largely on this basis, development of the sprawling San Fernando Valley

spurred ahead. Hundreds of other suburban communities came into being throughout the state. The growing suburbanization was accompanied, inevitably, by a decentralization of shopping facilities and other amenities. Local shopping centers, or "malls" in later parlance, became characteristic features of the California economy. Gradually, they led to a marked decline both in centralized downtown business and in neighborhood or "Mom and Pop" stores.

A vast freeway system soon would link together the numerous suburbs with central Los Angeles, and with one another. At the end of the war, only one freeway--the "Arroyo Seco," to be renamed the Pasadena Freeway--existed in the county. In 1947, a new freeway linked downtown Los Angeles and Hollywood, and was soon extended into the San Fernando Valley. Dozens of other freeways joined this congested system over the next three decades. The tens of thousands of automobiles added to the "smog" problem, which had first arisen during the war.

Carpenters found much work on the new commercial, industrial and public construction, which generally had been deferred during the war years (except for emergency projects and those required by the war effort). This building activity, in the immediate postwar period, stimulated employment in contract construction. By September of 1946, employment reached a peacetime record of about 185,000. Employment remained at or above this level until the 1950s, when recessions, rising interest rates and housing costs, and greater use of prefabrication in construction posed new threats to the carpenters' union.

The union consistently opposed prefabrication and what it termed "cheap housing." At the 1946 convention of the State Council of Carpenters,

President Cambiano denounced a federal program for low-cost veterans' housing, proposed by Truman's Housing Expediter, Wilson Wyatt. Cambiano also joined building contractors and the real estate industry in deploring price and rent controls and governmental restrictions on construction supplies. He called upon the union members to fight prefabrication immediately and without compromise, just as painters were fighting the spray gun. Cambiano warned that the Henry Kaiser Company was about to enter the prefabrication field. While he hoped that prefabrication was only a passing fad, he took the additional stand that, to the extent that it persisted, the carpenters' union would have jurisdiction over it and the construction site rate would be paid:³

Reviewing the whole situation, we must definitely set our minds to the rule that all work in the prefabricated field must carry the construction site rate. Of course, they would like the mill rate, in accordance with the master agreement for mills. Their labor relations man had it up with the General Office.

Under this scheme a \$6,000 house could be cut, on a mass production scale, in about twenty minutes. Men are not going to turn to all day on one spot and do this kind of work. The fight is here and we have to face it. We are particularly disturbed about this one firm, and we insist that all this work be done by members of the Brotherhood.

We appeal to all Delegates to let the State Council know what is going on in prefabrication in their Districts. And don't let us forget that while there is a lot of publicity about

homes for returning GI's, that prefabricated houses will not stand up, and within eight or ten years they will be faulty and our craft will be blamed. Without the question of a doubt this is something for you all to ponder about and set upon, and there is only one way to act--against it.

At the 1947 state convention, Cambiano and secretary-treasurer Ryan again stressed the importance of maintaining established union scale for any work performed on prefabricated houses, and reported that this policy had been enforced in all local areas during the past year. They added, optimistically: "It is our opinion that as dimension lumber is made available in sufficient quantities to service the needs of residential construction, the prefabricated house will gradually disappear."⁴

In later conventions, warnings recurred on this issue, but the emphasis shifted entirely to the need for organizing all prefabrication work and preserving the union scale. No longer could the union realistically hope to prevent prefabrication completely. The union struggled against the increasingly vocal forces which demanded major revisions in local building codes, describing them as antiquated and unnecessarily restrictive. Opponents of the codes claimed that, in existing form, they legitimized "feather-bedding," while the unions rejoined that code requirements were essential to prevent unsafe and inferior construction. In California, the case put forth by the construction unions has been bolstered by the earthquake danger, which requires special structural provisions. Recent legislation mandates renovation of hundreds of buildings which fail to meet minimum earthquake-safety standards. This work, potentially, could provide much new employment for building craftsmen. The higher safety standards have the added benefits, from a union viewpoint, of preventing a general weakening of the building codes.

Perhaps the most alarming aspect of the prefabrication revolution was the further eroding of the carpenters' skills. More and more, the carpenter was becoming a specialist, no longer able or expected to perform the diverse skilled tasks which had characterized the carpentry trade in years past. Many of the veteran carpenters deplored this trend, but it reflected the realities of changing construction techniques and labor markets. Almost alone among the skilled trades, on occasion, the carpenters' union sought to preserve the traditional skills through apprenticeship programs. Large numbers of contemporary journeymen, however, do not take the apprenticeship route. In addition, apprenticeship itself has become more specialized. It still provides a broader training than can be obtained through any other channel, but it could not remain unaffected by the growing specialization among craft workers.

Another consequence of the ongoing erosion of skills was a decline in the relative economic status of the carpenter. The typical carpenter was reasonably well paid, thanks largely to the union contract, but was no longer the "aristocrat of the building trades." Several other crafts received equal or better pay. Annual income, for all the trades, reflected the declining economic circumstances which burdened so many of the craftsmen. The media, and much of the general public, gave inordinate attention to the high hourly rates paid to workers, neglecting the intermittency of their employment and the severe impact of recessions upon their job security and their annual earnings.

The continuing erosion in the economic status of carpenters led to a major resurgence of strike activity in the early 1950s. In 1950, the southern California carpenters went on strike for higher wages,

and, after a 36-day stoppage, secured increases totaling 23 cents an hour. The year 1952 saw a peak of strike actions: about 100,000 construction workers struck, with a loss of at least 2 million person-days in employment. The carpenters in northern and central California were heavily involved in this activity. Carpenters in the four San Francisco Bay Area counties struck for sixty days in the spring, and carpenters covered by the AGC master agreement in the other 42 northern and central California counties also struck around this time. On May 29, the Bay Area strike ended with a settlement providing for a fifteen percent wage increase and the first employer-paid health and welfare plan covering workers in any of the basic construction trades. A week later, the other strike was settled after 32 days, establishing another employer-paid health and welfare plan and bringing wages into line with the Bay Area scale for the first time. In mid-decade, the number of strikes dropped again.

An analysis by the State Department of Industrial Relations showed that most of these strikes in the construction trades, in the period 1946-1955, focused on economic issues. Of the total of 367 disputes, more than 57 percent centered on wages, hours, and fringes. Another 21.5 percent were jurisdictional or sympathy strikes, almost 12 percent concerned union organization (either alone or in conjunction with other issues), and about 9 percent focused on working conditions. All of the major strikes, accounting for the greatest loss in person-days of work, involved economic issues. The carpenters, and other building trades workers, now were trying to catch up with non-construction trades, many of which had struck earlier in the postwar period.⁵

Continuing erosion of the carpenters' economic status led to a major resurgence of strike activity in the early 1950s. In 1952, about 100,000 construction workers were involved in work stoppages in California, resulting in a loss of 2 million person-days of employment.

The Union Changes

In some ways, the postwar carpenters' union in California returned to its prewar patterns. In 1946, Board Member William P. Kelly, of northern California's Third District, reported: "During the war many women worked in some branches of our trade that had never before had women employees. This condition is reverting to prewar status and there are practically no women now working in these branches of our trade."⁶

Despite the Taft-Hartley Act, many jurisdictional problems remained unresolved and some strife persisted. Probably the thorniest issue remaining was the jurisdiction over millwrights, which the UBCJA had disputed with the International Association of Machinists since the early years of the twentieth century. In postwar California, the unions fought over equipment installation at the new Edison electric plant in Redondo Beach. After 1948, the National Joint Board for the Settlement of Jurisdictional Disputes, led by Harvard professor John T. Dunlop, wrestled with this issue. In 1954, just a year before the merger of the AFL and the CIO, a special committee negotiated a compromise agreement which finally settled the question. The settlement defined jurisdictional lines of such complexity that only a highly experienced and knowledgeable craftsman could interpret them accurately.

The feud with the CIO also resumed, but with much less violence and intensity. The carpenters' union successfully repelled some half-hearted forays by the United Mine Workers' catch-all District 50 into the construction field in California, and deplored the organization by the CIO of two large shipyards in Los Angeles. There was some continuing conflict with the IWA in the forest areas, though it was mild compared to the prewar experience.

Strikes were rare. The union, indeed, prided itself upon its typically good relations with employers, and many building contractors were, and are, former members of the carpenters' union. Even high-ranking union officials could switch roles easily: In Santa Clara County, the veteran head of the District Council, M.L. Blanchfield, became a contractor and, subsequently, the president of the builders' association, and earlier, in the mid-1920s, P.H. McCarthy had joined the employer ranks after his retirement from the union. State conventions of the union often featured speeches by representatives of the contractors, who assured the membership that capital and labor have many common goals in the industry.

There were only two major strikes in California during the immediate postwar period: the turbulent Hollywood strike, described in Chapter IX, and a hard-fought dispute with the redwood lumber companies in northern California. The lumber companies locked out strikers, enlisted the active assistance of law enforcement officers, and imported scabs. Early in 1947, after 13 months of violent fighting, the Lumber and Sawmill Workers signed an agreement with Hammond Lumber Company, one of the largest operators. But the strike lasted until April of 1948, when the redwood workers called it off after securing contracts

with all but a few operators. Both the lumber and the Hollywood strikes were costly. The State Council of Carpenters contributed generously to Studio Local #946, but declined corresponding aid to the redwood locals, on the grounds that they were not affiliated with the Council and had not paid dues. The Bay Cities District Council and other UBCJA affiliates, however, provided support, and State Federation president Haggerty worked mightily in behalf of some strikers who had been threatened with imprisonment because of alleged violence.

As the union entered the decade of the 1950s, revolutionary changes were occurring in collective bargaining and union structure. The master agreement, with AGC and other builders' associations in northern and southern California, was now the basic contractual relationship governing wages, hours, benefits, and every other facet of labor relations in the industry. The agreements were becoming lengthy and complex, encompassing complicated pension and health and welfare plans along with the more traditional items. From the early verbal agreements and brief handwritten provisions, union contracts had moved into fields of such complexity that only a battery of lawyers and specialists could negotiate and interpret them. The state and district councils turned increasingly to economic consultants and technicians, who could supply the expertise that the union officials lacked.

More and more, the leaders of the carpenters' union focused on nonwage issues: legislation, political activity, grievances and arbitration, workers' compensation, health and safety matters, pensions, unemployment compensation, and legal questions. The union had to maintain continuous and competent representation in Sacramento and in Washington. Employment for its members depended, in

increasing degree, upon governmental action, even upon federal monetary and fiscal policy. The business cycle resumed its operation, with only a semantic improvement: downturns now are dubbed "recessions," never "depressions," no matter how severe.

Public, or publicly-financed, construction became the most dependable source of employment. The Bacon-Davis Act, at the federal level, and prevailing-wage laws, at the state and local levels, protected union wage standards in public works and all other work performed under government contracts. This legislation came under increasing attack, as employer groups and their political allies sought either its repeal or an administrative redefinition of "prevailing wage." In later decades, the 1970s and the 1980s, the carpenters' union would be constantly involved in campaigns to preserve union conditions in the public sector.

Ironically, the carpenters' union was becoming more industrial and more political, exactly contrary to the precepts initially laid down by "Big Bill" Hutcheson. In many ways, the union was returning to the policies advocated by Peter McGuire, but for wholly nonideological reasons. In order to protect jobs and maintain its jurisdiction, the UBCJA had to move off the construction site and into manufacturing fields, and to enter the political and legislative arenas. The older leaders found this change in direction difficult to accept and to implement. New leaders now were waiting in the wings.

The Leadership Changes

Frank Duffy, the international's venerable general secretary, was the first of the "old guard" to leave; he retired in 1948, after 47 years of service. William L. Hutcheson was next, retiring

from the presidency in December of 1951. Hutcheson's successor was his son, Maurice, who was then the First Vice President of the UBCJA. Maurice Hutcheson had been brought onto the union's General Executive Board in 1938, and had been formally confirmed in that spot by the delegates to the 1940 convention, despite some muffled grumbling.

Maurice was, in many ways, the antithesis of his father, thereby defying the adage "Like Father, Like Son." He was quiet, unaggressive, somewhat shy, primarily an administrator who disliked public speaking and preferred to work as an expeditor and conciliator behind the scenes. By historical coincidence, he fitted the needs of the moment far better than his father could have. He was able to consolidate gains, placate some former enemies, and improve the union's image. After the union's brief departure from and return to the AFL, he brought the United Brotherhood into the merged AFL-CIO in 1955. Inevitably, he could not fully escape from the shadow of his overpowering father, and some "racketeering" charges continued to be directed at the union's top leadership. Appropriately and symbolically, in 1961 the international's headquarters were moved from Indianapolis to Washington, D.C.

Similar changes in leadership were taking place in California. Joseph Cambiano, who had headed the State Council of Carpenters since its founding in 1928, was a strong, conservative leader, very much in the Hutcheson mold. He ran the State Council almost singlehandedly, delegating little authority and trying to control its increasingly complex affairs unilaterally. By the mid-1950s, it was becoming clear to many members and local leaders that some restructuring of the State Council was essential, to assure that its many functions, in relation to political and legislative activity as well as organizing and other more traditional concerns, could be efficiently fulfilled.

The "moment of truth" came at the Council's 1958 convention. Many of the newer leaders sought to reorganize the Council to give more voice to district councils and locals in decisionmaking, to guarantee more effective legislative representation, and to vest more power in a full-time executive officer (other than the president) who would report to an expanded executive committee between conventions. The vice president of the State Council, H.J. Harkleroad, gave some of the reasoning behind the movement for organizational reform:⁶

We are assembled here in Monterey to hold a convention, which incidentally happens to be the 30th, and during the course of its daily meetings transact business that will strengthen the State Council in every way humanly possible by setting policies and making progressive decisions that will promote the interests and welfare of the vast multitude of rank and file members to whom it is responsible and whom it represents.

Thirty years! Three decades! Think of it! When we humans attain such an age we are considered to be mature, not only in stature, but also in habits and thinking. Any properly constructed organization reaching this age is considered to have dignity, tradition and considerable experience behind it and must have originally been built on a fairly stable foundation or it would have collapsed and crumbled at an early age.

We, as members of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, are all well acquainted with the term "foundation" and know that in order to build properly, it is almost a

vital necessity to have a substantial and solid foundation beneath it in order to erect a structure that will endure and weather the storms ahead.

I am firmly convinced that we have such a basic foundation in our State Council, but the super structure we have erected over the years is a little shaky and needs some remodeling in order to develop a militantly progressive and fighting body that will act in every respect with a unified purpose to protect all of the interests, jurisdictions and rights of all of its affiliates and their membership!

Such a statement might to some be alarming and somewhat of a radical departure from the ideas, customs and practices established by this council over the years. However, if you will recall that but a few years back this State Council created and established under Article 9 of our constitution what is known as an executive board, which meets quarterly to discuss labor and jurisdictional problems that have arisen during the three-month intervals between meetings. Lengthy discussions have been held and recommended policies have been adopted, with, I'm sure, the best and fullest intentions of properly executing them, but there has never been an effective method of "following through" to see that these recommendations are acted upon by all in the same manner to produce a unified front. I am fully aware that this would be a tremendous task, but it can be accomplished if we delegates develop the machinery to do such a job during the course of our deliberations here. Coordinated effort should become a watchword!

Harkleroad went on to identify some of the problems, and organizational enemies, which posed a formidable threat to the union unless its structure and leadership could be strengthened. He noted that the state councils of other international unions had recently been restructured, toward the same ends, and that the UBCJA might not be able to protect its jurisdiction unless its own state organization could be made equally strong. He mentioned the pervasive antiunion activity in California, the fact that three district councils and nearly 100 locals were not then affiliated with the State Council, and the need for effective representation in Sacramento in connection with the many legislative issues of concern to the union.

