

STICKIN' WITH THE UNION: Songs From Wisconsin Labor History



Larry Penn and Darryl Holter

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Collector records # 1948-C

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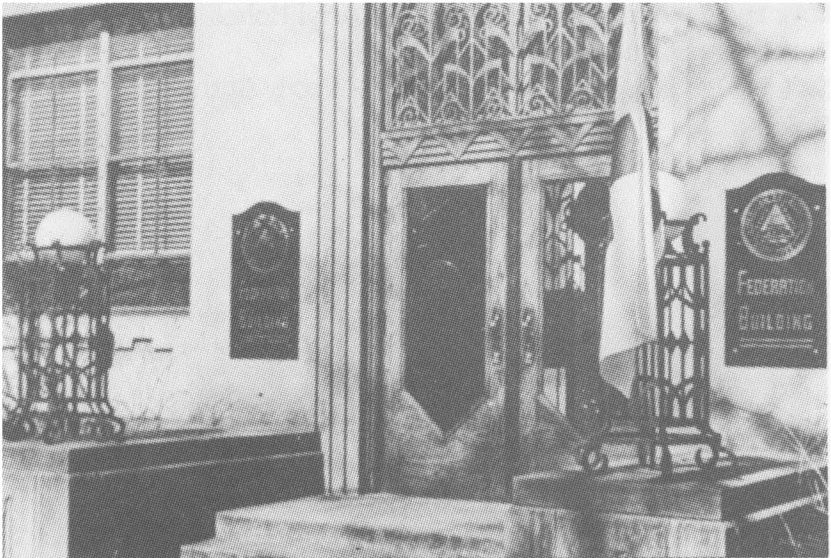
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Silver Spring, MD 20902

FIFTY YEARS AGO

Every union had to begin somewhere and one of the largest unions in America began right here in Wisconsin. In 1932 a group of Wisconsin state employees held a meeting in the State Capitol in Madison. They were concerned with political attempts to destroy the civil service system and to return to the old, corrupt patronage system. Recognizing the value of organizing as a union, the new group linked up with the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor and eventually received a charter from the American Federation of Labor. In 1936, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees was formed as a national organization, but its first local, located in Madison, retained its number as AFSCME Local 1.

Joe Glazer performed this song at convention meetings that took place on the 50-year anniversary of AFSCME. We borrowed the song with his permission and Larry added a verse that puts the founding of AFSCME in the State of Wisconsin.

Fifty years ago, there was no such thing as public sector unions, but today these unions are among the largest in the country. While private sector unions have been hurt by runaway shops, deregulation, and the growth of union-busting, public sector unions have been growing as more and more workers in the public sector see the value of organization. With good reason the song thanks "those AFSCME pioneers" and expresses hope that the union will be "bigger and better fifty years from now."



AFSCME's first headquarters building in Madison, Wisconsin.

Photo: AFSCME

FIFTY YEARS AGO

Joe Glazer ©1986

(Chorus)

Fifty years ago
Fifty years ago
AFSCME was a little baby
Fifty years ago
Started as just a kid
But look at the things we did
We've come a long way since that day
Fifty years ago

There was no job security
Fifty years ago
We fought to feed our families
Fifty years ago
Our dignity they tried to rob
Fifty years ago
We fought for justice on the job
Fifty years ago

(Chorus)

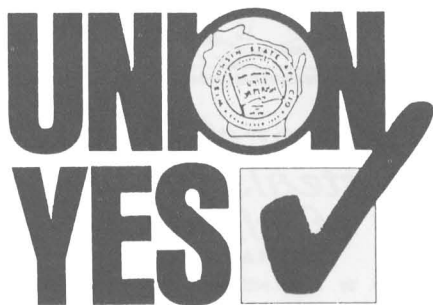
There was no collective bargaining
Fifty years ago
We all recall the boss was king
Fifty years ago
As we look back upon those years
Fifty years ago
We thank those AFSCME pioneers of
Fifty years ago

(Chorus)

The dream of standing up had come
Fifty years ago
It took a hold in Madison
Fifty years ago
Who'd have thought that little seed
Fifty years ago
Would grow to be a mighty tree

(Chorus)

Fifty years from now
Fifty years from now
The union's gonna be bigger and better
Because we showed them how
Because we showed them how
Because we showed them how
The union's gonna be bigger and better
Fifty years from now



BABIES IN THE MILL

The Industrial Revolution led to an increase in child labor. It was no longer necessary to use skilled labor once the process of making a product had been broken down to simple tasks and when machinery was used. Factory owners reduced labor costs by laying off adult males and hiring women and children. Kids were paid less and it was harder for them to organize unions.

