

FOUNDING of the *Journeyman Bakers*

It was a German immigrant named George Block, with a background in journalism, who finally got a union off the ground for the journeymen bakers in New York and Brooklyn in the 1880's.

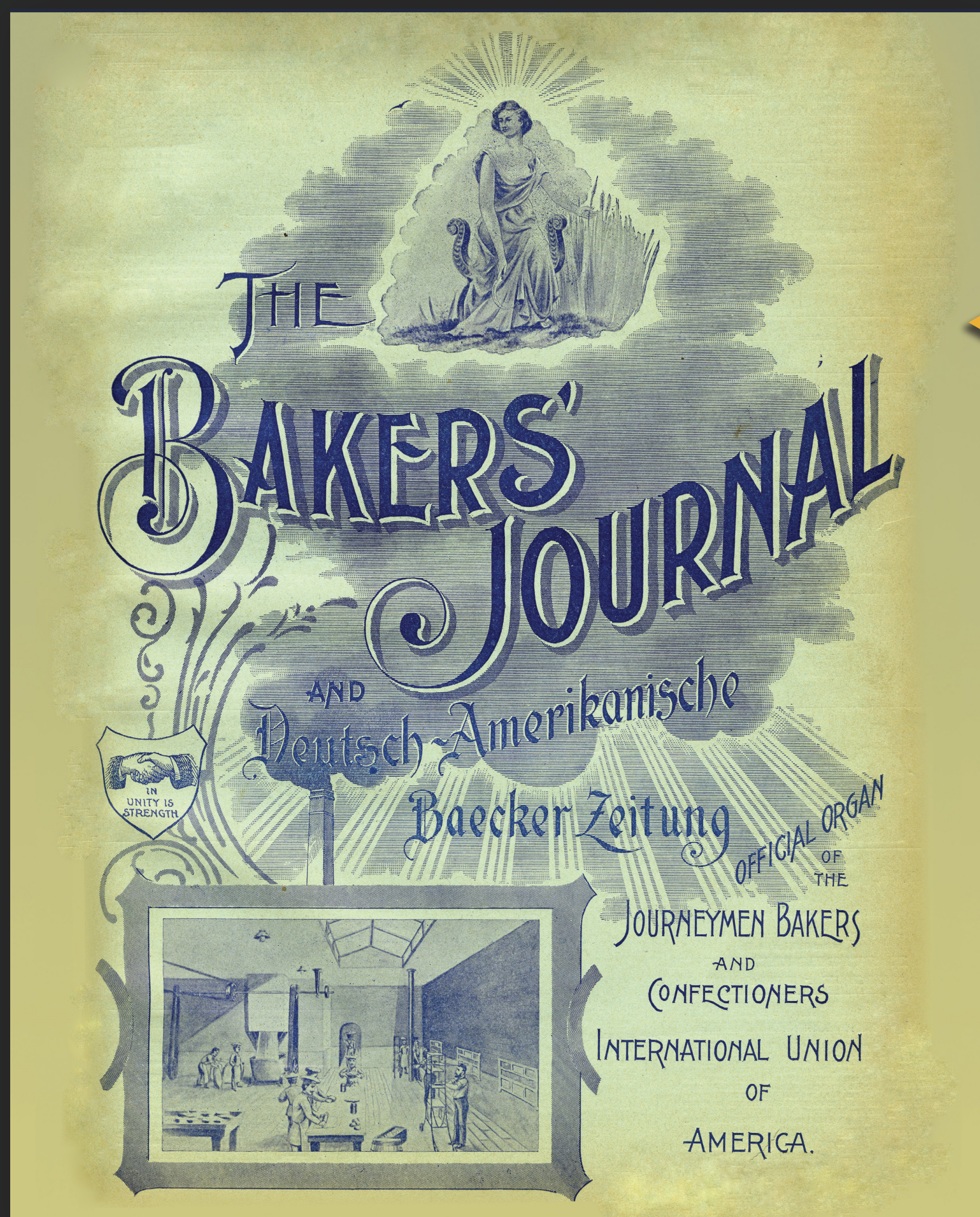
AVERAGE WORKDAY

16 hours	23 hours
Mon-Fri.	Sat.
.....	
8 hours	Sun.

AVERAGE WAGE

\$8.20 /	8 cents /
WEEK	HOUR
=	

Block collected census data and raised awareness about exploitative 'bakers boardinghouses', extreme heat and exhaustion inside the bakeries, and low quality of life for the workers.