A large group of delegates, representing all parts of the state, introduced and supported resolutions amending the constitution to achieve the reform goals. The key proposals were as follows:

(1) The executive officers of district councils throughout the state, plus representatives of unattached locals, would constitute the new Executive Committee, guaranteeing democratic policymaking.

(2) Between conventions, there would be quarterly meetings of an Advisory Board, composed of full-time business representatives and financial secretaries of all local unions and councils. In this way, all leaders would be involved and informed, and could communicate to the membership on key issues.

(3) The per capita tax of the State Council was boosted, to build a convention fund which could assure that all affiliates, regardless of size, could send delegates to conventions.

(4) Chief administrative authority would be vested in the Executive Secretary-Treasurer, who would be responsible, between conventions, to the Executive Committee.

(5) The Council would henceforth employ a full-time legislative advocate (lobbyist) in Sacramento, along with special representatives to assist locals and district councils.⁷

With the adoption of these major changes in structure and policy, the stage was set for a possible transition in leadership. For the first time, Cambiano was facing a serious challenge. Most of the delegates felt that it was time for fresh direction, with a renewed emphasis on organizing. Cambiano had taken little initiative in the organizing field, with the result that large parts of the industry still remained nonunion. In the election for officers, Chester (Chet) Bartalini, of the Bay Counties District Council, was named new president of the State Council, defeating both Cambiano and E.A. (Al) Brown of the North Coast Counties District Council; Gordon McCullough, of Local #1140 in San Pedro, and Harkleroad, of the Orange County District Council, were elected vice president and secretary-treasurer, respectively. Cambiano had lost much of his former strength with the recent passing of some long-time supporters, particularly, Earl Thomas of the Los Angeles District Council.

With the new leadership and structure also came new policies. A systematic campaign was launched to organize the prefabrication industries, with special emphasis on the trailer and mobile home industry. In Los Angeles, James Skelton, now with the District Council, was among those who were assigned as organizers in that industry; the campaign experienced some successes, but most of the industry remained unorganized.

Anthony L. Ramos, of Local #550 in Oakland (and now the executive secretary-treasurer of the State Council), has identified other critical results of policies adopted at the 1958 convention:⁸

(1) Coordination of pension reciprocity within the state and with other states, later established on a national basis within the Brotherhood.

(2) Coordination of negotiation strategy between the collective bargaining areas, arriving at common expiration dates and more effective collective bargaining.

(3) Development and publishing of a Jurisdictional Handbook.

(4) Widespread development of educational conferences on an area basis, now generally prevalent in the 8th District and throughout the Brotherhood.

(5) Leadership, coordinating with other major unions, in developing strategies to deal with problems in the health and welfare programs of labor in California.

(6) Major concentration on making the Brotherhood in California a power in the political and legislative life of the state.

(7) Advocating and successfully lobbying the state legislature to establish a State Home Finance Agency empowered to provide loans to boost production of badly needed housing.

(8) Leadership to local unions and councils in constructing and owning over \$20,000,000 in nonprofit low and middle income housing.

In the decades of the 1950s and 1960s, carpenters benefited from the accelerating growth of California's population and economy. In the 1950s, more than 1,800,000 new housing units were built in the state, and in the 1960s, another 1,500,000 units were added. Completion of the freeway and other transportation systems, construction of several new campuses of the University of California and the state's burgeoning college and university system under a newly-adopted Master Plan for Higher Education, and federal Housing and Community Development and urban renewal programs helped to maintain building trades employment at high levels.

Population boomed both because of the continuing influx of migrants from other states and because the postwar "baby boom" added many more children. The average age of the population dropped, and many new schools, health centers, child care facilities, and other structures had to be built to accommodate a more youthful population. Fortunately, these new campuses, hospitals and so forth were distributed widely throughout the state, even in relatively unpopulated areas of northern and central California. Jobs for carpenters were available in most districts.

The effects of this population boom were not wholly salutary, from the standpoint of the carpenters' union. Much of the growth was occurring in traditionally antiunion areas, such as Orange and San Diego counties. The union had to mount expensive organizing campaigns in these regions. The historical stronghold of unionism in the state, San Francisco, was proportionately declining in population share and in influence.

Furthermore, many of the younger workers, the products of a comparatively affluent society where memories of the Great Depression and the struggles of the 1930s were fading, were unreceptive to unionization. They tended to take high labor standards for granted, and to opt for a quick income, often in a nonunion work environment, without considering the long-range benefits (pensions, health and welfare coverage, etc.) which union membership could assure. Almost all of them were unaware of the contributions, and sacrifices, of unions in gaining and preserving these enviable standards.

Thus, as the carpenters' union proceeded through the middle decades of the twentieth century, it faced both opportunities and challenges. It had survived, as one of the most influential labor organizations in the country, but dangers lurked down the road. The new leadership, at federal and state levels alike, was to be sorely tried and tested in the next volatile decades.

Chapter XI

The Carpenters' Union Today

A reincarnated William L. Hutcheson would recognize very little in the contemporary carpenters' union. By 1970, the leadership, and the union generally, had abandoned the Republican Party and moved into a closer relationship with the Democrats. The modern carpenters are heavily involved in political and legislative activity, usually favorable to social legislation (Maurice Hutcheson chaired the AFL-CIO's committee on social security and fought for Medicare legislation, while his father had opposed health insurance and virtually all other governmental measures), and relatively peaceful jurisdictionally. By one estimate, about 40 percent of the union's members now are in industrial fields.

The union's changed stance is a pragmatic response to new conditions. With rapidly advancing technology and the outlawing of its traditional jurisdictional defenses, the United Brotherhood has had to switch much of its organizing focus to the industrial areas. Construction employment is linked, directly and indirectly, with public policy, making political action a necessity. Much of the welfare and security of the membership depends on legislation, from workers' compensation to social security. A more hostile public opinion and growth of a more sophisticated open-shop movement have encouraged greater labor unity. No longer does the carpenters' union pursue a "go it alone" policy. To the contrary, it cooperates closely with other unions, both within the Building and Construction Trades Department and within the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO.

The period of the 1960s and 1970s was one of transition for the union. The Hutcheson era came to an end, and the new leaders, though capable, were comparatively anonymous. Throughout organized labor, the widely known, sometimes flamboyant, highly individualistic, and powerful union leader--"Big Bill" Hutcheson, John L. Lewis, Walter Reuther, and Jimmy Hoffa had been the prototypes--was being replaced by a quieter and more administrative type of leader. Few of the new leaders could be readily recognized by an average American.

The nature of construction also was changing. The younger population favored apartment and other multiple-unit housing, in preference to the single-family home which had been preferred by previous older populations. Mobile homes continued to rise in popularity, and prefabricated modular housing was gaining strength in the construction market. For the first time, the UBCJA and other building trades unions negotiated contracts with module manufacturers. In the 1960s, higher proportions of contract construction were in commercial and industrial fields.¹

The economic environment varied widely between the 1960s and the 1970s. The liberal, Keynesian-oriented fiscal and monetary policies pursued by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, joined with the new housing and community development programs of that era, stimulated construction employment. By the end of the 1960s, total U.S. unemployment had declined to 3.5 percent, virtually a "full employment" rate. Overall, the inflation record, averaging only 2.5 percent price rise annually for the decade, was enviable, but there were disturbing signs later in the decade as the Vietnam war heated up. The more restrictive policies of the Nixon, Ford, and, to a

large extent, Carter administrations proved disastrous for the building industry, with rising interest rates and housing price inflation choking off much of the market demand in both the residential and commercial sectors. Price inflation combined with persistently high unemployment to make the 1970s and early 1980s a particularly difficult period economically, the worst since the pre-World War II era.

The economic status of carpenters precisely reflected the overall national experience. Over the 1960s, real wages of union carpenters rose by about 30 percent. In the 1970s and early 1980s, lagging employment and continuing high prices created severe distress among building craft workers, and by the summer of 1980, the official unemployment rate among carpenters had risen to 18.2 percent.² Much of the industry was now in shambles, weakened by high interest rates and "tight money," retrenchment in public construction and capital spending generally, record housing prices, and recessions.

Turnover in union membership, always high in recent decades, has been further aggravated by the onerous economic conditions. In 1973, the union reported a total of membership of 849,829, the second highest in history (the highest was in 1956, when the figure was 852,038). In 1980, membership had dropped to 762,163, the lowest figure since the early 1960s and approximately the same total as in 1950. In the 1950s and 1960s, the union experienced high rates of membership suspensions and resignations, but these were roughly balanced by inflows of new members. In the depressed 1970s and early 1980s, suspensions and resignations rose and new memberships dropped sharply. Many locals, it was reported, feared more competition for the limited supply of jobs.³

The usual difficulties generated by economic downturns and changing technologies have been recently compounded by the presence of an active and clever open-shop campaign in the construction industry. The crude tactics of earlier campaigns, as exemplified by the M & M and Industrial Association drives in California, have been supplanted by highly sophisticated strategies developed by management consultants. Imaginatively orchestrated campaigns, staying within the limits of the National Labor Relations Act, instruct employers in the psychology and economics of union-busting, and cleverly manipulate both the hopes and fears of employees. A nonunion builders' association, Associated Builders and Contractors, has gained strength, with its largest single chapter located in Los Angeles. In mid-1979, even the Associated General Contractors, formerly a largely union-shop organization, had about a forty percent nonunion membership nationally.⁴

These cascading problems offered a challenge to the new leaders of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. In 1972, California's William Sidell succeeded Maurice Hutcheson in the international presidency, becoming the union's first chief executive from the west coast. Born in Chicago, the son of a cabinetmaker, Sidell soon moved to Los Angeles with his family. After finishing school, he apprenticed in Local #721, and rose through the ranks, over time, to become president of the 4,500-member local. In 1957, he was named secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles County District Council of Carpenters, the largest council in the nation. In 1958, he played a leading role in reorganization of the State Council.

In 1962, Sidell had moved onto the union's General Executive Board, defeating 78-year-old Joe Cambiano as representative of the 8th District. The western caucus had selected Sidell as its candidate for the Board, but Maurice Hutcheson made it clear that, should Cambiano decide to run again, the officers would feel committed to support him. Hutcheson forgave Sidell for his successful challenge, and, two years later, appointed the west coast leader Second General Vice President of the international union.

As the new President, Sidell brought with him some positive ideas about organizational needs. He favored a greater centralization of authority in the national office, in order to achieve more coordination of policy and, in some fields, uniformity of agreements. Sidell was especially concerned about jurisdictional strife, anxious that nothing should disturb or alienate otherwise friendly contractors. Under his leadership, such disturbances were reduced to a minimum. In 1973, a mutual assistance pact was reached with the International Woodworkers of America, under which the two unions agreed not to compete destructively against each other in organizing non-union firms. Although subsequent merger plans fell through, the pact remained in effect and strife vanished.

As in California, more effective organizing now became a national priority. Sidell, and other leaders, understood the necessity of extending organization farther into the industrial field, and a new industrial component was established within the union to assist locals and district councils. The new leadership also set up a Coordinated Housing Organizing Program, to organize the still-resistant housing industry, and Voluntary Organizing Committees, designed to expedite the organizing of about 1.5 million nonunion industrial workers who were within the Brotherhood's jurisdiction.

Under Sidell's leadership, the existing trend toward national agreements accelerated. A special need was to establish area-wide, multiple-employer pension plans; single-employer plans afford the workers little protection. With the growing importance of pension and health and welfare plans in collective bargaining, both cost and service considerations mandate maximum uniformity in coverage and benefits.

The net impact of these shifts in policy has been to restrict local autonomy in negotiations, characteristic of the carpenters' union in the past. However upsetting this trend may be to local officials, it reflects the realities of bargaining and policymaking in an increasingly complex economy. Even with this partial circumscribing of local authority, the United Brotherhood still remains more decentralized than many of the industrial unions, which are highly centralized in administration.

Sidell's reign as General President was relatively short. He retired in 1980, to be succeeded by First General Vice President William Konyha. An Ohio product, Konyha first worked in construction with his father, a home builder, at the age of 14, and later joined Cleveland Local #1180. He served in the Seabees during World War II, subsequently became president of Local #1180, and then a General Representative in 1952. He joined the General Executive Board in 1970.

Another event in 1980 symbolized the fundamentally changed role of the carpenters' union. In that year, the union joined the Industrial Union Department (IUD) of the AFL-CIO, paying per capita tax on 200,000 members. The irony would not have been lost on either "Big Bill" Hutcheson or John L. Lewis.

California Carpenters In The 1970s And 1980s

In the 1970s and early 1980s, the carpenters' union in California faced many new adjustments. Historically, localism and independence had characterized the union's bargaining structure. Even with the advent of the master agreement, four separate construction contracts covered the state: In southern California, the 11-counties and the San Diego agreements, and in northern California, the four-counties (later, five counties) Bay Area and the 42-counties (later, 41 counties) agreements. Of course, there were many other area agreements: mill-cabinet, lumber and sawmill, industrial, drywall, and others. Within the state, as in the nation as a whole, there was a movement, at least at the state leadership level, to achieve greater uniformity and less diversity.

There were many reasons for this movement. Carpenters, by necessity, are mobile, moving from one area to another in pursuit of work. The growth of pension and health and welfare plans made uniformity of benefits and financing even more essential. "Portability" of pension and other benefits was a much-discussed issue in this period: Unless "vesting" could be accomplished, workers could lose some or all of their benefits when they transferred to other employers and other jurisdictions. Wider and more comprehensive agreements were of benefit to unionized employers as well as workers, and the revived open-shop campaign in California underlined the need for maximum unity in organizing and bargaining. Needless to say, the drive for uniformity was not unopposed within the union. Several local leaders were accustomed to negotiating separate agreements, and, in some cases, they sought to maintain "historical differentials."

The first issue, and a hot one, was the possible unification of the master construction agreements in northern and central California. The San Francisco Bay Area had long been separatist, and many union members apparently blamed State Council president Bartalini for it (Bartalini also headed the Bay Counties District Council). In 1968, Bartalini declined renomination for the state presidency, claiming that he was being unfairly condemned on this issue and that he wanted to avoid a "bloodbath" in that year's election. In a lengthy defense, he asserted that he personally had favored consolidation of bargaining and agreements within the state, but that he had been overruled by the business representatives and other San Francisco leaders, such as Joe O'Sullivan, who still demanded local control. He was simply their servant, he said. In 1971, after a 17-day strike-lockout, a master agreement finally was negotiated with the Associated General Contractors which covered all 46 northern and central counties.

The next logical step was a statewide agreement. At the 1974 state convention, executive secretary-treasurer Ramos set forth, in the strongest possible terms, the case for statewide bargaining:⁵

While, in the short run, there may be instances where an individual, or a local or district council, can make a better deal than it would as part of a larger group, in the long run the interest of all affiliates is best served when all are combined together on the largest possible scale in dealing with the employers.

In a trade such as ours, it is quite common for Brotherhood members to shift employment from one area to another. The best interests of the membership are served when a carpenter knows

that wherever he works the union contract guarantees him the same wages and working conditions for the same work. That is why, in convention after convention, our delegates have always, and with unanimity seldom seen on any issue, called for the State Council to take leadership in moving toward the goal of a statewide agreement.

With technological changes taking place, new methods and new products, it is obvious that much of the work formerly done by carpenters on the job, at construction wages, has been moved off site, often to areas where the union is weak or nonexistent, at lower wages.

The problem created by this can be alleviated and hopefully solved through a statewide agreement.

The time has long since passed when we can afford the disease of localitis which adopts the attitude, "We've got ours made in our geographical jurisdiction--it's up to the rest of you to take care of yourself."

That point of view is directly, and diametrically, opposed to the true spirit of unionism which is expressed in our Brotherhood Constitution--"a wrong done to one is a wrong done to all."

If pursued to its logical conclusion, isolationism can only lead to the destruction of our union because, after having destroyed the weak areas, the employers are in a much better position to undermine and destroy the strong areas.

Only through unity do we have strength.