Dorsey Dixon captured the real-life impact of child labor in this brilliant composition marked by its haunting tune and lyrics. Dixon describes the situation in the textile mills where the use of child labor continued well into the 20th century. Organized labor campaigned for an end to child labor and coupled that demand with the need for a public school system. Our society is better because of labor's contribution.

Today, we think of child labor as a vestige of the past. However, the exploitation of children under the age of 16 is growing in the U.S. in fast food restaurants, phone solicitation, computer data entry and production of electronics. Much of this work is done at home, and is called "homework." It's especially growing in the rural areas of our nation's heartland. In the less developed economies of the Third World, hundreds of thousands of children are employed as manufacturing workers at substandard wages. "Babies in the Mill" has a contemporary as well as an historical meaning.



This "stickerette" used by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) criticizes child labor.

BABIES IN THE MILL

Dorsey Dixon ©1950

I used to be a factory hand
When things were moving slow
When children worked in the textile mills
Each morning they would go
Every morning just at five
The whistle blew on time
And called the babies out of bed
At the age of eight or nine

(Chorus)

Get out of bed, little sleepy head
And get your bite to eat
The factory whistle is calling you
There's no more time to sleep

The children all grew up unlearned
They never went to school
They never learned to read or write
They learned to spin and spool
Every time I close my eyes
I see the picture clear
When textile work was carried on
By babies in the mill

(Chorus)

Old timer, can't you see that scene
Through all the year's gone by
Those babies all went on the job
The same as you or I
I know you're glad that things have changed
And kids have lots of fun
While we go in and do the jobs
That babies used to run

(Chorus)

THE GHOSTS OF BAY VIEW

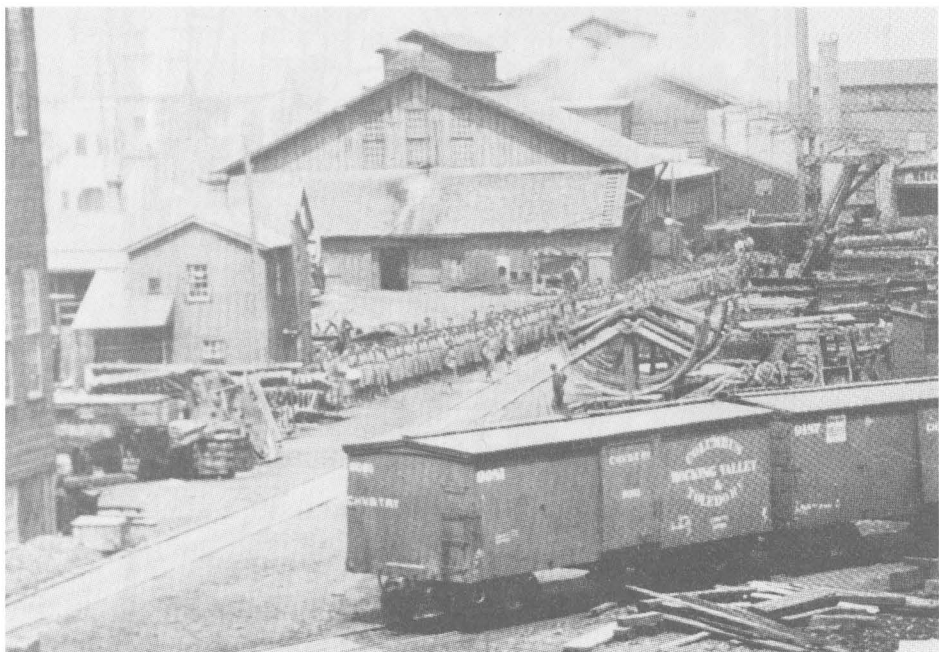
"Eight hours for work, Eight hours for rest, and Eight hours for what we will" old labor standard

It's easy to miss, but there is a historical marker tucked away in Bay View on the corner of Superior and Russell. It's too bad it is not a part of every Wisconsin worker's coming of age, to visit the site, because it is more than a marker, it is a monument to a price once paid in the struggle for better working conditions.