Following a tumultuous first couple of years attempting to establish the Union, Block submitted to a small group of loyalists a plan for a newspaper devoted solely to the education and organization of the journeymen bakers.

"It worked, in fact it created wonders," Block later wrote of the outcome. *"The Union was growing and it was decided to call a convention of all other Bakers' Unions of the country to take place January 13, 1886, in Pittsburgh, Pa."*



At the 1886 Convention, a national brotherhood was adopted under the name **Journeyman Bakers' National Union**. George Block was elected as its National Secretary and editor of the Journal, which became the property of the National Union.



ORGANIZING workers in *Candy and Confection*

By the 1890's, the **Journeyman Bakers' National Union** had begun expanding into Canada and the first organizing of confectionery workers.

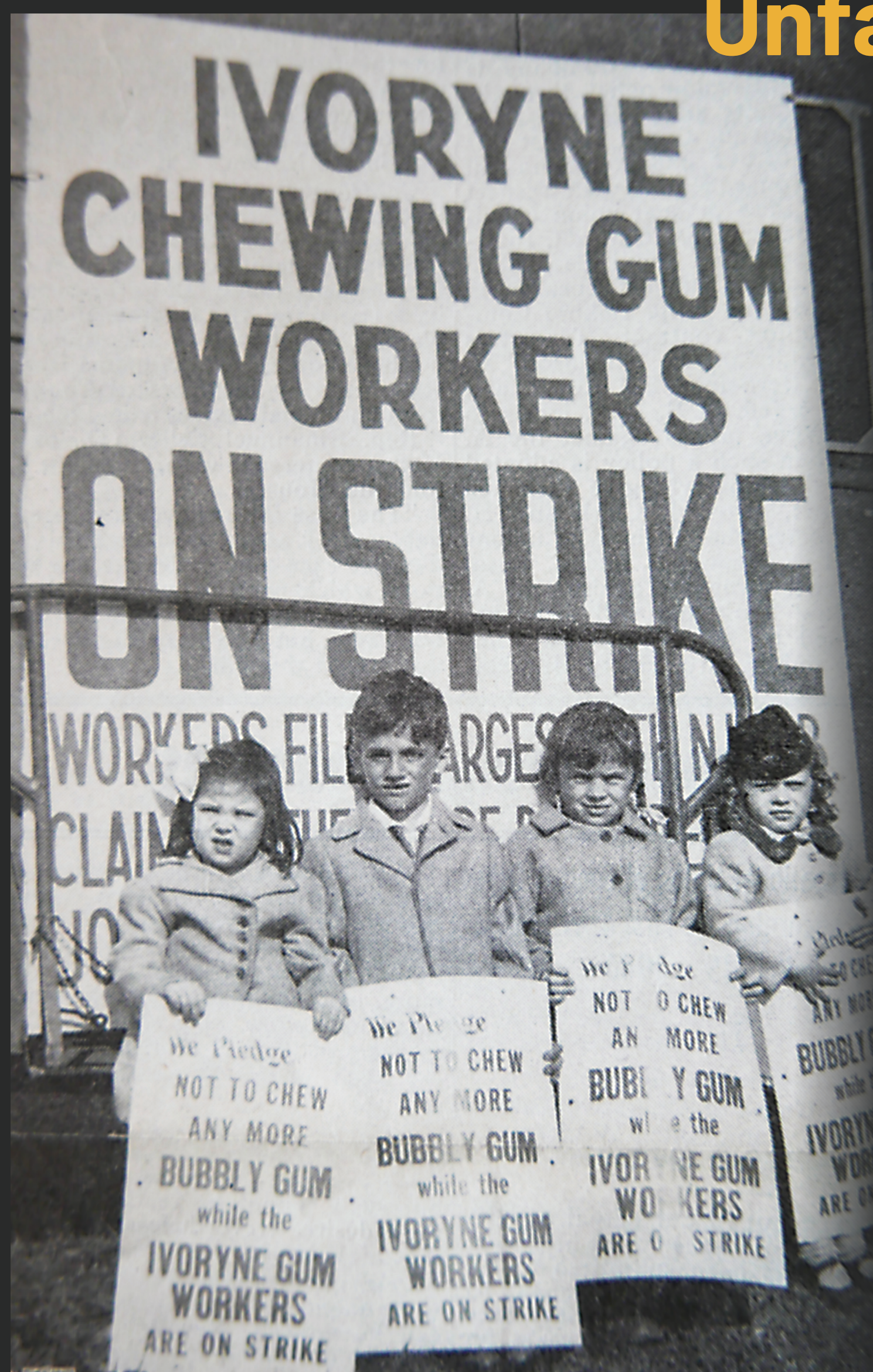
At its 5th convention in Detroit, Mich. in 1890, it voted to change the name to the **Journeyman Bakers & Confectioners' International Union**.