The task of unification was difficult. In 1976, Ramos reported to the delegates that a statewide agreement was not yet a reality, but that greater uniformity in provisions among the existing agreements had been attained. Beyond the factors which already militated in favor of greater intraunion and interunion collaboration, the growing open-shop movement among employers now threatened labor standards and unionism to an even greater degree. The nonunion builders' association, Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), has become highly active in California, but perhaps a more critical danger to the union has been emergence of a strong open-shop element within the previously union-shop AGC. The AGC admits nonunion contractors, and follows what is called a "double-breasted" policy: Member contractors can be union-shop in one area and trade, nonunion in another. Many employers solicit the aid of consultants, some of them academicians, who are skilled in the development of antiunion strategies.

Renewal of the open-shop campaign, in a highly sophisticated form, was having a visible impact. At the 1976 state convention, the director of the Western States Organizing Office, Peter Hager, reported to the delegates that the union was winning less than half of all NLRB representation elections, and at the same convention, W.B. Bryant, the representative of the 8th District on the international's General Executive Board, remarked that in the light of the ongoing rate of membership losses, it was necessary to bring in new members at the rate of ten percent of existing membership every month just to stay even.⁶

In response, the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department launched, in March 1978, a pilot coordinated organizing drive in Greater Los Angeles. The initial results were encouraging: In

late 1978, the Department's president, Robert A. Georgine, claimed that more than 10,000 new union members had been recruited in that area.⁷ However, success of the campaign admittedly depended, in large part, upon continued strength in construction. The industry had been in reasonably good shape in 1978, but the subsequent slump inevitably hindered organizing drives.

This experience illustrates the interdependence of general economic and local union policy. Because of this, the union's political involvement has become total. In the 1970s and 1980s, union leaders, in convention after convention, have castigated the restrictive economic programs of the Nixon, Ford and Reagan administrations, asserting that industrial progress could not be sustained unless conservative fiscal and monetary policies could be reversed. So complete was the California union's commitment to economic liberalism that, in 1972, the State Executive Council defied the "neutrality" stand of the AFL-CIO's national Executive Board and unanimously endorsed Democratic Senator George McGovern for President. The ghost of William Hutcheson had been exorcised totally.

Beyond their generalized effect on prosperity in construction, the "domestic austerity" measures of the Nixon and Ford administrations adversely affected the union in more specific ways. In 1967-68, the San Diego Building and Construction Trades Council had pioneered in sponsorship of federally-subsidized low-to-moderate-income housing under Section 221 of the national housing legislation. The 1968 convention authorized the State Council to assist affiliates in establishing nonprofit entities eligible to sponsor and own similar projects. As a result, residential units were built throughout the state, from Pomona to Santa Rosa. The program, according to the 1972 convention proceedings, "had three basic objectives:"⁸

(1) To participate in the federal government's program of providing badly needed housing for low and middle income families;

(2) to create employment for carpenters;

(3) to strengthen the position of our affiliates in the communities where our members live and work.

This program provided the union with a rare opportunity to combine broad social goals and narrower economic interests in one package. In 1974, however, Nixon suspended funding for housing programs, closing off financing for about 60,000 units already in the works for California. These HUD-supported programs, the union reported, amounted to about twenty-five percent of all residential construction in the state. The new action effectively curtailed further union sponsorship.

The union, of course, had a direct and substantial interest in other governmental matters. Environmental issues agitated the membership, who expressed frequent concern that the "extreme" environmentalists would choke off much of the available employment for building craft workers. While denying any lack of commitment to environmental improvement and conservation of resources, the union formally deplored what it considered an excessive concentration on "no growth" or "slow growth." Specifically, the delegates opposed some of the proposed expansion of protected redwood areas and local "no growth" ordinances. Some of this environmental movement, it was suggested, represents an "elitist" attitude of wealthier citizens who seek to preserve their own scenic views, recreational preserves, and segregated suburban neighborhoods, at the expense of jobs for workers. The debate over this knotty issue continues to this day.

An equally complex issue arose in connection with imports of nonunion products from out of state or out of country. Lumber and sawmill workers, in particular, worried about the increasing inflow of wood products from Japan, and called for some protection. The union generally was upset by the use of nonunion fixtures, furniture, and other goods in public construction, specifically in school buildings. Much of this material, the union demonstrated, came from low-wage plants in the south, where, allegedly, workers were exploited and discrimination was practiced. The delegates endorsed new legislation to require that preference in governmental purchasing of supplies and equipment be given to firms located in California.

Another problem area, a uniquely complicated one, related to the costs and quality of health care for members. Billions of dollars now are allocated to health and welfare trust funds, co-administered by unions and management, which must underwrite the provision of medical and other care. Soaring costs in this field have become of immediate concern to the union. One response, in the 1960s, was creation of the Council for Health Plan Alternatives, a body jointly composed of union representatives, technical specialists, and academicians. Major purpose of the Council was to research and implement alternative ways of providing high-quality health care under the negotiated plans.

The ever-growing complexity of the issues discussed at the bargaining table persuaded some union leaders to seek a stronger and more productive relationship with the academic community. The Council for Health Plan Alternatives was one partial example of a mutual effort among unionists, technicians, and academicians. A more direct and longer-term relationship had already been established with the University of California, through the Institutes of

Industrial Relations on the Los Angeles and Berkeley campuses. As early as 1963, following establishment of a new Center for Labor Research and Education on each campus, Bartalini had called for a closer, mutually beneficial association between the labor movement and the university:⁹

We should be prepared to go outside for help. There has been a great deal of discussion in recent months about the labor education program conducted by the University of California. It is true that the University has invested little in the way of money in labor education, but it is also true that the labor movement has never made any serious demand on the University for more. It happens to be true that what the University has offered in the way of labor education, while limited in volume, has been experimental in nature, attuned to the future needs of the labor movement, and high in quality; it is also true that many of our Brothers in the movement have no interest in--and sometimes a considerable fear of--education programs which present a challenge to our minds and imaginations.

Fear is the worst of advisers. If there are risks in educating our successors, there are even greater risks in stagnation. If education is expensive, the costs of failure as a movement will be very much higher. If our business as union representatives is advocacy, it must increasingly be advocacy based on the best of information and training that is available.

We have a great opportunity now in California to break new ground. It is clear that the University, as a result of our representations,

is prepared to cooperate with us in developing a labor education program of high quality and great range, adjusted to our needs, committed to the development of a leadership prepared to work, not only for self-improvement, not only in the service of the membership, not only for the interests of the United States, but for the betterment of all our fellow men. The interest is there, there is money available. What is lacking more than anything else is the determination of the labor movement to decide exactly what it wants, to demand the appropriate services, and to use intelligently and consistently what it gets.

The State Council later followed up with creation of a revitalized Department of Research and Education, designed to provide the information and expertise needed in the increasingly technical processes of negotiation and decisionmaking. In the early 1970s, this department cooperated with staff of the Center for Labor Research and Education, at the University of California at Berkeley, in an extensive study of productivity in the construction industry. As a result of studies of this nature, the union has been able to demonstrate, statistically, that job-site labor costs are an insignificant factor in explaining the high overall cost of housing and other construction. Of much greater relevance are capital costs, so profoundly affected by monetary and financial policy. The accelerating emphasis on research again reflects the pervasiveness of exogenous forces --technical, legal, legislative, economic, and social--which influence the decisions made in union councils.

Table 6

Geographical Distribution in the Membership
of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters,
United States, December 31, 1977

(Percent of Total)

| <u>State</u> | <u>Beneficial</u> | <u>Semi-beneficial</u> |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| California | 19.4 | 25.2 |
| Illinois | 8.5 | (a) |
| New York | 7.5 | 10.0 |
| Ohio | 4.7 | (a) |
| Washington | 4.7 | 6.1 |
| Pennsylvania | 4.3 | 2.7 |
| Oregon | 3.8 | 7.1 |
| Michigan | 3.8 | 2.3 |
| Texas | 3.3 | 3.7 |
| Other | <u>40.0</u> | <u>42.9</u> |
| TOTAL | 100.0 | 100.0 |

(a)-Less than one percent.

Source: United Brotherhood of Carpenters,
Proceedings, Thirty-Third General Convention, 1978,
p. 242, cited in Galenson, Book #5.

Affirmative Action, Apprenticeship, And Training

An "external" factor of much significance for the labor movement, especially over the past two decades, has been the burgeoning civil rights movement. In 1964, Section VII of the federal Civil Rights Act firmly and finally established the principle of nondiscrimination in the labor market, covering unions, employers, and government alike. Unions, and all programs administered by unions either unilaterally or in collaboration with employers, were mandated to admit and treat all workers without discrimination based on race, color, creed, or national origin. Many states, including California, already had "fair employment practices" statutes on the books, applying to intrastate commerce.

The building trades long had been a highly visible target for civil rights organizations. Racial discrimination was rampant, buttressed by an intricate system of rules, rituals, tests and examinations, committees, and job assignments governing employment, training, and union admission. Few unions or employers blatantly discriminated through constitutional "color bars" and so forth, but the results were essentially the same. Several of the skilled craft unions were literally "lily white" in composition, and, of course, they were all-male.

The carpenters' union does not fall in the latter category. As we have seen, blacks were invited into membership at an early stage in its development, unlike most of the craft unions which followed it. Almost all of its black members, however, were in segregated locals, prior to the mid-1960s. After much discussion, the national leaders decided, in 1963, to order the elimination of such segregation and merger of the affected locals.

Old practices and habits die hard. There was in some areas an expressed reluctance to comply, among white and black members alike. In later years, then-president Sidell had to visit several cities and persuade locals to merge. Ultimately, the leadership prevailed, and segregated locals no longer exist.¹⁰

In principle, the UBCJA did not object to the provisions of the Civil Rights Act. The union, along with the AFL-CIO generally, had endorsed the bill and lobbied for its passage. Its national leaders pointed to the union's record and denied that blacks and other minorities were treated differently from white applicants and members. In truth, the union did not suffer by comparison with nearly all other skilled building trades unions. Due largely to McGuire's founding principles and other historical circumstances, the carpenters' union appeared in a relatively favorable light in an otherwise bleak landscape. Scores of cases were brought against building trades unions, both by government and by private civil rights groups, but only a few singled out the Brotherhood.

It should not be inferred that all was well. The actual proportion of blacks in total membership was tiny, and a variety of factors, though not directly discriminatory on the surface, impeded progress. For decades, admission both to apprenticeship and journeymen status had been influenced, often determined, by subjective or selfish considerations. New memberships, except in rare periods of extreme prosperity and labor shortage, were restricted in terms of a perceived need to protect work opportunities for existing members, all or most of whom were white. Sons or other relatives of members were given preference in admission to apprenticeship training. Present members, in any case, often prefer to work

and socialize with others of their own racial and cultural backgrounds. Through preadmission examination committees and other means, such preferences are easily, though perhaps subtly, translated into policy.

In California, as elsewhere, leaders and members supported the legislation's antidiscrimination provisions, but expressed deep and strongly-felt reservations about "affirmative action." As mandated by executive orders and administrative regulations issued pursuant to the Act, covered organizations are expected to seek out minority and female applicants, particularly where there is evidence of past discrimination in the trade or industry. Some "affirmative action" plans in the building trades, such as the so-called "Philadelphia Plan" and subsequent "hometown" plans, established quotas or specific goals for minority and female hiring. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, national and California leaders of the carpenters' union vigorously condemned quotas and deplored any external interference with apprenticeship selection procedures.¹¹

Apprenticeship was, and is, an especially sore point, both for union and for civil rights leaders. As pointed out before, apprenticeship traditionally has been the means by which craft skills are transmitted from one generation to another. Not all trades have apprenticeship programs, and several in California have closed the books. Thanks again to McGuire, and other past and present leaders of the union, the Brotherhood has consistently spearheaded the movement for expanded and strengthened apprenticeships. Both nationally and in California, by far the highest share of apprentices belong to the carpenters' union.

Table 7

Percentage of Blacks
Selected Occupations
California 1940 to 1970

| <u>Trade</u> | <u>1940</u> | <u>1950</u> | <u>1960</u> | <u>1970</u> Black Spanish | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------------|------|
| Craftsmen, Total | .51 | 2.1 | 4.3 | 4.6 | 14.5 |
| Carpenters | .34 | 1.9 | 3.9 | 3.8 | 14.0 |
| Electricians | .18 | 1.0 | 3.2 | 3.6 | 10.9 |
| Painters | .66 | 2.7 | 5.5 | 6.8 | 16.2 |
| Plasterers & Cement Finishers | 2.5 | 9.7 | 13.3 | 15.9 | 31.8 |
| Plumbers | .34 | 1.5 | 2.9 | 3.5 | 12.6 |
| Cabinetmakers | .29 | 1.0 | 2.9 | 2.2 | 23.3 |
| Construction Laborers | 3.4 | 18.2 | 20.0 | 14.4 | 31.2 |

Source: U.S. census. Figures for the Spanish surname population are available only in the 1970 census.

In 1960, only a small proportion of apprentices were black, hispanic, or female. The Brotherhood, along with other craft unions, thereafter was pressured to expand the absolute and proportionate numbers of minority (and, later, female) apprentices. After passage of the Civil Rights Act, special "apprenticeship outreach" programs were developed to offer orientation, counseling, and short-term instruction to minority youth, designed to prepare them for apprenticeship admission tests. In Greater Los Angeles, outreach programs were administered by the Urban League and the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation, in cooperation with the Building and Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO. The programs had some effect, varying according to trade, but the Reagan administration abolished them in 1981.

Apprenticeship programs in California are subject to special state-enacted guidelines, which remain in effect. The so-called "California Plan" promulgates goals for all apprenticeable trades, based on Census data. Figures for minorities and women are not published by separate trades, but it appears that significantly more progress has been made in relation to minority apprenticeships than in relation to female. The goals established for women are high, both in relation to existing percentages of participation and, more importantly, to the pool of female applicants. Nevertheless, some programs do enroll small but slowly growing proportions of women.

Reliable data for journeymen (in more appropriate parlance, journeypersons) are not published by trade, but figures developed for "referral unions" (those referring members to jobs through a hiring-hall procedure) in Los Angeles County, in 1979, demonstrate that the carpenters' union no longer can be described as "lily white." Slightly over one-third of its male membership in the county is minority. Female representation still is minuscule: Only 58 out of 21,346 referral-union members are women.

Table 8

Male Membership, By Race
Referral UBCJA Locals
L.A. County, 1979

| <u>Race</u> | <u>Number</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| White (Anglo) | 13,615 | 64.0% |
| Black | 1,991 | 9.3 |
| Hispanic | 5,438 | 25.5 |
| Asian or Pacific | | |
| Island | 170 | .9 |
| American Indian or | | |
| Alaskan Native | <u>74</u> | .3 |
| TOTAL | 21,288 | |

Feelings expressed by union representatives in relation to affirmative action have been readily transferred to similar areas of public policy. In 1962, the Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA) injected the federal government heavily into vocational skills training, and in late 1973, the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) brought together federally-supported training and employment programs in a single package, administered by state and local governments throughout the nation. Carpenters' union leaders joined other craft representatives in warning against subsidized short-term training which potentially invaded their jurisdictions and trained disadvantaged persons for nonunion or sub-standard work. Some were concerned that subsidized workers or trainees, particularly in youth categories, might perform work which otherwise would belong to building craftsmen.

In Greater Los Angeles, the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Council administered an on-the-job training program in the late 1970s, under CETA. The program overcame initial administrative difficulties and achieved a reasonable degree of program success, but declining construction activity eventually killed it. A more recent landmark program is being administered by the carpenters' union, under diverse funding arrangements with the City and County of Los Angeles and the State of California. Abandoned by its initially proposed administrator, the Building and Construction Trades Council, the innovative pre-apprenticeship work-experience program was salvaged by the UBCJA in 1981 and linked with its own Apprenticeship Training Center. Using journeyman union members as trainers and supervisors, the program hires disadvantaged minority youth to rehabilitate and rebuild houses relocated as a result of freeway construction in south Los Angeles. The Century Freeway project then places successful program completers in jobs paying not less than \$4.20 an hour. The carpenters' union administers instruction in plumbing, painting, roofing, electrical and other trades in addition to carpentry, but refers trainees to the appropriate trade apprenticeship committees wherever they exist.