It was on this site one balmy day in May where workers fifteen hundred strong marched to the gates of the North Chicago Rolling Mill in support of the eight hour day. It was on this site one balmy day in 1886, where the state militia stood with orders to kill. It was on this site one balmy May 5th morning where the bloody price was paid.

This is the place where two companies of militia, led by Major George P. Traumer fired a volley into the marchers, now less than two hundred yards away, and killed seven! Now, what say you Jeremiah Rusk, Governor of all the people?: "I saw my duty and I done it."

The old rolling mill is long gone, but it is too bad it's not part of every worker's pilgrimage to stand here. For there are vibrations coming from these bricks that would strengthen our resolve to hold firm the gains won at a cost so dear, by those who have marched before us.



Wisconsin National Guardsmen march in the yard of the E.P. Allis Reliance Works in Milwaukee during the strike for the 8-hour day in May, 1886.

THE GHOSTS OF BAY VIEW

Larry Penn ©1986

The years roll around and yellow the page
But the history of labor won't mellow with age
The blood in the workers will always run red
When the wind blows a time for a change

The ground here is hallowed, it's haunted they say
By the ghost of the workers that came here in May
When the killing was seen as a duty by some
To put down the eight hour day

Now here in Bay View it's all quiet today
But you still hear 'em call for an eight hour day

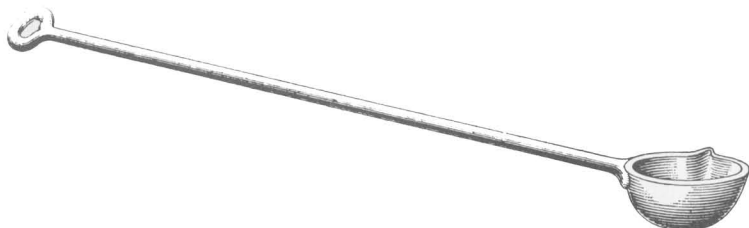
The sound of the rifles has faded away
The bones of the Rolling Mill gone to decay
And only the hall where the puddlers met
Still stands like an eight hour day

It's time once again for us to unite
It's time once again for labor to fight
Tell me what will you do for your roses and rest
If they take back the eight hour day

Here in Bay View it's all quiet today
But you still hear 'em call for an eight hour day

To all who would labor for board and for bed
To all who would give up on Union for dead
The blood in the workers will always run red
When the winds blow a time for a change

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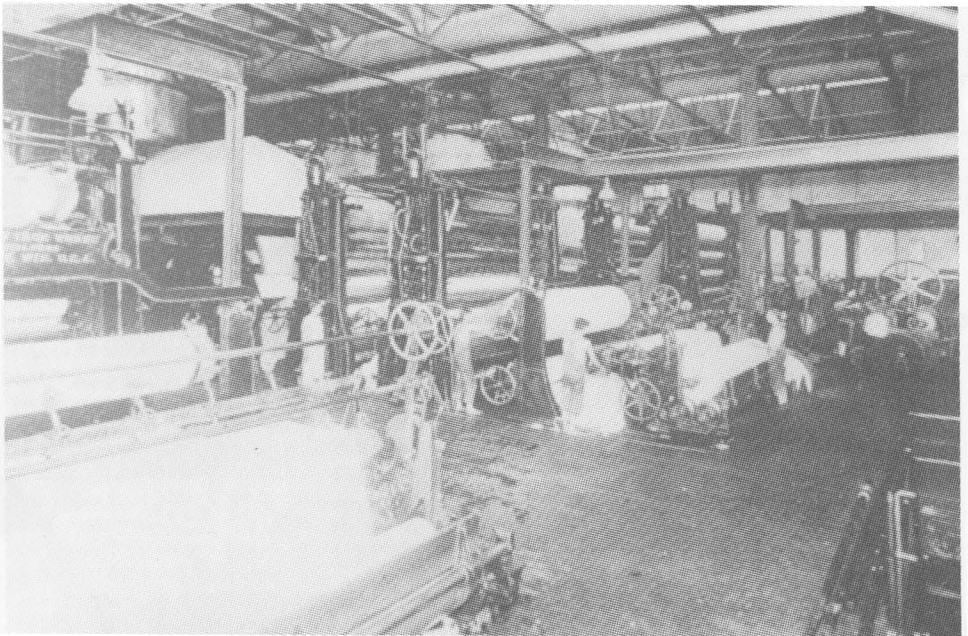
SATURDAY NIGHT