Around 1910, the name was changed again to the **Bakery & Confectionery Workers International Union of America**.



On April 2, 1937 more than 600 members of the United Chocolate Workers (CIU) union staged a sit-down strike at the **Hershey Chocolate Company** in Hershey, Pa. On April 7, an anti-union crowd of 3,000 stormed the plant and 25 workers were badly beaten in the ensuing battle. **In 1939, the workers affiliated with the Bakery and Confectionery Workers Union (AFL).**

Ivoryne Chewing Gum Non-Union: Unfair to Organized Labor!



"As soon as **Local 6, Philadelphia**, attempted to organize the workers of the **Ivoryne Chewing Gum Co.**, claiming 42 of 85 employees in favor of union membership, the company tried to interfere with further unionizing efforts in consequence of which strike action against the bubble gum manufacturing company developed. The picture shows the great interest little children are taking in picketing the plant and the good work they are doing for the union. Union men and women and friends of organized labor should write on their memory book that the Ivoryne Chewing Gum Company products are non-union and should not be patronized. The little children, who are carrying the signs, will enjoy with the union members a victory of union recognition."

- The **Bakers' & Confectioners' Journal**, May 3, 1947



Tobacco Workers ORGANIZE against the 'TRUST'

By the late 19th century, the tobacco industry was booming and massive corporations like the American Tobacco Company (also known as 'The Tobacco Trust') were dominating production.

Tobacco workers—many of which were women, immigrants, black workers in the South and often even children—faced extremely **low wages**, **long hours** and **dangerous factory conditions**.

In 1895, cigar makers, stemmers, packers and other tobacco workers gathered in St. Louis, Ms. to establish the **Tobacco Workers International Union (TWIU)**.

Tobacco workers at R.J. Reynolds in Winston-Salem, N.C. went on strike in 1947.

At the time, they were members of the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied Workers Union (FTO). Taft-Hartley provisions required national union leaders to sign affidavits that they were not members or in any way affiliated with the Communist Party in order to have access to the procedures of the NLRB. Complications around their refusal to do so **led the workers to finally join the TWIU** in 1949, after a long organizing effort stemming from the 1920's.