The carpenters' union project is considered to be close to ideal among current CETA-funded programs, since it encompasses direct linkages to apprenticeships or other jobs and therefore involves the private business sector. As before, however, the ultimate success of the program depends upon a resurgence of activity in the construction trades. Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of this program, from our viewpoint, is that the UBCJA is virtually the only individual craft union which has the resources and capabilities to administer it, primarily because the union maintains a still-vigorous and open system of apprenticeship.

The Carpenters' Union In 1982

The contemporary carpenters' union is astoundingly diverse in jurisdiction and membership. The historical image of the carpenter--a skilled wood craftsman, with compass, hammer, and nails--no longer applies, although some of the union members still fit this description. The union label now is attached to bowling alleys, musical instruments, spaceships, caskets, metal trim, wood and metal lathe, boats, plastics, aluminum doors, lumber, artificial turf for football fields, and countless other items.

Included within its jurisdiction are millwrights; piledrivers, dock and bridge builders; workers and technicians in space technology; lumber and sawmill workers; shipwrights and boatbuilders; cabinetmakers; furniture and other woodworkers; acoustical tile and drywall installers; and many others. In 1979, a long-delayed jurisdictional agreement brought the Wood, Wire and Metal Lathers International Union into the United Brotherhood, adding another 11,000 members to its rolls.

The benefits enjoyed by members have multiplied over the decades. The first union carpenters, in the 1880s, primarily sought only a shorter work day, in a six-day week; there were variable wages, no fringe benefits, no job security, no grievance procedures, no health and safety protections, no social insurance, and no guaranteed vacations and holidays. The first master construction agreement in California, in 1941, represented a major advance in standards of craft employment, but its provisions were relatively simple. It established wages, shift and overtime schedules, and a uniform 40-hour week for 21 unions, provided for arbitration of disputes, and granted recognition and union-shop conditions to the signatory unions. From a journeyman carpenter wage rate of \$1.17 1/2 an hour in 1942, the wage level has risen to \$16.29 an hour in 1982. (See Table 9)

Table 9

SUMMARY OF JOURNEYMAN CARPENTER PAY RATES

| EFFECTIVE DATES | WAGE RATE PER HOUR | FRINGE BENEFITS PER HOUR WORKED | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|---------|---------------------|------------------------|
| | | Health & Welfare | Pension | Vacation Savings | Apprentice Training |
| 1920 | \$ 1.00 | | | | |
| 1929 | 1.00 | | | | |
| 1933-1941 | 1.10 | | | | |
| 1/1/42 | 1.17 $\frac{1}{2}$ | | | | |
| 5/1/42 | 1.35 | | | | |
| 10/1/45 | 1.50 | | | | |
| 7/1/46 | 1.65 | | | | |
| 5/1/47 | 1.90 | | | | |
| 5/1/48 | 2.03-3/4 | | | | |
| 7/1/49 | 2.12 | | | | |
| 7/10/50 | 2.32 $\frac{1}{2}$ | | | | |
| 12/11/50 | 2.35 | | | | |
| 7/14/52 | 2.57 | | | | |
| 6/15/53 | 2.70 | | | | |
| 8/1/54 | 2.77 $\frac{1}{2}$ | | | | |
| 9/1/54 | 2.77 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 5¢ | | | |
| 6/1/55 | 2.77 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 10¢ | | | |
| 6/15/55 | 2.86 | | | | |
| 9/15/55 | 2.90 | | | | |
| 5/1/56 | 3.00 | | | | |
| 6/15/57 | 3.22 $\frac{1}{2}$ | | | | $\frac{1}{4}$ ¢ |
| 5/1/58 | 3.37 $\frac{1}{2}$ | | | | |
| 1/1/59 | 3.37 $\frac{1}{2}$ | | 10¢ | | |
| 6/15/59 | 3.60 | | | | |
| 5/1/60 | 3.82 $\frac{1}{2}$ | | | | |
| 6/15/61 | 4.00 | | | | |
| 3/1/62 | 4.00 | | | 10¢ | |
| 7/1/62 | 4.10 | | | | |
| 8/1/62 | 4.10 | | | 15¢ | |
| 1/1/63 | 4.10 | 18¢ | | | |
| 6/1/63 | 4.30 | | | | |
| 6/1/64 | 4.45 | | 15¢ | | |
| 6/1/65 | 4.64 | | 25¢ | | |
| 5/1/66 | 4.83 | 23¢ | 30¢ | | |
| 5/1/67 | 5.09 | 26¢ | | | |
| 6/15/68 | 5.33 | | | | 1¢ |
| 9/1/68 | 5.33 | 36¢ | 45¢ | 25¢ | |
| 5/1/69 | 5.68 | 41¢ | 55¢ | 35¢ | |
| 5/1/70 | 5.98 | 51¢ | 65¢ | 45¢ | |
| 5/1/71 | 6.33 | 61¢ | 75¢ | 50¢ | |
| 5/1/72 | 6.75 | 69¢ | 85¢ | 60¢ | |
| 5/1/73 | 7.05 | 74¢ | 95¢ | 70¢ | |
| 5/1/74 | 7.35 | | | | |
| 7/1/74 | 8.35 | 82¢ | 1.15 | 70¢ | 3¢ |
| 4/1/75 | 8.53 | 87¢ | 1.30 | 75¢ | 5¢ |
| 6/15/75 | 8.83 | 92¢ | 1.45 | 75¢ | 5¢ |
| 9/1/75 | 9.07 | 1.02 | 1.55 | 80¢ | 6¢ |
| 6/15/76 | 9.54 | 1.30 | 1.80 | 80¢ | 6¢ |
| 7/1/77 | 10.05 | 1.49 | 1.95 | 1.00 | 6¢ |
| 7/1/78 | 10.77 | 1.59 | 2.07 | 1.00 | 7¢ |
| 7/1/79 | 11.57 | 1.63 | 2.16 | 1.00 | 9¢ |
| 7/1/80 | 13.67 | 1.63 | 2.21 | 1.00 | 10¢ |
| 10/1/80 | 13.81 | 1.63 | 2.21 | 1.00 | 10¢ |
| 7/1/81 | 14.94 | 1.63 | 2.63 | 1.50 | 10¢ |
| 7/1/82 | 16.29 | 1.75 | 2.63 | 2.00 | 15¢ |

Even more remarkable has been the expansion of nonwage benefits. The 1980-83 master contract for eleven southern California counties stipulates contributions by employers, amounting in 1982 to \$1.75 per hour to the industry's health and welfare fund, \$2.63 per hour to the pension fund, \$2.00 per hour to the vacation savings fund, and 15¢ per hour toward the expenses of apprenticeship training. Other provisions cover detailed grievance procedures and protection of employee rights, job safety, parking and drinking water for workers, holidays, meal periods, shifts, subcontracting, and both regular and special working rules. Union contracts, in and out of the construction industry, assure "due process" on the job for all covered employees.

Few of these benefits are fully available to nonunion workers in the industry. Nor do such workers enjoy the procedural guarantees defined in union contracts. They receive an income and standard fringe benefits, subject to the considerable vicissitudes and uncertainties of the trade and the economy. Most of these now-standard provisions are the result of past union campaigns.

The present-day union contract is a complex instrument, reflecting the ever-changing needs of both workers and employers in a modern economy. The approximately 100,000 craft workers in California, covered by carpenters' union agreements, are the beneficiaries of a long and sometimes turbulent history. The union and its members face even greater challenges ahead, but the labor movement has survived decades of tribulation and strife. It has shown a capacity for adjustment and innovation, an indispensable precondition for institutional survival in the twentieth century.

Chapter XII

A Summation

In a sense, the carpenters' union has been the child of a marriage of contradictions. This preeminently craft-conscious "business union" was founded by a socialist who fervently believed in political action and the unity of the working class. It became highly centralized in jurisdictional matters, and highly decentralized in negotiations. From the Hutcheson era characterized by an uncompromising antigovernment posture, enunciated by a steadfast Republican in a labor movement dominated by Democrats, the union evolved into a politically active organization which is heavily dependent on governmental policy and rather closely linked with the Democratic party. Initially attached to the American Federation of Labor because of a mutual adherence to the concept of craft organization and jurisdiction, the union gradually abandoned the purity of its craft in order to preserve its jurisdiction.

The union did not concede easily in the long struggle to defend its skilled craft. The early carpenters took pride in their role as the "aristocrats of labor," a phrase which connoted less their affluence than the quality and breadth of their skill. The union had much in common with the medieval guild, which existed primarily to protect the standards of the trade and, through apprenticeships, transmit skills to a new generation. The carpenters' own apprenticeship system, more advanced than in any other craft, symbolized their commitment to standards of excellence and their determination to prevent the erosion and disappearance of those skills. Like the professional and academic "guilds" of the modern era,

craft organization also served the economic self-interest of members, who benefit from the exclusivity created by self-enforcement of standards of admission to the trade.

The carpenters possessed, in extraordinary degree, what Thorstein Veblen described as the "instinct for workmanship." Their sense and pride of craftsmanship were heightened by the nature of the product they created. With only their acquired skills and some basic tools, they built, from foundation to roof, the structures which housed civilization--the families for whom the home was an investment extending across the generations, the commerce and industry and agriculture which produced the goods and services essential to survival and growth, and the government which laid down and enforced the rules under which society must function. Theirs were the indispensable skills.

Their craftsmanship, in the later nineteenth century, was increasingly threatened by the nature of the "pecuniary culture," again in Veblen's words, in which the skills were exercised. The evolving economy of capital concentration and mass production valued quantity above quality, giving priority to the highest possible output of standardized and interchangeable goods. The neoclassical economists, academic rationalizers of the emerging society, made "productivity" the goal and measurement of human progress, but productivity is more readily measured in quantitative than in qualitative terms. Assumptions of "perfect knowledge" among consumers and a resulting "homogeneity" of market products were formal theoretical devices to justify the competitive models which became an "ideal" equilibrium. None of this conformed with the preservation of individual craft skills, which then became, in some sense, "uneconomic." In the carpentry trades, the new profit-oriented economic forces were represented by subcontracting, piecework, and, finally, prefabrication.

The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America originally was formed to protect the skills of carpenters and combat the emerging threats to both the technical and economic status of the trade. These specific and narrower aims were joined, due in large part to Peter McGuire's commitment, to a broader concern with an eight-hour day. The carpenters' union, possessed of a powerful bargaining leverage and a record of demonstrated success in its own campaigns, became the spearhead of a national eight-hour movement. The first successes were achieved in California, where the region's relative isolation gave skilled craftsmen an even greater bargaining strength. The union's role in this movement reflected more than class solidarity: Gains in any one trade, or part of a trade, are attainable and sustainable in the degree that they can be extended throughout the entire market. Controlling the market was the characteristic goal and strategy of the industrial giants. The lesson soon was learned by organized labor.

The lesson was applied, with special effectiveness, in California. Here, the union could organize a booming labor market "from the ground up," growing as the population and the economy grew. The fruit of strong organization first were achieved in San Francisco, a city of workers, and employers, who were culturally and economically receptive to consolidation. P.H. McCarthy skillfully brought building trades workers and employers together in a mutual understanding to control the market and prevent "outside" competition. The employers found the resulting stabilization of both product and labor markets quite compatible with their own class interests. The alliance survived until the "open shop" campaign of the 1920s.

Southern California was a different case. Distinct from San Francisco in population, weather, culture, and many other ways, Greater Los Angeles was created by promoters and developers who deliberately sought to maintain a union-free environment. The massive inflow of population from the east, south and midwest, and the immense distances within the region and lack of a solid industrial base, made it difficult for unions to organize and police the trades. Not until the 1930s, with a pro-labor national administration, the beginnings of full-scale industrialization, and a burgeoning defense program, could organized labor finally challenge the open shop meaningfully.

In the 1940s, the union enjoyed a major breakthrough when southern California building trades employers first agreed to negotiate master contracts in construction. Such agreements, providing for a union shop, established uniformity of wages and benefits throughout the industry and assured a steady supply of qualified workers. With the onset of war, union-security clauses and the exigencies of war production and construction further strengthened the union. But the war had other, less salutary effects on the carpenters' union. The development of new prefabrication and assembly-line techniques during the war led to their subsequent application to construction. Carpenters, increasingly, were becoming specialists. The trend started in the later nineteenth century was coming to full fruition in the mid-twentieth century.

The ultimate triumph of quantity over quality came in the mass-produced Levittowns, after the war. Throughout California, especially in southern California, specialized building trades workers helped to construct scores of new suburban communities, along

with the commercial, industrial and governmental buildings to serve them. The individualized product of superior craftsmanship was becoming accessible only to the wealthy. In Pennsylvania, William Levitt himself enjoyed this privilege: His own home, according to William Manchester, was "a lovely old Bucks County farmhouse with thick stone walls, hand-hewn rafters, stout beams, expansive rooms, and a stunning view of thick, uninhabited woods."¹

The union fought the erosion of skills as long as it could. As more and more of the work was done "off site," under subcontract and in the mills and factories, the United Brotherhood faced the prospect of losing much of its membership to other unions. From its still-powerful base in the construction trades, it reached out and, extending its claimed jurisdiction far beyond the skilled craft areas, asserted hegemony over myriads of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled production workers. Coming into conflict with other AFL unions, the carpenters' union first fought with the Sheet Metal Workers over metal trim, then the International Association of Machinists over millwrights, the IATSE over set erectors, and many others. The most violent confrontation was with the International Woodworkers of America on the west coast, over the jurisdiction of lumber and sawmill workers. This was the most dramatic battle with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in the 1930s and 1940s, when the new competition spurred the Brotherhood to decisive action. The media publicized every jurisdictional strike and secondary boycott, tarnishing the union's image. The unfavorable publicity generated support for the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, an antiunion measure which outlawed many of the union's most potent jurisdictional defenses.

The post-World War II and post-Taft-Hartley era challenged the union's leadership, at both national and state levels, as it had rarely been challenged before. Appropriately, the era of "Big Bill" Hutcheson came to an end. The United Brotherhood, with its members increasingly dependent for work upon public and publicly-financed construction and affected by legislation in many fundamental ways, could not retain its antigovernmental posture. Legislative advocacy, political action, and social concern became integral parts of the union's activity. The welfare of the industry itself was inextricably linked with the government's monetary and fiscal policies. Step by step, the union moved full-scale into the arena of social and political policy.

Inevitably, the nature and composition of the membership has changed. Much of the new membership now is located in the industrial fields, and the union has joined the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO. Other changes reflect the mandates of affirmative action and the varying demographic characteristics of the labor market. There are more minorities, and some women, within the ranks of the carpenters, although much greater progress is called for. The union is among the few which preserve a commitment to apprenticeship, although even apprenticeship programs are not wholly immune to the impact of growing specialization in the trade.

Some of the veteran members and leaders, it would appear, regret such changes, but there is little alternative. Conflicts can be observed, inevitably, between a number of traditional values and the requirements of a nondiscriminatory society. New laws and regulations consciously restrict the power of unions to deny membership or job referrals to

applicants. Complaints are heard that the union now must admit and refer "unqualified" workers. The previous complex procedures established to evaluate qualifications and competence, by their nature, left room for much discrimination. The authority wielded by business representatives and a small number of members could, in truth, serve to close the union to any but a select few. It is difficult, even under the best of circumstances, to achieve an equitable balance of interests and needs. The traditional function of the union in protecting craft standards must be balanced against society's reasonable interest in assuring equality of opportunity in the labor market.