Nobody likes to work on Saturday night, and it was the same for the paperworkers of northern Wisconsin in 1902. The paper industry grew rapidly after the turn of the century and paper mills dotted the river banks of the Fox, Wisconsin, Menominee, Wolf, Oconto, Eau Claire and Peshtigo rivers. Water power drove the paper mills and the mill owners, determined to keep up with the growing demand for paper, kept the mills running 24 hours a day. "The river runs day and night," they said, "why should the factory ever close?"

Workers on the day shift worked 11 hours a day, six days a week. Night shift employees put in 13 hours a day, including Saturdays. But in 1902 the paperworkers got together to ask the owners to shut the plant down on Saturday nights. "Saturday night off" became the rallying cry for a strike that started in Appleton and swept through the Fox River Valley.

The Kimberly and Clark Company agreed to close down on Saturday night, but only on the condition that its competitors also agreed. Other mill owners refused and the paperworkers walked off the job. The strike lasted for more than 100 days. It ended in a partial victory when several paper mills shut down on Saturday nights.

It took nearly 40 years before the paper mills were organized in the late 1930s and 1940s. But the fight for "Saturday Night" was the starting point for trade unionism in Wisconsin's paper mills. It's an interesting episode in labor's hidden history.



Paperworkers in the Kimberly-Clark mills in 1922.

SATURDAY NIGHT

Darryl Holter ©1989

Come with me to the Fox River Valley
Lined with tall pine trees
And spend some time with the paperworkers
At the turn of the century
The early paper makers learned to harness water power
To drive the first factories that made paper by the hour.
The owners built their mills where the rushing water flowed
It turned the wheels; it made the factory go
"The river runs day and night," they said
"Why should the factory ever close?"
Even on Saturday night

Crowded into unheated mills, they're workin' night and day
Crushin' the pulp, stokin' the boiler, keepin' the spindles straight
One week they work 7 to 6 p.m. six days a week
The next week they're on the night shift, 78 hours a week
They came from failing prairie towns in the upper midwest
They lost their farms, they lost their jobs in town
They're glad to work, but they still recall that needed respite
Saturday night

Jack Lapin is a paper man, a machine tender by trade
And he knows every inch of the great northwoods from Eau Claire
up to Green Bay
But the early morning factory whistle gets earlier each a.m.
And Jack wants the right to spend Saturday night playing poker
with his good friends
There's talk inside the paper mill, the union's in the wind
The orders just keep piling up day by day
Jack Lapin tells his fellow workers the time might be right to strike
For Saturday night

Young Tom Strock works the loading dock, but he's so tired he can
hardly stand
He thinks maybe he could come to life again if he could hold a
woman's hand
Tom met a girl up in Appleton, she was friendly enough all right
But Tom knows he won't get very far if he can't get off Saturday night
At six o'clock on Saturday, 1902
They walked off the job up in Appleton
And up and down the Fox River Valley the strikers' song was sung:
"We want Saturday Night"

FROZEN IN TIME

(Requiem for a Brick)

"Teach History, and practice civic ritual"

Ronald Reagan (fairwell address)

Kelly Sparks, president of U.A.W. Local 180 in Racine has a number of beatitudes that in my mind are prerequisites for union leaders. Kelly has a great sense of labor history, and a hunger and thirst for social justice.

Kelly comes out of a coal mining heritage, so his love for the union is built right in. Surely his appreciation for labor music goes along with the turf, since so much of it comes from that region and those struggles. With that he conceived a concert of labor music, the proceeds of which were donated to the food banks in Racine-Kenosha, an area hit hard by plant closings.

The odds against getting so many egos in one place at the same time are awesome, but when Kelly dreams, things happen. In 1986 he succeeded in getting Joe Glazer and Pete Seeger to head up a host of others in the largest labor concert the Midwest had ever seen.

If you can't get Woody, then Arlo Guthrie will do, and in 1988, he came too. Along with a new appreciation for his father's music, brought on by the timely release of the Smithsonian's recording "A Vision Shared" (Folkways).