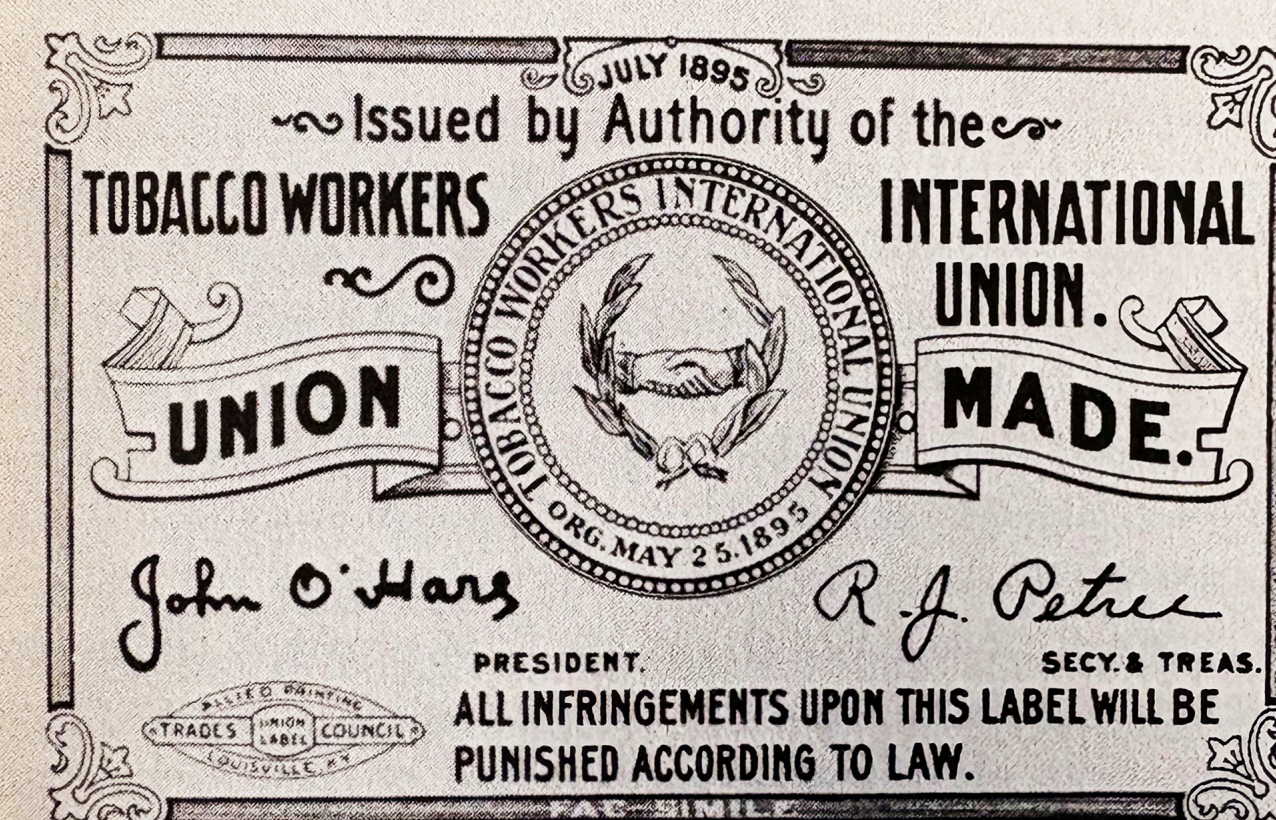


(Source: Valentine Museum)
Black hand stemmers and their white supervisor. Tobacco, tied in bundles, was packed in large barrel-like hogsheads.



(Photo by Lewis Hine)
Child laborers at American Tobacco Company in Wilmington, Del. in 1910.

This is The TOBACCO WORKERS' UNION LABEL



See that it is on all
Tobacco, Cigarettes
and Snuff you buy.

One of the enduring legacies of the early tobacco workers was an **aggressive Union Label campaign**, aimed at ensuring the working class only purchased union-made tobacco.

To this very day, union-labeled goods signal to consumers that a product was made with skilled, quality craftsmanship, by workers protected under a union contract.



Merger of Tobacco Workers With B&C Is A "Natural"

Rene Rondou, President of the Tobacco Workers International Union, discussed merger with the B&C International in an article "The Tobacco Worker", official organ of the TWIU. He wrote: "During the merger discussions between the officers of the B&C and TWIU there developed an increasing awareness that both organizations shared the same goals and aspirations on behalf of their members, that their constitutions were similar and that both unions solicited the views... of their local union leaders and members."

"They also became aware of another community of interest. With the increasing trend of tobacco companies, during recent years, to buy out companies in other industries in order to protect their money in the face of market losses due to anti-smoking pressures, several firms in the baking industry were purchased and are now controlled by tobacco companies. Consequently, many members of the Bakery Workers and Tobacco workers are now working for the same employer."

There is also a community of interest which comes to the surface when the history of both organizations is viewed.

For example, shortly following the establishment of the National Tobacco Workers Union of America by 10 local unions in 1895, it enlarged its jurisdiction to include Canada and became the Tobacco

found the value and importance of the union label as a "symbol of independence" against the big tobacco trust. Bakers had found the union label important in their fight against the bread trust.

Merger of the two unions developed out of a decision by the TWIU Convention in 1976 when the Convention voted that their General Executive Board be "instructed... to enter into formal merger discussions with other AFL-CIO-CLC International Unions which are considered most likely to promote and advance the objectives of the TWIU and the security and well-being of its membership..."

The TWIU engaged discussions with other trade unions. But, as the report in the TWIU newspaper states: "The Bakery and Confectionery Workers' International Union was interested enough to negotiate a true merger of the two organizations", rather than absorption, which other unions had sought.

Merger of the two unions will provide additional strength to both and enhance organizing efforts in the South. Obviously, both organizations are the gainers and the membership of the merged organization will benefit most by this development.



Rene Rondou
President
Tobacco Workers
International Union

Workers International Union. This, of course parallels the development of the B&C. Both the B&C and the TWIU

TWIU President Rene Rondou writes of the 1978 decision to merge with the Bakery & Confectionery Workers (B&C) International Union. ►

Grain Millers

ASSEMBLE after NLRA

Grain mill workers initially relied on craft unions and labor groups like the Knights of Labor for representation at the turn of the century.

The passage of the **National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) in 1935** gave workers the legal protection to organize, and grain industry workers the confidence to pursue a dedicated industrial union.