In California, as in the nation, union leaders have mounted organizing campaigns, mindful of the threats posed both by changing technology and industrial organization and by the ingenious open-shop thrust launched by some employers. Much of the existing labor force is not easily organizable. Unaware of history, influenced or intimidated by antiunion employers, and primarily concerned with short-term financial gain, a large segment opts for a quick income from a nonunion or substandard job. Even some union members undercut standards by "moonlighting" (or "sunlighting") on nonunion work.

Despite these admittedly thorny and formidable problems, the union, in California, also faces burgeoning opportunities. Initially drawn to this frontier state because of the economic and developmental prospects it offered, the carpenters still confront a widespread social need for the skills they bring. California remains a growing state, though at a slower pace. The demands of an increasing population, joined with the massive requirements for renovation and rehabilitation of substandard housing, represent a potential market for the services of skilled building craftsmen.

In addition, a pressing need remains for the preservation, use and development of craft skills. In an economy dominated by a short-run profit motive and a pervasive emphasis on purely statistical measurements, there is an omnipresent danger that quality of workmanship will diminish, perhaps even vanish in certain fields. A vital function of any craft-oriented union is to protect and transmit the skills which may otherwise erode from disuse. Although some reforms may be indicated, the system of apprenticeship continues to be a viable channel for the transmission of such skills. With a few adjustments, apprenticeship can readily and usefully be linked with special preapprenticeship training funded under existing employment and training programs.

In 1982, therefore, the carpenters still encounter a mixture of challenge and opportunity. The history of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America is a story of crises met and overcome, of opportunities both seized and lost. No human institution, of course, is free of flaws, and the carpenters' union has had its share. Nevertheless, on balance, its contributions and achievements outweigh its institutional shortcomings. Whatever new struggles and problems the future holds in California, the carpenters will continue to play a key and indispensable role in the building of the state.

NOTES AND APPENDICES

NOTES

Chapter I

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14. Ibid., p. 91.
15. Ingels, op. cit., pp. 92-93.
16. Milton R. Konvitz, The Alien and the Asiatic in American Law (Cornell University Press, 1946), passim; Hirata and Bonacich, op. cit.
17. Ingels, op. cit., pp. 81-82.
18. Ibid., pp. 83-84.
19. Ingels, op. cit., p. 85.
20. Saxton, op. cit., p. 170.
21. Chiu, op. cit., pp. 89-128.
22. U.S. Census, 1870; Saxton, op. cit., p. 170.
23. Fred W. Riggs, Pressures on Congress: A Study of the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion (King's Crown Press, 1950).

24. Saxton, op. cit., pp. 273-278.
25. All songs are drawn from Philip S. Foner, American Labor Songs of the Nineteenth Century (University of Illinois Press, 1975).
26. U.S. Census, 1880.
27. Grace Heilman Stimson, Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles (University of California Press, 1955), pp. 2-4.
28. Stimson, op. cit., pp. 22-27.

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1. Biographical information on McGuire is drawn primarily from Walter Galenson, "History of the UBCJA: The First 100 Years," Unpublished Ms., Book #1, passim.
2. Galenson, op. cit., p. II.11, citing McGuire's A Chapter of Our History, a document in the files of the UBCJA.
3. Galenson, II.13.
4. Ibid., pp. II.40-41.
5. Jules Everett Tygiel, "Workingmen in San Francisco, 1880-1901," Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, History Department, UCLA, 1977, pp. 115, 119.

6. McWilliams, op. cit., pp. 138-139.
7. Galenson, op. cit., pp. II.42, III, III.16.
8. Mel Scott, Metropolitan Los Angeles: One Community (Haynes Foundation, 1949), pp. 25-28; WPA Writers' Program, Los Angeles: A Guide to the City and Its Environs (Hastings House, 1941, 1st Ed. and 1951, 2nd Ed.), pp. 43-45.
9. Scott, op. cit., pp. 26-28, 31.
10. Scott, op. cit., p. 28.
11. Galenson, op. cit., pp. 29-36.
12. Stimson, op. cit., pp. 96-98.
13. Ibid., pp. 96-103.
14. Eaves, op. cit., p. 219.
15. Foner, op. cit., pp. 231-232.
16. Stimson, op. cit., pp. 43-45.
17. Stimson, op. cit., pp. 154-156.
18. Descriptions of Vinnette's and Coxey's armies are drawn from Stimson, op. cit., pp. 154-160, and Henry Winfred Splitter, "Concerning Vinette's Los Angeles Regiment of Coxey's Army," Pacific Historical Review, February, 1948, pp. 29-36.

Chapter IV

1. Walton Bean, Boss Ruef's San Francisco: The Story of the Union Labor Party, Big Business, and The Graft Prosecution (University of California Press, 1952), pp. 12-13.
2. Cross, op. cit., pp. 233-234. In his unpublished memoirs, McCarthy makes it clear that he had an informer within the employers' ranks, whose identity remains unknown. His informer regularly relayed the millowners' strategy to him, thus enabling him to counter it effectively. McCarthy also reveals that Peter McGuire vigorously opposed the strike, arguing against it at the AFL convention and claiming that it could not be won.
3. In his unpublished memoirs, McCarthy explained the reasoning behind his decision to seek a uniform 8-hour day in all the construction and mill trades:

First, was the 8-hour day a proper and reasonable working day for the employees of such institutions? If it was good sound business, then it could only be such by protecting the owners of the mills and factories, whose capital was invested therein, from competition coming from planing mills and factories working more than 8 hours per day.

It would not be fair for the Building Trades Council of San Francisco to impose on the owners of the planing mills and factories operating in this city, the 8-hour day for their employees, unless the Council could protect them from

such competition as herein before set forth. I realized the seriousness and magnitude of the undertaking. I also realized that a beginning must be made sometime and when such beginning was made, it should be put into full force and effect only when all avenues of escape, which would undoubtedly be resorted to by the enemy, could be successfully blocked by the Building Trades Council of San Francisco.

During the past five years, all of these questions had been turned over in my mind many times and my associates had also, at my urgent request, given them considerable thought for quite some time. I had now fully made up my mind that since the 8-hour day must come, must be established in the mills and factories associated with the building business, there must be a beginning made sometime, somewhere, somehow. Therefore, this was the time and San Francisco was the place to establish the 8-hour working day for the union men employed in the mills and factories in this city and then throughout the state.

I had also fully decided and made up my mind that the owners of the mills and factories in San Francisco, agreeing to cooperate with the Building Trades Council, the Council (sic) could and would protect them from unfair competition by any institution or combination of institutions engaged in the mill and factory business working more than 8-hours per day.

4. Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, State of California, 1906, pp. 183-214.
5. Bean, op. cit., p. 19.
6. Ibid., pp. 25-26.
7. Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, op. cit., p. 215.
8. Ibid., pp. 218-219.
9. Ibid., p. 220.
10. Carey McWilliams, Southern California Country: An Island on the Land (Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1946), p. 275. When Johnson, then a United States Senator, moved sharply to the right in the 1930s and 1940s, he regularly had the support of the Times.
11. Ibid., p. 279.
12. Stimson, op. cit., pp. 270-273.
13. Stimson, op. cit., pp. 210-211.
14. Stimson, op. cit., p. 205 ff.
15. Ibid., pp. 242-244.
16. Stimson, op. cit., pp. 242-244, 261, 268, 296, 304, 358, 421, 424.
17. Correspondence, Ted L. Knudson, Financial Secretary, Local #1149, Oakland, March 12, 1982; Frank Duffy, History of the U.B. of C. and J. of A. (Unpublished), pp. 42-44.
18. Correspondence, M.L. Walker, Financial Secretary, Local #1280, March 29, 1982; Edmond Gale, Local #316, April 7, 1982.

19. Christie, op. cit., p. 198.
20. The discussion of political and legislative issues is based upon: George E. Mowry, The California Progressive (Quadrangle Books, 1963), pp. 92-98, 290-301; Saxton, op. cit., pp. 241-257; and Eaves, op. cit., passim.
21. Mowry, op. cit., p. 93.
22. Saxton, op. cit., p. 247; Roger Daniels, The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion (University of California Press, 1962), passim.
23. Information on southern California in this period is drawn mainly from Scott, op. cit., pp. 31-34.
24. Louis B. and Richard Perry, A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement, 1911-41 (University of California Press, 1963), pp. 30-31.
25. Ibid., p. 138.
26. Perry and Perry, op. cit., p. 139.

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1. Paul Bullock, Jerry Voorhis: The Idealist as Politician (Vantage Press, 1978), pp. 11-12.

2. Cross, op. cit., pp. 249-252; Galenson, Book 4, op. cit., pp. IX.7-IX.8; Frederick L. Ryan, Industrial Relations in the San Francisco Building Trades (University of Oklahoma Press, 1936), Chapter 7, passim.
3. Galenson, op. cit., pp. IX.7-IX.8; Ryan, op. cit., pp. 154-160.
4. Cross, op. cit., pp. 252-254.
5. Interview with Joseph O'Sullivan, by Paul Mandel and Richard Steele, UCLA Carpenters' History Project, Sept. 17, 1981; O'Sullivan interview, Labor Pulse, March, 1976.
6. Galenson, op. cit., pp. IX.10-IX.12; Ryan, op. cit., pp. 1920196; Cross, op. cit., p. 254.
7. Series of articles by Donald L. Davis, Los Gatos Local #2006, The Union Gazette; correspondence from Edmond Gale, San Jose Local #316.
8. Perry and Perry, op. cit., pp. 203-206.
9. Galenson, op. cit., X.4.
10. Ibid., pp. X.4, X.6.
11. Perry and Perry, op. cit., pp. 230-231.
12. Ibid., p. 236.
13. WPA Writers' Program, San Francisco: The Bay and Its Cities (Hastings House, 1940), p. 110.
14. Correspondence from Ed Gale, Local #316.
15. Perry and Perry, op. cit., p. 228.

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1. Descriptions of the NRA period are based upon: Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Coming of the New Deal (Houghton Mifflin, 1959), pp. 113, 136-151; William Manchester, The Glory and the Dream (Little, Brown, 1973), pp. 88-90; and Christie, op. cit., pp. 271-282.
2. Christie, op. cit., pp. 285-300.
3. Galenson, Book 4, op. cit., p. X.37.
4. Christie, op. cit., pp. 293-298.
5. Descriptions of the Westwood organizing campaign and strike are drawn from Gerald A. Rose, "The Westwood Lumber Strike," Labor History (Spring, 1972), pp. 171-199.
6. Remarks of Edward Vandeleur, Proceedings of the 12th Annual Convention of the California State Council of Carpenters, San Francisco, February 24, 25, 26, 1939, pp. 3-4. Also, remarks of W.K. Merrill, president, and E.C. Shannon, business agent, of Local #2836, and Jack Granger, State AFL organizer, pp. 9-10.
7. Christie, op. cit., pp. 298-299.
8. Proceedings, 1941, p. 50.

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1. Proceedings, California State Council of Carpenters, 1936, p. 25; 1939, p. 43.
2. Perry and Perry, op. cit., pp. 242-250.
3. Ibid., pp. 270-272.
4. Ibid., pp. 407-409.
5. Ibid., pp. 499-501.
6. Western Construction News, July, 1942, p. 2.
7. Ibid.
8. Proceedings, 1939, p. 24.
9. Proceedings, 1940, p. 31.
10. Proceedings, 1941, p. 23.
11. Ibid., p. 24.
12. Ibid.
13. Local #22 membership figures, and other information on the local's activities during the period from 1925 to World War II, are drawn from an interview with Joseph O'Sullivan, Local #22 activist and business agent, by Paul Mandel and Richard Steele, UCLA carpenters' union project, Sept. 17, 1981.

14. O'Sullivan interview, op. cit.
15. WPA Writers' Program, San Francisco: The Bay and Its Cities, op. cit., pp. 46-47.
16. Interview with Al Brown, Petaluma Local #981, and Leo Gurevitch, Santa Rosa Local #751, by Paul Mandel and Richard Steele, UCLA carpenters' union project, Sept. 16, 1981. Brown even claims that O'Sullivan's men worked on some nonunion jobs in his jurisdiction. Mike Munoz, then the recording secretary of Piledrivers' Local #34, also reports that Local #22 members worked on jobs which were within the pile-drivers' union jurisdiction (Interview, March 29, 1982).
17. Proceedings, 1938, p. 7.
18. Proceedings, 1937, Report of J.F. Cambiano and D.H. Ryan, p. 1.
19. Interview with Mike Munoz, former recording secretary of Local #34 and now an organizer with the Bay Counties District Council of Carpenters, by Richard Steele, UCLA carpenters' union project, March 29, 1982.
20. Proceedings, 1941, p. 21.
21. Galenson, Book 4, pp. X.39, X.40. The remarks were made at the 1936 UBCJA convention.

22. Information on minorities and unions is drawn from: F. Ray Marshall, The Negro and Organized Labor (John Wiley, 1965); Sterling D. Spero and Abram L. Harris, The Black Worker (Atheneum, 1974); and Robert C. Weaver, Negro Labor: A National Problem (Harcourt, Brace, 1946).
23. Marshall, op. cit., p. 157.

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2. Galenson, op. cit., XII.5.
3. William Bradford Huie, Can Do! (E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1945) p. 65.
4. Richard R. Lingeman, Don't You Know There's A War On? (G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1970) pp. 237-239.
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7. Los Angeles Citizen, Oct. 16, 1942, p. 1.
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9. Terry Henry, Ed., Seabees "Can Do!" (Waltham Publishing Co., Inc., Marceline, Mo.) p. 74.

10. Los Angeles Citizen, Sept. 11, 1942, p. 1.
11. Henry, op. cit., p. 137.
12. Huie, op. cit., pp. 40-42.
13. Ibid., pp. 57-58.
14. Ibid., p. 59.
15. Ibid., p. 188.
16. William Bradford Huie, From Omaha to Okinawa (E.P. Dutton & Company, Inc., New York, 1945) pp. 72-76.
17. Huie, From Omaha to Okinawa, pp. 170-181.
18. Henry, op. cit., p. 112.
19. Seabee History, courtesy of the Port Hueneme Seabees Museum, pp. 40-41.
20. Los Angeles Citizen, Dec. 19, 1931, p. 1.
21. Proceedings, 1943, pp. 5, 26; Proceedings, 1941, pp. 8-9.
22. California State Reconstruction and Reemployment Commission, Postwar Housing in California, June 1945, p. 6.
23. Proceedings, 1942, p. 12.
24. Proceedings, 1946, pp. 11-12.

25. Proceedings, 1942, p. 25.
26. Paul Bullock, Ed., Watts: The Aftermath. (Grove Press, Inc., New York, 1969) pp. 14-15.
27. L.A. Times, Nov. 17, 1942, II, 3.
28. Los Angeles Citizen, Dec. 10, 1943, p. 2.
29. Los Angeles Citizen, Dec. 3, 1943, p. 2.
30. Interview with James Skelton, past President, Studio Local #946.
31. See, for example, reports from the various Districts in Proceedings, 1944. In the Greater Los Angeles area, a special edition of the Los Angeles Citizen was published and mailed to the homes of 43,000 AFL Metal Trades (shipyards) workers every week; in the Bay Area the shipyards industry was by far the largest war industry.
32. Los Angeles Citizen, Sept. 4, 1942, p. 4.
33. Ibid., p. 10.
34. Ibid., p. 1.
35. Los Angeles Citizen, Oct. 2, 1931, p. 1.