Now kind reader, an account of the Italian Hall Tragedy was written by Darryl Holter and published in the Wisconsin Labor History Society's newsletter. It has been included here so that you may see how the chain links of labor history fall in a marvelous heritage, from Calumet, Michigan to Kenosha, Wisconsin, and from Woody Guthrie to Arlo.

75 YEARS AGO: THE ITALIAN HALL TRAGEDY IN CALUMET, MICHIGAN

*"Take a trip with me in 1913,
To Calumet, Michigan in the Copper Country.
I'll take you to a place called Italian Hall
Where the miners are having their big Christmas ball."*

Woody Guthrie, "1913 Massacre"

In one of his most moving songs, Woody Guthrie describes an event that shook the nation on Christmas Day, 75 years ago. In the small town of Calumet, located about 200 miles north of Green Bay, Wisconsin, copper miners employed by the Calumet-Hecla Mining Company voted to strike in the summer of 1913. Copper miners numbered about 15,000, including nearly all European nationalities, especially large numbers of Finnish workers. The copper miners decided to form a union and affiliate with the Western Federation of Miners. When management persisted in its refusal to recognize the union, the copper miners called a strike. The mining managers brought in professional strikebreakers, detectives and gunmen. When the copper miners continued to strike, 4,000 troops from the state militia positioned themselves near the mining gates and escorted scabs past the strikers and into the pits.

In December 1913, the strike had lasted for six bitter months with no end in sight. Business leaders formed a powerful Citizen's Alliance to defeat the strike and prevent unionism from spreading across the Upper

Penninsula. Meanwhile the strikers tried to survive the winter months. As Christmas grew near, the Women's Auxiliary decided to organize a big Christmas party. They wanted to make sure that every child of a striking worker would receive a holiday gift. The party was held on the second floor of the Italian Hall in Calumet. This was the setting for Guthrie's tragic story.

Guthrie makes the listener a participant in the events that shocked Calumet and the rest of America. "I'll take you in a door and up a high stairs, singing and dancing is heard everywhere. I'll let you shake hands with the people you see, and watch the kids dance round the big Christmas tree." But while a little girl plays the piano for hushed party-goers, outside a group of anti-union thugs are planning to disrupt the festivities.

Although there remains dispute over the true cause of the catastrophe, it is clear that some person or persons yelled "Fire!" into the crowded hall. A mad stampede for the stairs leading to the first floor began. Perhaps because the doors opened inward, or, as some strikers (and Guthrie) later charged, because "the thugs held the door" hundreds of people, mostly children, could not exit at the bottom of the stairs. Meanwhile scores of others were plummeting down the tall stairs. Those who reached the doors first were knocked down and crushed by others who followed. As more and more people tried desperately to escape, the stairway became jammed with panic-stricken children who piled up on top of each other, in many cases with arms and legs painfully entangled or even broken. After a few moments, the children trapped at the bottom of the pile began to suffocate. When the door was finally opened and the injured removed, 72 persons, mostly children, were found dead in the stairwell of Italian Hall.

"We carried our children back up to their tree," wrote Guthrie. He described the massive funeral procession that took place. "The piano played a slow funeral tune, and the town was lit up by a cold Christmas moon." One sad participant in that grim procession was twenty-one-year-old August Mattson. He carried the tiny casket of a child to her grave in the frozen, copper-rich ground of Calumet.

The Italian Hall tragedy horrified the nation and sparked a congressional inquiry into its causes. Still, the question of who cried "fire!" was never definitively answered. Many strikers blamed the company thugs. There were reports that a man with a Citizens Alliance button was standing in the area where the cry originated. But no one was ever apprehended for causing the riot, nor did anyone ever step forward to claim responsibility — or even to present solid information to identify the person who yelled "Fire!"

In 1984 the Italian Hall was torn down over the protests of a handful of people who remembered its history. Today the site has been made into a small park with a plaque commemorating Annie Clemenc, a pro-union activist who organized the Christmas party for the Women's Auxiliary and was dubbed by the press as "the miners' Joan of Arc."

Three-quarters of a century is a long time. Looking back, we tend to think of this tragedy as a highly unusual event. Yet violence against workers was a common feature of this period. Indeed, our knowledge of the past is sharply punctuated by these scarred and bloody "signposts of history" — the deadly shots that killed striking workers at Bay View, Wisconsin in 1886, the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Fire in New York City, or the miners' strike in Ludlow, Colorado in 1914 when 33 men, women and children were shot or burned to death after the state militia fired into their tents and set them on fire. Placed in this context, where company profits counted for more than workers' lives, the Italian Hall tragedy seems like just another sad chapter in a long saga of labor's history.