Local unions in flour mills, feed mills and grain elevators came together in 1937 to form the **American Federation of Grain Millers (AFGM)**. With momentum from President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, the Union was able to negotiate standardized wage scales, seniority systems, safety protections and pension and health plans.



The 1990's would see the effects of a "merger mania" during the 80's—many Grain Miller employers downsizing, right-sizing, re-engineering and retrofitting their facilities.

The AFGM and BC&T decided they were stronger together, and merged to become the **Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM)**.

Farm Forum/Futures

Deadly dust

Grain system injects explosive material

By WILLIAM H. INMAN

United Press International

The nation's silos and elevators, cluttered with rice, corn, wheat and beans, rise from the Midwestern plains like ballistic missiles, ready to detonate into death and destruction.

In fact, 80 percent of them are packed with dust more powerful, pound for pound, than dynamite, and could explode with major loss of life and limb.

The danger, ironically, will be greater with the signing of a major wheat agreement with the Russians.

In the past 25 years alone, 210 American workers have died in 434 major grain elevator explosions; 778 people were seriously injured. More than half the fatalities have come since the mid-1970s.

YET THE nation lacks a uniform grain dust standard, which experts say could reduce explosions by more than half.

Instead, government agencies — federal, state and local — adhere to differing and perplexing inspection rules. Fire safety standards vary. Respirator standards

"It is readily apparent,"

conceded a U.S. Agriculture Department blue-ribbon panel, "that no single agency or entity has total authority, jurisdiction or responsibility for the grain industry."

A UPI study of the world's largest and wealthiest grain handling business revealed:

• There is a widespread practice of injecting explosive dust into the grain stream to boost profits.

Federal law permits 2 percent of any grain sold to be foreign matter, a practice banned by other grain producers like Canada and Australia.

Industry representatives held three closed meetings this year with officials of David Stockman's Office of Management and Budget, charged with review of a controversial grain dust proposal. Since the meetings, the OMB has asked for an indefinite delay in the rule-making process.

"The absence of openness," charged Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., "creates the specter of special interest politics."

The Occupational and Health Administration, whose grain investigations dropped from 466 in 1977 to 43 last year, has launched an

chief export zone: Texas and Louisiana.

"The grain handling story is one that goes from crisis to crisis," said Bob Schoeff, a prominent grain dust researcher with Kansas State University. "It takes a crisis to motivate people. If people don't read about explosions and danger, they don't get motivated to improve things."

"This situation," he said, "may be one that has to get worse before it gets better."

MANY PREDICT a crisis ahead with the signing of a new Soviet wheat pact.

More than 9 million tons of grain will be processed soon by many of the nation's 15,000 grain elevators and mills, including the same Gulf Coast export terminals which exploded with seismic fury at the height of the last Soviet export sale. During a single week in December 1977, 54 people were killed and \$80 million damage was inflicted.

"It was a record time for big fatal explosions," said Rep. Joseph Gaydos, D-Pa., whose subcommittee investigated the 1977-78 grain disasters. "Silos were going off around the country with the frequency of skyrocketing on the Fourth of July."

PERHAPS THE single most explosive facet of handling involves the legal practice of injecting hazar-

ous dust into grain. "It's just ridiculous and it's done all the time on a widespread basis," said Bill Borwegen, industrial hygienist with the Food and Beverage trade union. "The dust is extracted for processing, then placed back in the grain stream. This stuff has little food value for humans and is highly explosive."

Collected grain dust sells for \$30 a ton, but grain averages \$120, he said. "So it makes economic sense."



This is the scene of a Continental Grain elevator explosion Dec. 22, 1977, in Westego, La.

Five people were killed.

In 1980, there were 43 explosions; 1981, 21 explosions; 1982, 14 explosions; 1983, eight explosions to date.

But when that grain starts moving again, cautioned Joseph Cindrich, USDA grain elevator safety coordinator, "the risk factor increases proportionately."

But the U.S. industry is changing. Many of the larger elevators now compress "fugitive" dust into small