36. Ibid., p. 3.
37. Ibid., Jan. 7, 1944, p. 6.
38. State Reconstruction and Reemployment Commission, Estimates of Wartime and Postwar Employment in California, Dec. 1944, pp. 13-15.
39. Proceedings, 1943, p. 9.
40. Los Angeles Times, Aug. 24, 1942, p. 1.
41. Interview with Stan Soderberg, July, 1982. Soderberg went to work at Hughes in 1943 as a "trimmer" and is still with the Spruce Goose in Long Beach Harbor, "The Last Mechanic."
42. Soderberg interview, July, 1982.
43. Description of the construction process is based upon the Soderberg interview, above, and an interview with Arnold Rickabaugh, who went to work on the Spruce Goose as a wood jig builder in 1946, served on the flight crew, and retired in 1976. Both were members of #1553.
44. Proceedings, 1942, pp. 62-63.
45. Los Angeles Citizen, May 28, 1943, p. 1.
46. Ibid., April 24, 1942, p. 1.
47. Ibid.

48. Ibid., Oct. 16, 1942, p. 1.
49. Ibid.
50. Los Angeles Citizen, Sept. 1, 1944, p. 1.
51. Ibid., Sept. 15, 1944, p. 1.
52. Ibid., Oct. 20, 1944.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., Nov. 3, 1944, p. 2.
55. Ibid., Nov. 10, 1944, p. 1.

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1. Walter Galenson manuscript, "History of the UBCJA: The First 100 Years," Book #4, p. IX.28.
2. Hugh Lovell and Tasile Carter, Collective Bargaining in the Motion Picture Industry (Institute of Industrial Relations, UC Berkeley, 1955) pp. 20-21; also, Probate Court finding in re: Frank Nitti, cited in George H. Dunne, Hollywood Labor Dispute: A Study in Immorality (Conference Publishing Company, n.d.).
3. "You Don't Choose Your Friends," Memoirs of Herbert Knott Sorrell, Oral History Collection, Powell Library, UCLA, pp. 22-40.

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5. Lovell and Carter, op. cit., pp. 21-22; John Cogley, Report on Blacklisting (Fund for the Republic, 1956) pp. 60-61.
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7. Sorrell, p. 158.
8. Interview with James Skelton, Feb. 17, 1982.
9. Skelton interview.
10. Sorrell, pp. 151-158, 159-163; also p. 112 ff.; Cogley, p. 64; New York Times, Oct. 6, 1945, p. 3; Oct. 7, p. 3; Oct. 9, p. 14; Oct. 10, p. 14; Oct. 11, p. 14; Oct. 12, p. 15; Oct. 13, p. 2; Oct. 14, p. 34; Oct. 16, p. 15; Oct. 19, p. 15; Oct. 24, p. 14; Oct. 25, p. 3; Oct. 26, p. 11; Oct. 31, p. 13.
11. New York Times, Feb. 24, 1948, p. 14.
12. Cogley, pp. 70-71; Lovell and Carter, pp. 23-24; Dunne, op. cit., pp. 283-287.
13. Sorrell, pp. 165-167; New York Times, Oct. 2, p. 3; Oct. 4, p. 10; Oct. 9, p. 9; Oct. 14, p. 15. See also, Christian Advocacy and Labor Strife in Hollywood, Father George Dunne, Oral History Interview, Oral History Collection, UCLA, July 1981, p. 49.

14. Sorrell, pp. 41-42; Skelton interview.
15. Skelton interview.
16. New York Times, Sept. 27, 1946, p. 3; Oct. 26, p. 10, Sept. 29, p. 25.
17. New York Times, Feb. 27, 1948, p. 14.
18. Cogley, op. cit., p. 69.
19. Sorrell and the Guild each took credit for arranging the truce. See Ronald Reagan, with Richard Hubler, Where's The Rest Of Me? (Best Books, 1965), p. 132.
20. Reagan, pp. 134-135.
21. Reagan, p. 137.
22. Sorrell, pp. 175-176; Cogley, p. 72; Reagan, p. 141.
23. Sorrell, pp. 182-183; Reagan, p. 138.
24. Skelton interview; Dunne, Hollywood Labor Dispute, p. 289. Descriptions of Reagan's role and liberal reactions to it also are based upon the personal recollections of Paul Bullock, who was active in Americans for Democratic Action in this period and served at the same time as Reagan on ADA's state executive board.
25. Sorrell, p. 185.
26. Sorrell, pp. 187-188; Cogley, pp. 72-73; Dunne, Hollywood Labor Dispute, pp. 289-301.
27. New York Times, Oct. 25, 1947, p. 1; Feb. 26, 1948, p. 24.

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2. Manchester, op. cit., pp. 431-432.
3. 1946 State Convention Proceedings, p. 31.
4. 1947 State Convention Proceedings, p. 13.
5. 1946 State Convention Proceedings, p. 20.
6. 1958 State Convention Proceedings, pp. 26-29.
7. Ibid., pp. 69-77.
8. Anthony L. Ramos, "A Short History of the California State Council of Carpenters, 1928-1978," 50th Anniversary Program, Forty-Third Convention, March 7-10, San Francisco, pp. 14-20.

Chapter XI

1. George A. Christie, "Construction in the Sixties: A Review," The Carpenter, Feb. 1970, pp. 2-5.
2. Galenson, Book #5, pp. XV-36-42.

3. Ibid., pp. XIII-49, XIV-38, XV-35-38, Appendix Table I.
4. Ibid., p. XVI-14.
5. 1974 Convention Proceedings, California State Council of Carpenters, p. 14.
6. 1976 Convention Proceedings, California State Council of Carpenters, pp. 74, 87-89.
7. "Los Angeles Pilot Organizing Drive Sets the Pace for Nationwide Effort to Organize the Unorganized in '79," The Carpenter, Jan. 1979, pp. 2-3.
8. Proceedings, p. 15.
9. Convention Proceedings, p. 48.
10. Galenson, Book #5, pp. XIV-43-44.
11. See, for example, William Sidell, 1968 Convention Proceedings, p. 74.

Chapter XII

1. Manchester, op. cit., p. 432.

APPENDIX I
Strikes
 Carpenters' and Related Trades
 California (Excluding San Francisco)
 1901 - 1905

| <u>Trade</u> | <u>Year</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Cause</u> | <u>No. of Strikers</u> | <u>Result</u> |
|----------------------------|-------------|-----------------|---|------------------------|-------------------|
| All building trades | 1901 | Fresno | Seek 8 hours instead of 9 and higher wages. | 15 | Successful |
| All building trades | 1901 | LA | (Unauthorized) Pay raise for laborers from \$2 to \$2.50/day. | 64 | Successful |
| Woodworkers | 1901 | LA | Reduced hours; union recognition | 106 | Unsuccessful |
| Carpenters and Painters | 1902 | LA | Against use of material from firm where strike pending. | 14 | Unsuccessful |
| Carpenters | 1902 | Fresno | Against working with non-union men. | 25 | Unsuccessful |
| Carpenters | 1902 | LA | Against use of non-union material | 35 | Successful |
| Carpenters and Painters | 1902 | Sacramento | Against agreement to work for members of Employers' Association only. | 250 | Successful |
| Carpenters | 1902 | Vallejo | For minimum wage of \$4/day | 18 | Successful |
| Carpenters | 1902 | LA | Discharge of non-union man | 12 | Successful |
| Carpenters and Bricklayers | 1902 | Bakersfield | Against working with non-union carpenter | 25 | Successful |
| Carpenters | 1902 | LA | For discharge of non-union men | 18 | Unsuccessful |
| Woodworkers | 1902 | LA | For discharge of non-union men | 12 | Unsuccessful |
| Carpenters | 1903 | Riverside | Wage raise from \$3 to \$3.50/day | 25 | Unsuccessful |
| Carpenters | 1903 | LA | For minimum of \$3.50 | 10 | Unsuccessful |
| Carpenters | 1903 | Santa Barbara | Against working with men employed by a firm on strike | 20 | Unsuccessful |
| Carpenters | 1903 | LA | Against discharge of a worker | 15 | Unsuccessful |
| Loggers and Millmen | 1903 | Fort Bragg | Reinstatement of discharged worker and union shop | 284 | Unsuccessful |
| Lumber mill employees | 1903 | Crescent City | For wage increase | 560 | Partly successful |

APPENDIX I (continued)

| | | | | | |
|---|------|-----------------|--|-----|-------------------|
| Lumber mill employees | 1903 | San Pedro | Against use of material from non-union firm | 90 | Successful |
| Millmen | 1903 | Santa Barbara | Against firm supplying material to non-union firms | 8 | Partly successful |
| Woodworkers | 1903 | LA | Discharge of employees not in good standing with union | 13 | Unsuccessful |
| Carpenters | 1903 | Oakland | For wage increase and "to compel employees [sic] to sign agreement" | 307 | Successful |
| All building trades | 1904 | Palo Alto | For union shop | 73 | Unsuccessful |
| Carpenters | 1904 | LA | Enforcement of uniform wage of \$3.50/day | 300 | Unsuccessful |
| Lumber laborers | 1904 | McCloud Lamoine | (Unauthorized) Wage raise or reduced hours | 30 | Unsuccessful |
| All building trades | 1905 | LA | Sympathy with striking employees | 12 | Unsuccessful |
| Carpenters and Brickmasons | 1905 | LA | Against use of non-union material | 108 | Unsuccessful |
| Hodcarriers, carpenters and Bricklayers | 1905 | Santa Rose | For union shop | 36 | Successful |
| Woodworkers | 1905 | LA | Against increase in hours without increase in pay | 60 | Partly successful |
| <u>Lockouts</u> | | | | | |
| Planing mill employees | 1903 | San Jose | Against their demand for reduced hours and time and 1/2 for overtime | 51 | Partly successful |
| Carpenters | 1903 | Santa Barbara | For open-shop enforcement | 5 | Successful |
| Carpenters, Painters | 1904 | Sacramento | Open Shop | 409 | Unsuccessful |

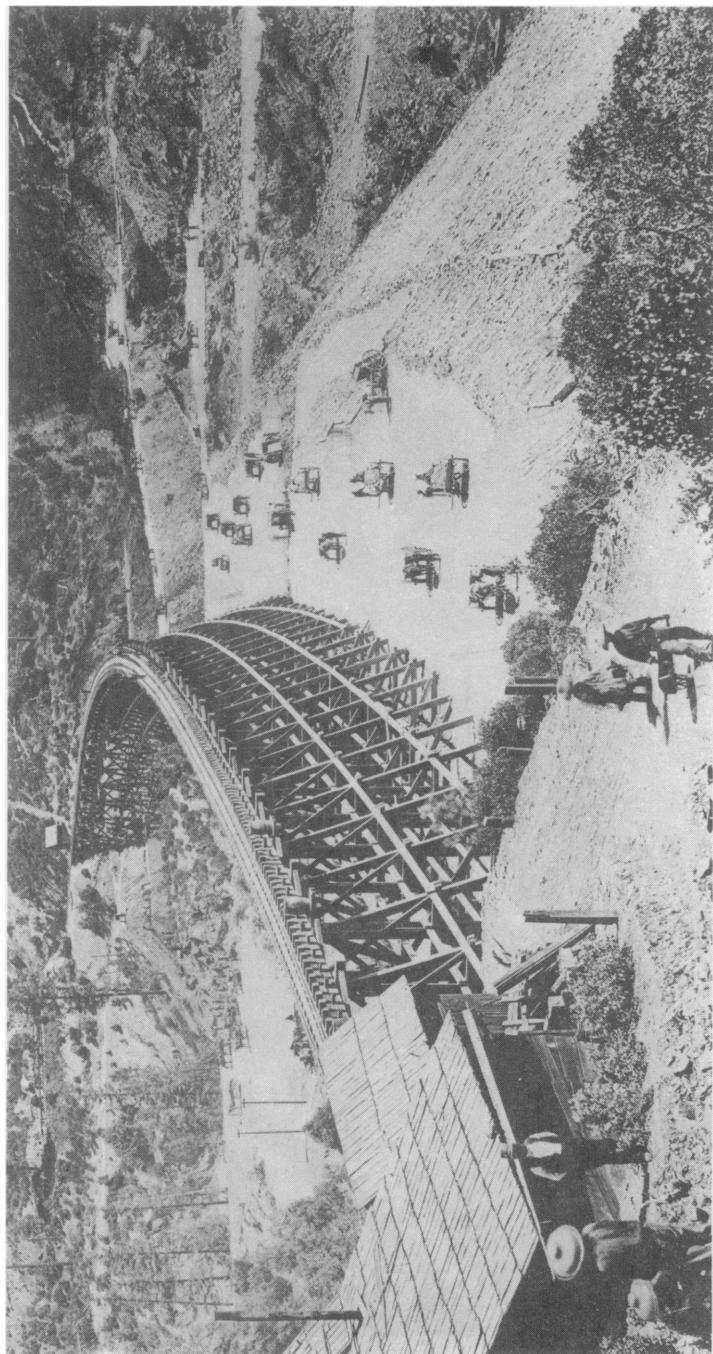
SOURCE: Report of Bureau of Labor Statistics, California, op.cit., pp. 184-207.

APPENDIX II

Percentage of Blacks Selected Occupations Los Angeles and San Francisco 1940 and 1950

| Occupations | 1940 | | | | | 1950 | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|----|--------------------|---------|-------------------|--------------------|---------|-------|------|
| | Los Angeles | | San Francisco | | | Los Angeles | | San Francisco | | | | |
| | Total Employed | Blacks Employed | % | Total Employed | | Blacks Employed | % | Total Employed | Blacks Employed | % | | |
| Craftsmen, Total | 73,761 | 960 | 1.3 | 28,853 | 53 | .18 | 257,074 | 6,677 | 2.6 | 127,945 | 3,644 | 2.8 |
| Carpenters | 8,959 | 87 | .9 | 3,200 | 7 | .22 | 29,658 | 688 | 2.3 | 15,743 | 546 | 3.5 |
| Electricians | 4,129 | 13 | .3 | 1,256 | 4 | .32 | 11,366 | 116 | 1.0 | 6,536 | 115 | 1.8 |
| Painters | 7,148 | 110 | 1.5 | 3,142 | 2 | .06 | 17,204 | 533 | 3.1 | 8,804 | 341 | 3.9 |
| Plasterers and Cement Finishers | 1,786 | 98 | 5.5 | 535 | 1 | .19 | 6,631 | 712 | 10.7 | 1,950 | 260 | 13.3 |
| Plumbers | 2,051 | 24 | 1.2 | 958 | -- | -- | 8,700 | 169 | 1.9 | 5,200 | 90 | 1.7 |
| Cabinetmakers | 1,841 | 13 | .7 | 660 | 1 | .15 | 6,370 | 77 | 1.2 | 1,953 | 25 | 1.3 |
| Construction Laborers | 5,392 | 529 | 9.8 | 2,199 | 48 | 2.18 | 19,323 | 3,527 | 18.2 | 9,102 | 3,270 | 35.9 |

SOURCE: U.S. Census.