The strike failed. Yet the Italian Hall tragedy left its mark on the labor movement. Thousands of strikers, blacklisted by the mining companies, left the Copper Country to find work in other areas. The memory of the strike and the deaths of innocent children remained with them forever. When it became clear that the strike effort was doomed, Augie Mattson left Calumet to find work in the mines near Ironwood. There Mattson became a local hero after rescuing 25 miners during the Pabst Mine Disaster. But in 1927 he was fired by the company for attempting to organize a union. Mattson made his way to Kenosha, where he soon became a union leader while working at the Nash automobile plant. His son, Arvo Mattson, carried on the tradition, became a labor leader in Kenosha, a member of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO Executive Board, and a founder of the Wisconsin Labor History Society.

Like others who had witnessed the "1913 Massacre," Augie Mattson carried the memory of the Italian Hall tragedy with him. Those who perished in 1913 made their way into the history books. And many of those who survived the events of Calumet sought to build a better society for all workers.

Indeed, it was an act of "Holy Communion" when Arlo was presented with a brick from Italian Hall on the night of the 1988 Concert. We heard you, Mr. Reagan!

FROZEN IN TIME

Larry Penn ©1988

The cold winter moon still rises to find
A trace of the old Calumet Copper Mine
And the place where the children were waiting inside
For legend to freeze them in time

The Keweenaw wind blows lonesome and cold
It cuts to the marrow and chills to the soul
With the memory of children like yours and like mine
Too young to be frozen in time

Well I took a trip with old Woody last night
On a ballad he carried me back to the site
It can only be found on the wings of a song
Now that all of these places are gone

The mine and the buildings and the children are gone
But I still hear the strains of Woody's old song
Your lust for green money has no place to hide
Your deed has been frozen in time

The wrecker's ball leaves not a brick upon brick
And the grand balcony's not a stick upon stick
An army would leave not a stone upon stone
But still it's all frozen in time

Well I took a trip

For all that we've made with our labor and pain
For all of the progress we ever have gained
The lesson we learn from your greed and your shame
Will always be frozen in time

You can tear down our buildings and haul them away
Tie up our Unions with scab and with chain
Forever our history will always remain
Because it's all frozen in time

Come on take a trip with old Woody tonight
On a ballad he'll carry you back to the site
It can only be found on the wings of a song
Now that all of these places are gone



Copper miners in Michigan's upper penninsula in 1913.

Photo: Calumet County Historical Society

SO LONG, PARTNER — Larry

It seems ironic that so many of our great unions are celebrating fifty-year anniversaries during such anti-labor times. It's not so ironic though, that in these greedy times, unions are an obstacle to avarice. This phenomenon should prove to anyone who thinks about it: Unions do work!

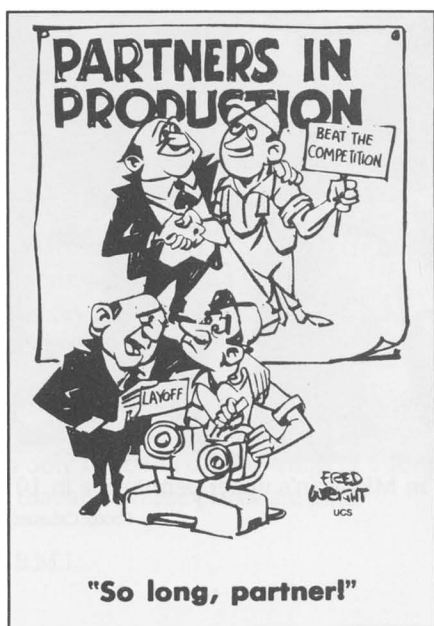
I was honored when the United Electrical Workers International Union invited me to sing at their fiftieth anniversary celebration in Milwaukee. The U.E. is a neat union.

It is a U.E. policy that no union official is paid more than the highest paid electrical worker. This policy is intended to reduce featherbedding, and keep the leadership interested in the union as a social movement. So I played my guitar in the Crystal Ballroom of the Marc Plaza Hotel for the U.E., and I didn't charge them any more than the highest-paid electrical worker!