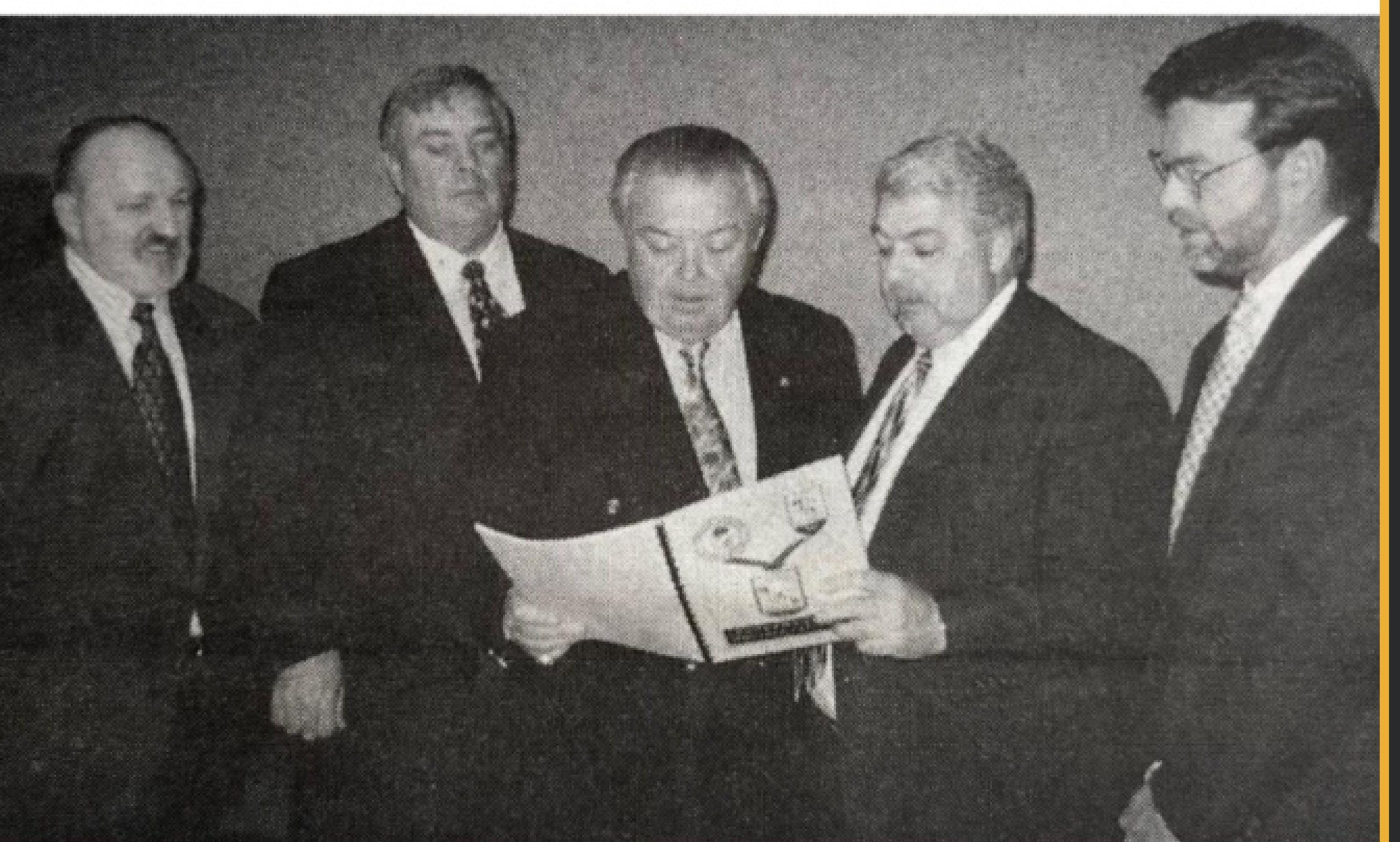
Canada and Australia ban the practice of "dirty grain" handling and have excellent safety records. Australia — which exports more than 100 million bushels a year — has recorded only one minor elevator explosion in 60 years.

Still, the process is "totally prohibitive" for most operators, he said, and despite voluntary industry guidelines to the contrary, the practice of dirtying grain continues.

A far more explosive issue concerns the nation's first uniform grain standard.

BC&T and AFGM complete merger during 'historic' October convention

Two unions will join to become BCTGM January 1, 1999



BC&T and AFGM officers review the merger agreement. They are, from left, BC&T Exec. Vice Pres. Joseph Thibodeau, AFGM Secy.-Treas. Larry Barber, AFGM Pres. Larry Jackson, BC&T Pres. Frank Hurt and BC&T Secy.-Treas. David B. Durkee.

By the mid 1970's, worker health issues related to pesticides and grain elevator explosions were becoming more and more common. In December of 1977, two deadly grain elevator explosions struck within five days of one another—**intensifying pressure from AFGM and the Labor Movement** for federal action on grain dust hazards.

A decade later, those efforts helped lead to OSHA's **Grain Handling Facilities Standard**, a landmark safety regulation and a major victory for grain milling workers.