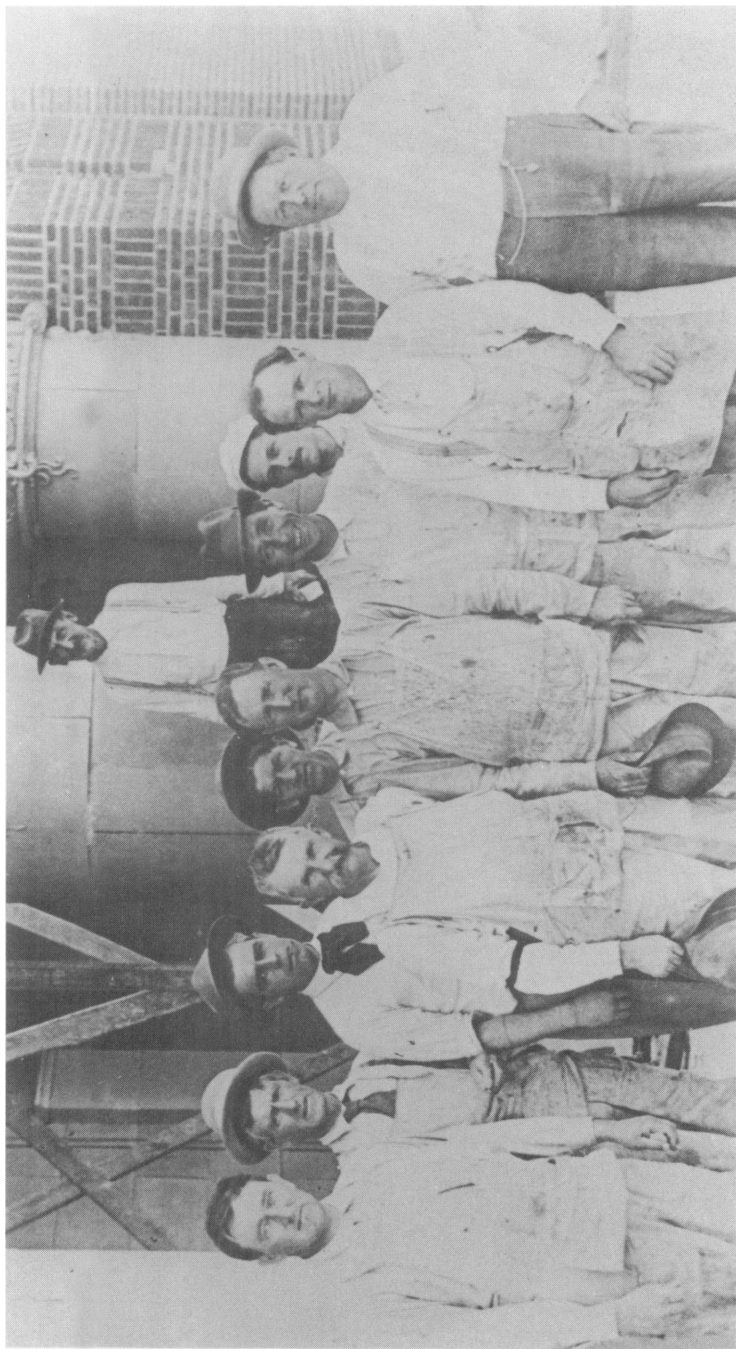
History Division, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History

Construction of the Southern Pacific Railroad, near the gold run in California, circa 1877. Carpenters and other construction workers built the trestle, and Chinese laborers then used 1-horse dump carts and wheelbarrows as earth moving equipment, to fill in the trestle.



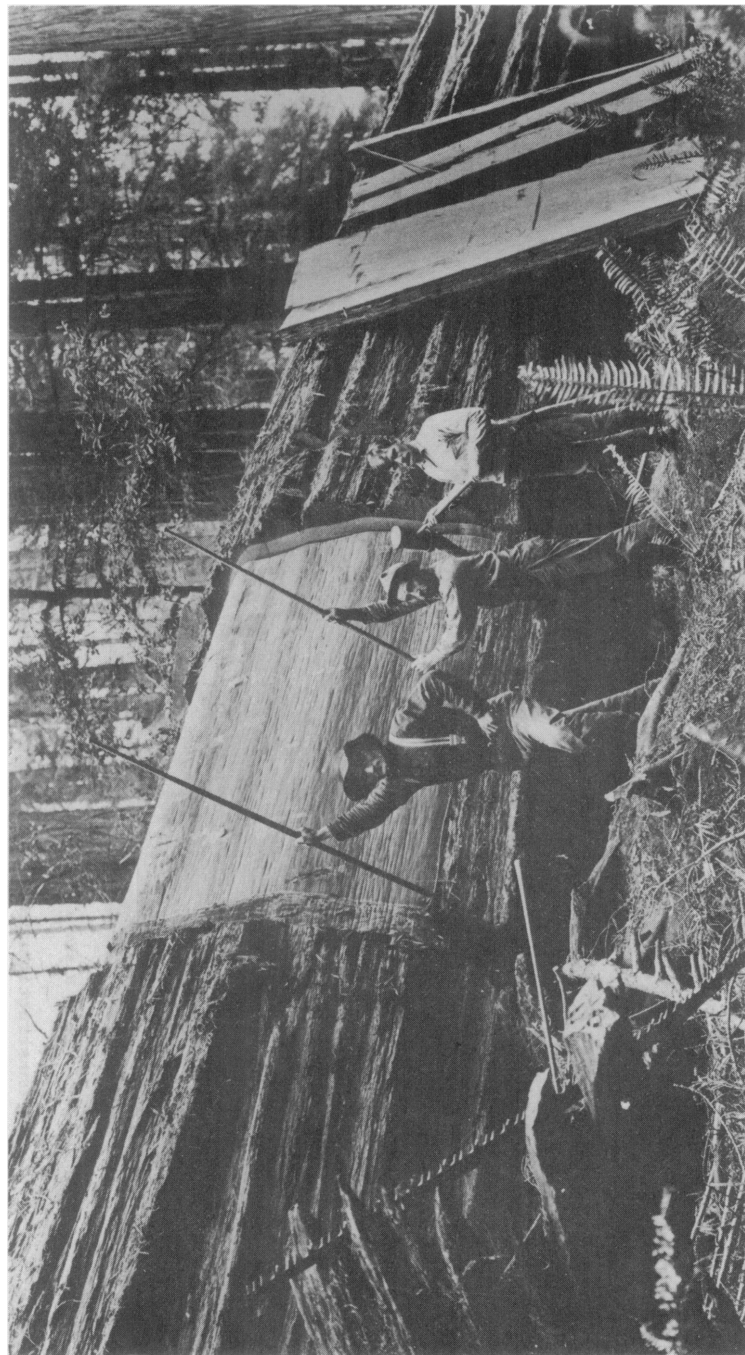
History Division, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History

Construction of the Owens River Aqueduct, Southern California, circa 1910. The aqueduct was the first major project in California's massive water resources system.



History Division, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History

A construction crew at the site of the new Los Angeles County Museum, 1912.



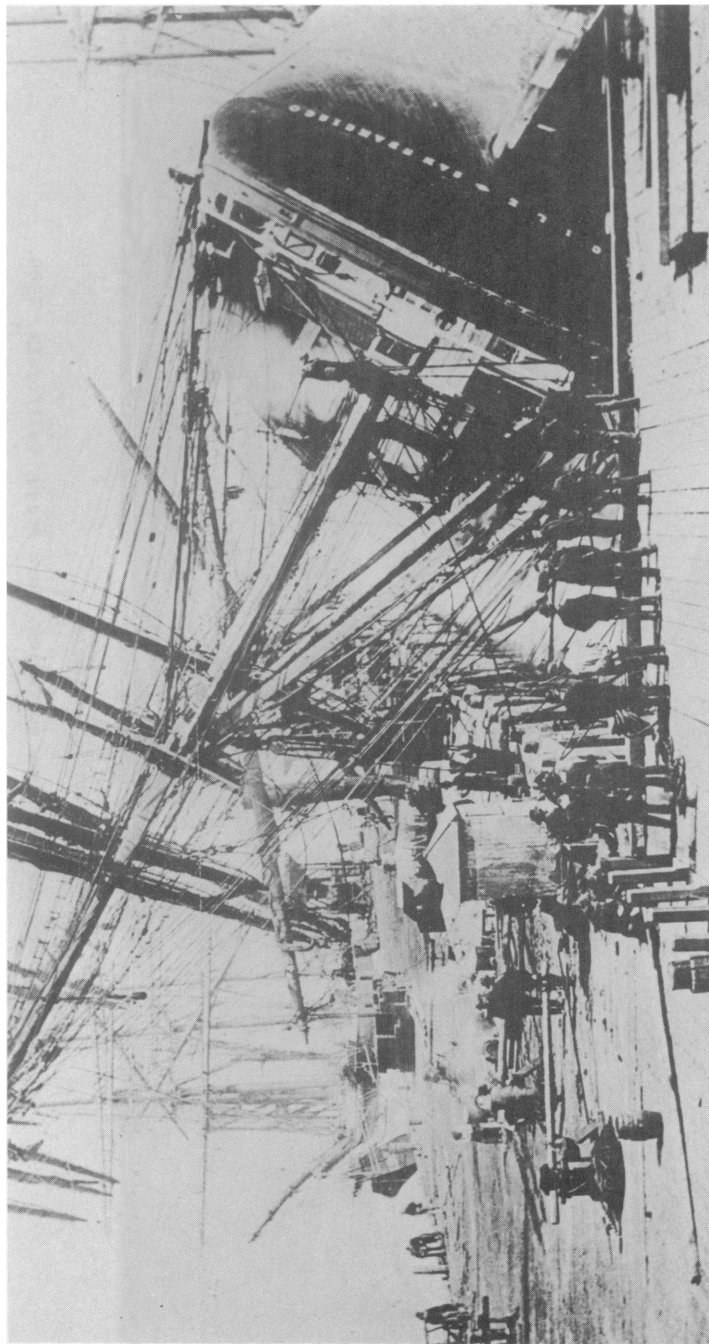
Georgia-Pacific Corporation

Lumber workers, Northern California, early twentieth century



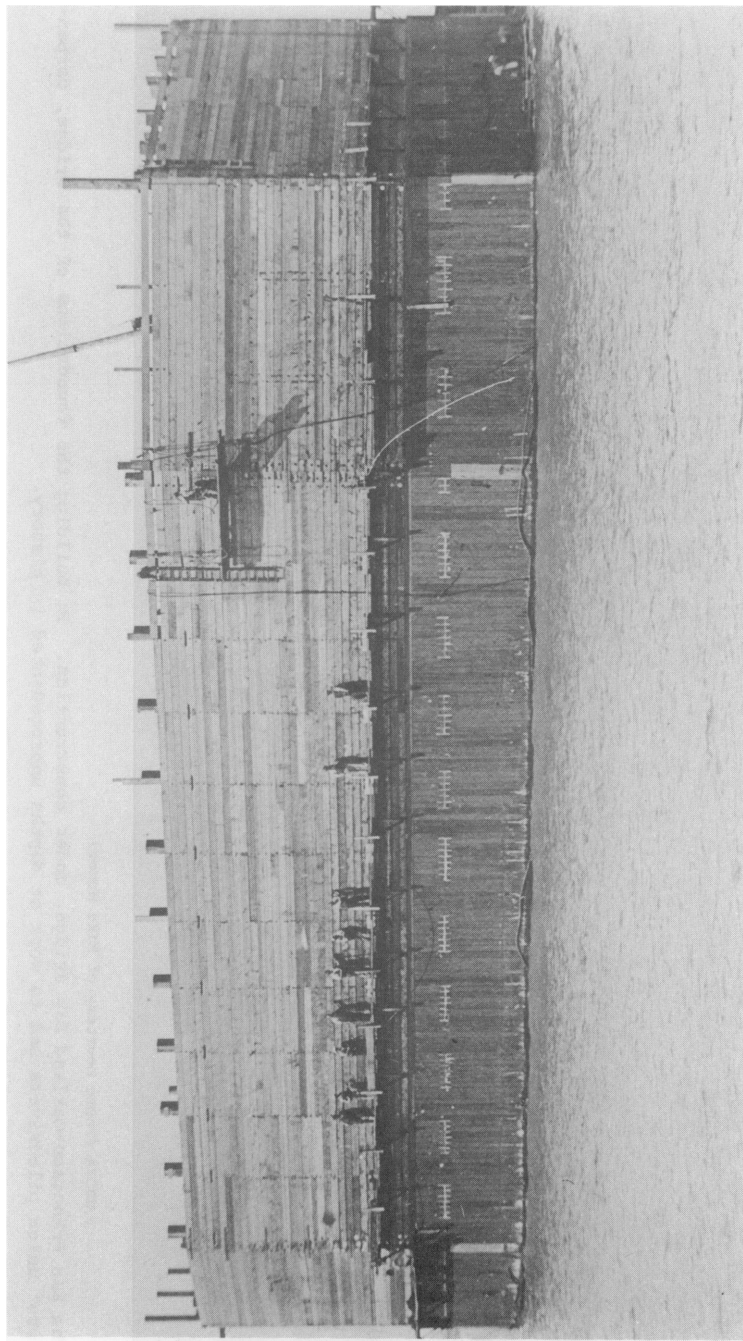
Georgia-Pacific Corporation

Sawmill workers, band saw operation, Fort Bragg, California, 1900.



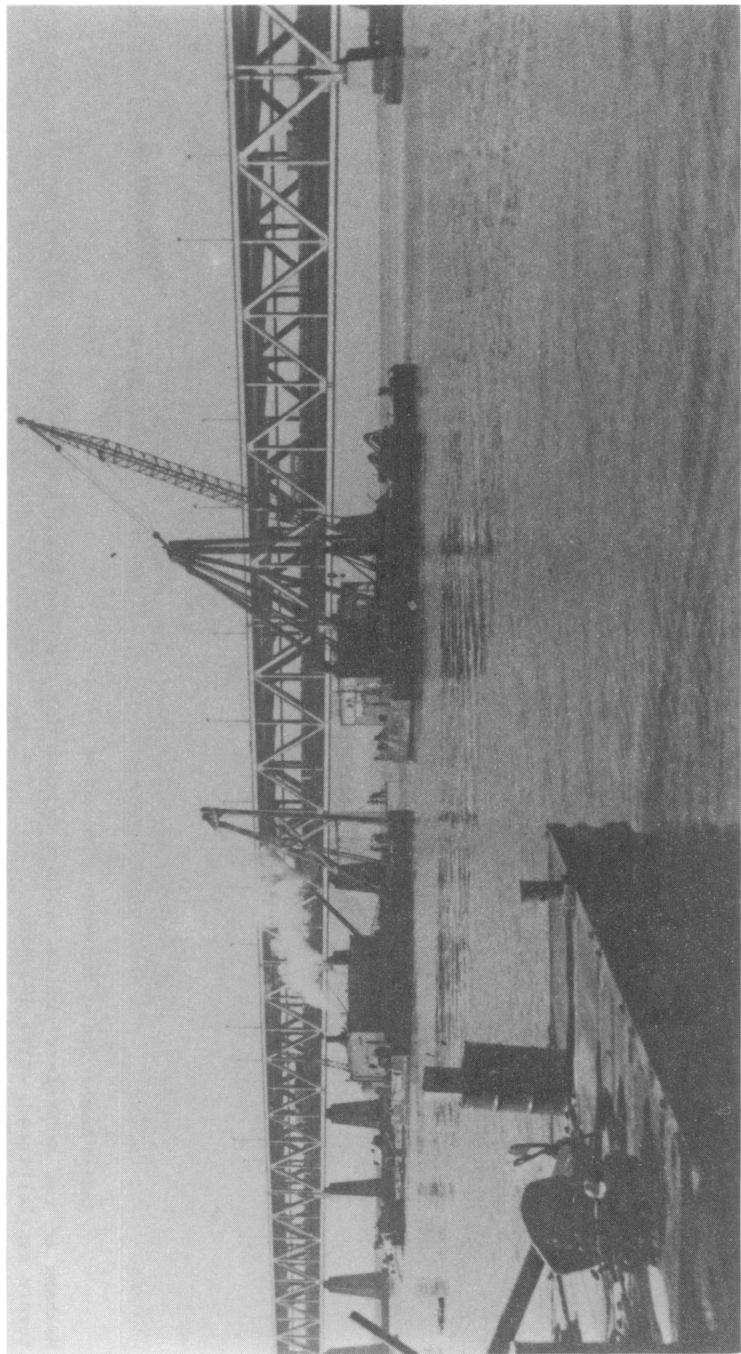
United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners of America

In the nineteenth century, before drydocks were built in San Francisco, a sailing vessel had to be pulled onto its side by lines so that caulkers could repair leaks and tighten up the hull. The ship caulkers, later to become members of the carpenters' union, organized the first permanent labor union in California, in 1853.