One of the perks for this job was a copy of "So Long, Partner," a collection of the late Fred Wright's cartoons. It was produced by the U.E., since he was one of their own, and like the union his career spanned fifty years. Fred Wright's talents, though, went far beyond mere bread and butter issues, and many of his cartoons found their way into the big time (and not so big time) daily newspapers.

You may have seen his most famous cartoon, "So long, partner." The first panel depicted a boss with his arm around a worker saying, "We are partners in production." In the second picture, after they had over-produced and the inevitable recession set in, the boss is saying, "So long, partner."

Fred, this one's for you.



SO LONG, PARTNER

Larry Penn ©1985

They will ask you to be
Partners in production
They'll invite you to come in
And be a friend
And they'll keep the promise goin'
While the money's rollin' in
But it will be so long, partner
In the end

They will ask you to
Come in and share the burden
In the awesome task
To keep 'em from the red
And they'll keep you in the dream
While the money's nice and green
But it will be so long, partner
In the end

Now they'll tell you
Not to worry 'bout the farmer
Even though he feeds you now and then
It should come as no surprise
It's just "Free Enterprise"
And they'll tell him so long, partner
In the end

They will ask you to be
Partners in production
And they're askin' us for
Soldiers once again
So I'll say it just once more
If we have to go to war
It will just be so long, partner
In the end

WILLIE THE SCAB

"I can hire half the working class to kill the other half"

Jay Gould

Thirty precious years of a person's lifetime spent on a job will not confer upon it a title of ownership as "sacred" as one granted to even the most rusted hulk of an automobile. Jay Gould knew that. Today's robber barons, the Corporate Raiders know it too. Today's Supreme Court will back them up. Witness the 6-3 ruling that gave more job preference rights to strikebreakers than to the TWA Flight Attendants. Times are tough for organized labor.

We've been backing up for a long time. When the conglomerate heads of Patrick Cudahy demanded that the members of Local P-40 U.F.C.W. accept concessions for the third time in less than four years, the strike vote was 687-30. You can't hold your head up if you don't stand.

The scabs came in the next day. For over two years of police overtime and support for the meat-packing industry's insatiable greed by the Courts and Legislatures, the union stood, and lost! My Brothers and Sisters of Local P-40 . . . down like Custer!

If you wonder what kind of society will lock a person up for stealing a loaf of bread, even if it is needed to feed their kids, and then call out the National Guard to protect them if they cross a picket line to take someone else's job, you may find, as I did, that tofu tastes better and better. I sure won't eat any scab bacon.



Members of Local P-40 walk the picket line at Patrick Cudahy in 1951.

Photo: Wisconsin State AFL-CIO

WILLIE THE SCAB

Larry Penn ©1987

Willie bought a gun he robbed a P.D.Q.
He got arrested too and he went to jail
They put him in a cell with just an old tin cup
Until his time was up and he made his bail
 Momma told him it was wrong to rob
 There was no other job that he could do
But if you take a gun and rob a P.D.Q. and get arrested too
You're going away

Now Willie doesn't need a gun to steal from you
I'm sad to say it's true in Cudahy
The Police will come and make you stand aside
While Willie goes inside to draw your pay
 Momma told him it was wrong to rob
 There was no other job that he could do
Willie doesn't need a gun to be a scab but ain't it just as bad
And stealin' too

Willie comes around when he gets down and out
Nobody cares about his kind of need
The Corporations come and say free enterprise
They're gonna use these guys to make you bleed
 Momma told him it was wrong to rob
 There was no other job that he could do
Million dollar Corporations write the book but like the common crook
They'll steal from you

©Cookie Man Music — B.M.I.



WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

This picket-line classic asks the fundamental question that emerges every time workers decide to put down their tools and go on strike. Written by Florence Reece for striking mineworkers, the song has been used on countless numbers of picket lines from Maine to San Diego.

It used to be said that the only power workers have is the right to withhold their labor. But even that power is limited today by the use of professional strikebreakers and laws that give more rights to scabs than to striking workers. Today, the right to strike often means the "right" to give your job to a scab. As a result, the whole system of collective bargaining in America is falling apart. Without the threat of a strike, employers have little incentive to bargain in good faith. No wonder unionists are trying new tactics such as corporate campaigns and in-plant strategies.