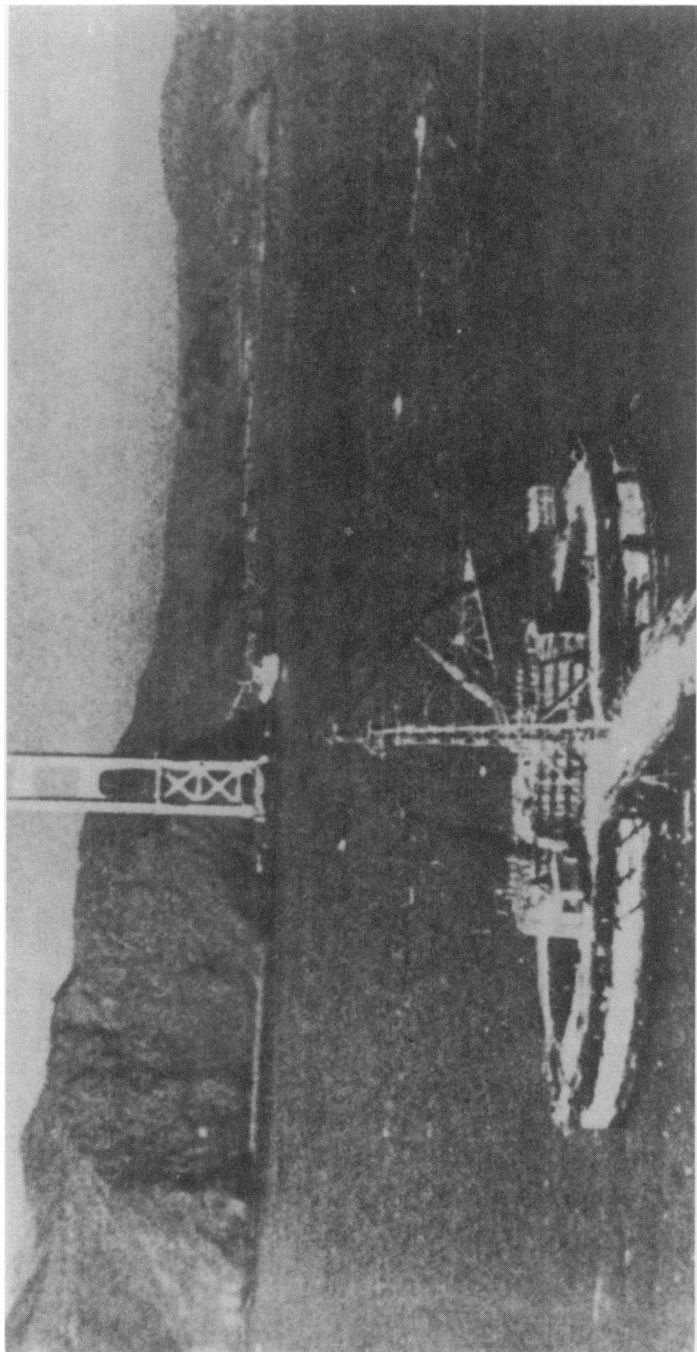
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Members of the carpenters' union caulk a caisson for the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, so that concrete towers can be poured, circa 1933-34.



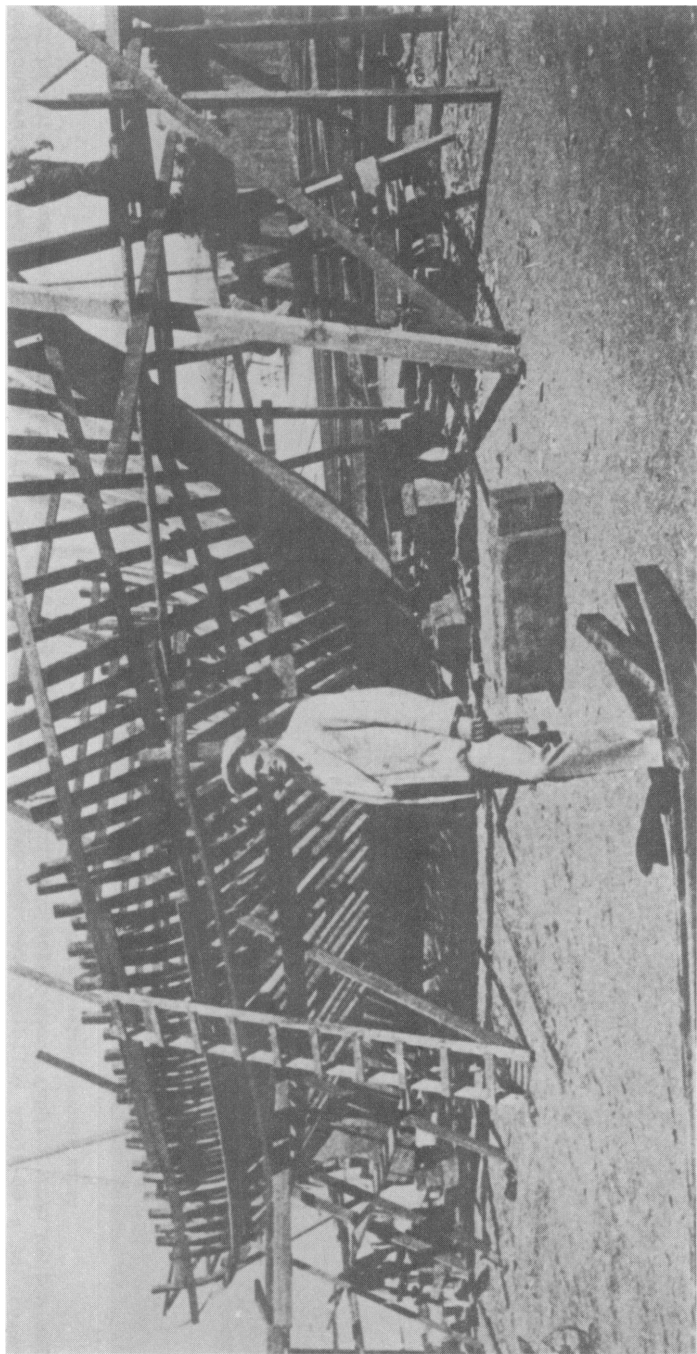
UBCJA (Photo Courtesy of Mike Munoz)

The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, under construction. In building the foundations of the bridge, carpenters' union piledrivers had to work at depths unprecedented in history.



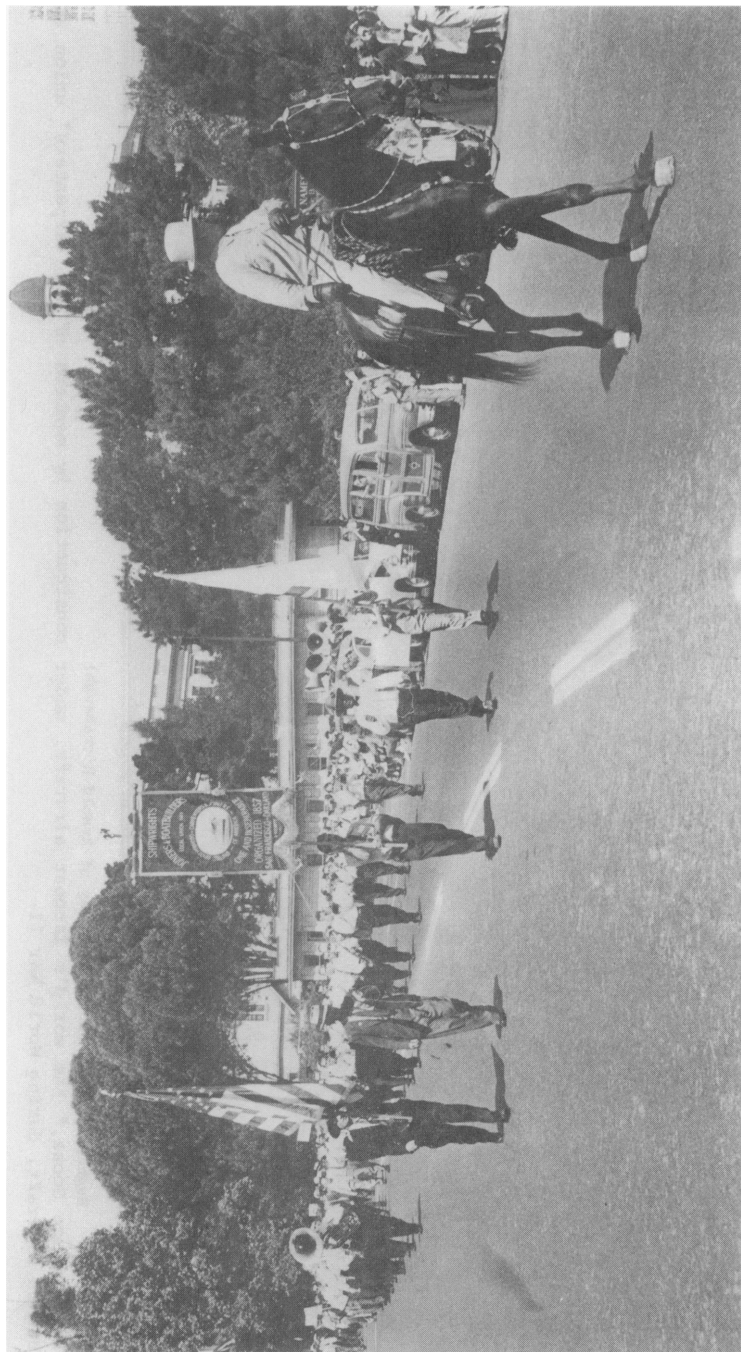
UBCJA (Photo Courtesy of Mike Munoz)

The Golden Gate Bridge, shown under construction, is the world's longest single span, its towers rising to the height of a 65-story building over the water. In building the foundation of the south tower, construction workers had to work on barges tossed by 15-foot ocean swells.



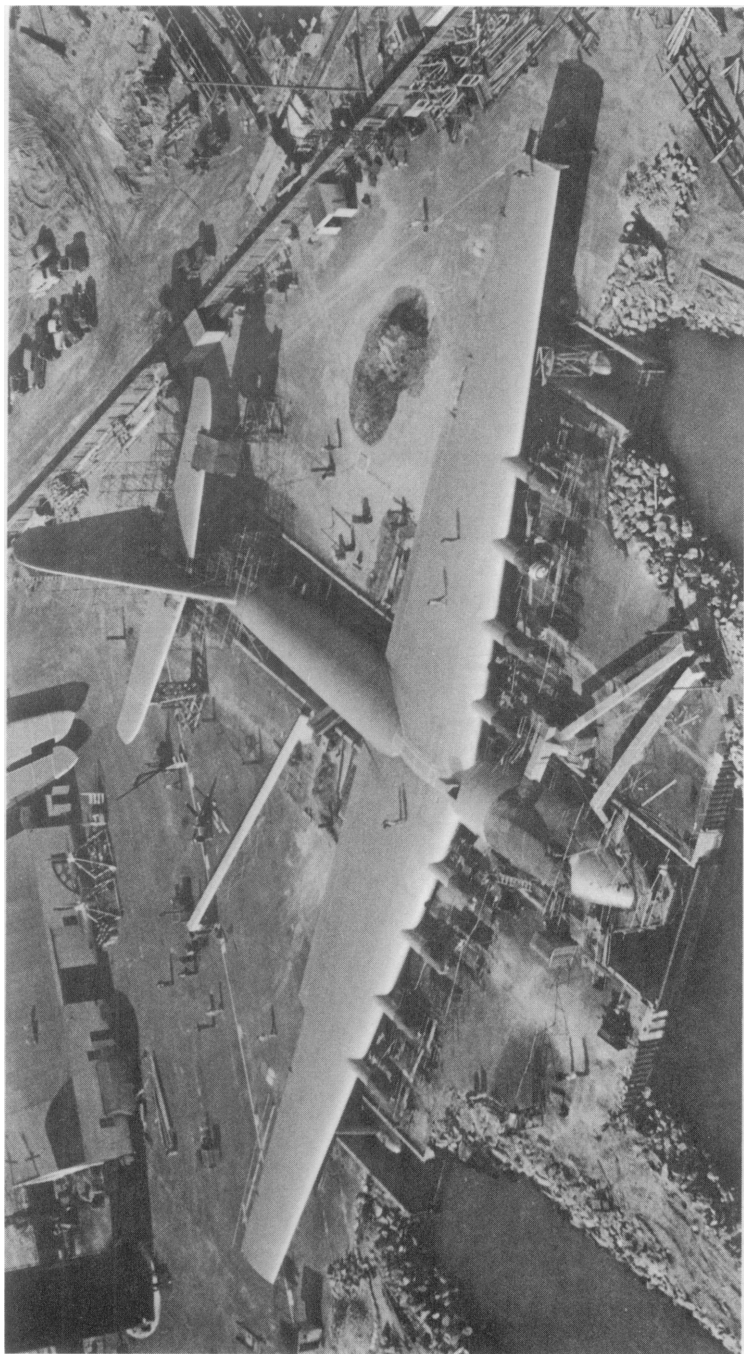
USCJA

The famous author, Jack London, poses at the construction site of his new boat, Anderson-Cristofani Boat Yard, San Francisco, early twentieth century. Boatbuilding has been within the jurisdiction of the carpenters' union since the turn of the century.



UBCJA

Members of Local #1149, Shipwrights, Joiners, & Boatbuilders, UBCJA, march in a 1947 Labor Day parade, San Francisco. Local #1149 is one of the earliest permanent labor organizations in California. Peter McGuire, Founding secretary of the carpenters' union, originated "Labor Day."



Hughes Aircraft (Photo Courtesy of Arnold Rickabaugh)

The "Spruce Goose," the world's largest aircraft, under construction by members of the carpenters' union at Hughes Aircraft, during World War II.



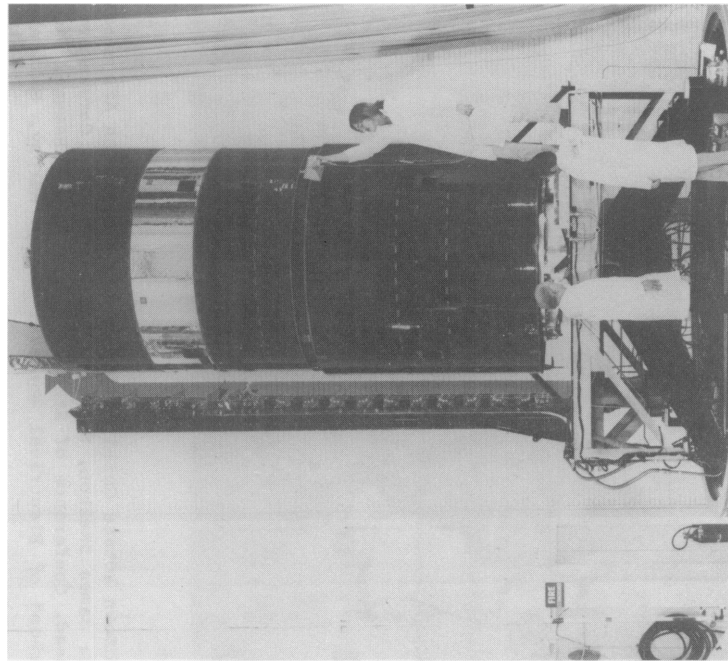
Los Angeles Times (Photo Courtesy of James N. Skelton)

Officials of the Hollywood studio craft unions and the Screen Actors Guild confer on the phone with AFL union leaders, during the 1946 strike-lockout. Left to right: James Skelton, Business Representative, Carpenters' Union Local #946; Herbert Sorrell, Painters' Union and head, Conference of Studio Unions; Ronald Reagan, SAG; Edward Arnold, SAG; Roy Tinsdale, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; George Murphy, SAG; and Gene Kelly, SAG.



UBCJA

Both ocean divers and space technicians are represented among the members of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners of America. Thus, the jurisdiction of the carpenters' union ranges from the depths of the ocean to outer space.



UBCJA