This version of "Which Side Are You On" highlights a long and bloody chapter in Wisconsin's labor history, the Kohler Strike of 1934-1941. Kohler, Wisconsin was the ultimate company town run by the Kohler family and complete with its own company police force. Workers organized a union in 1934, but old Walter S. Kohler, Sr. set up a company union instead. When the workers decided to go on strike, blackshirted company police sought to keep the plant open. The result was a picket line confrontation that ended when several workers were shot by company guards. Two were killed.

The violence at Kohler eliminated unionism for twenty years. But in 1954 the Kohler workers re-organized, this time with the United Automobile Workers. Another long strike took place. Only in 1960, after a six-year strike, were the Kohler workers able to win a contract with the company. Since then relations between labor and management have improved considerably, a far cry from the 1934 strike when Kohler workers asked the question, "Which Side Are You On?"



Memorial ceremony at strike headquarters outside Kohler. Standing behind the left wreath is Charles Heymanns, an important leader in the Kohler strike.

WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

Florence Reece

Come all you good workers, a story I will tell
Of how the good old union has come in here to dwell

(Chorus)

Which side are you on?
Which side are you on?
Which side are you on?
Which side are you on?

They say in Sheboygan County
There's no neutrality
Either you're with the union
Or you're a scab for the company

(Chorus)

In nineteen hundred and thirty four
Kohler's streets ran red
Bullets fired by company guards
Left two young strikers dead

(Chorus)

My daddy worked at Kohler
And I'm my daddy's son
And I stick with the union
'Til every struggle is won

(Chorus)

So don't scab for the bosses
Don't listen to their lies
Because workers never had a thing
Until they organized

(Chorus)

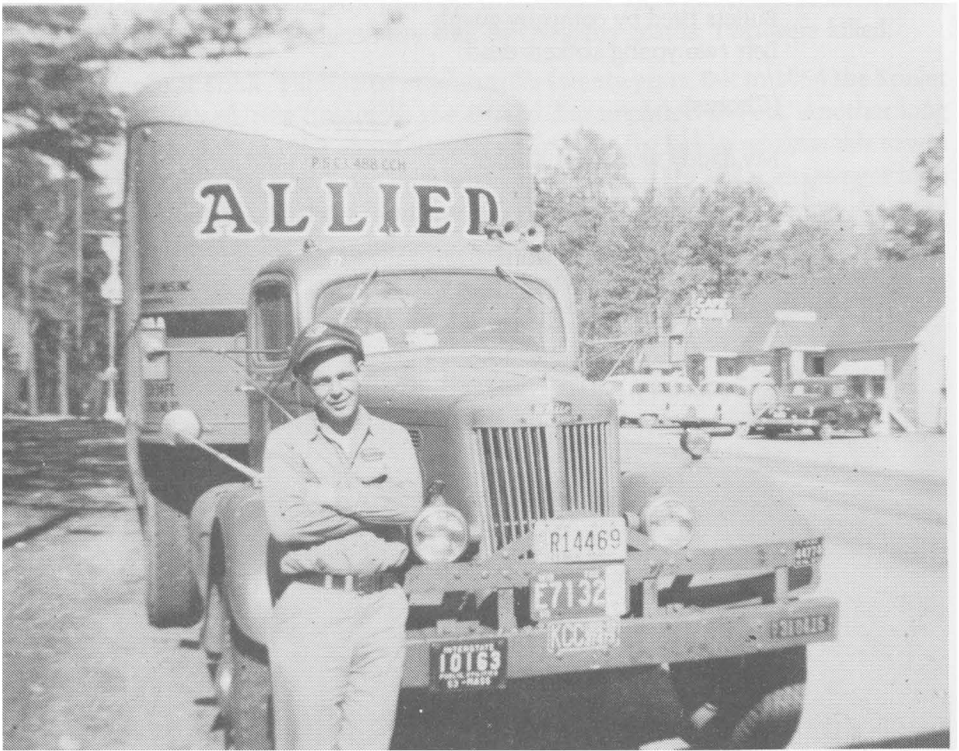
COWBOY DAYS

When people find out I was a trucker, they ask me to do trucking songs. I can't do "Six Days on the Road" — it's just not enough. Forty years on the road? Maybe, but I doubt that you would sit that long.

One of my mentors back in the early days was a fellow we used to call "Cowboy" Olenchek. He showed me the ropes, and some of the finer aspects to the art of trucking. Where he's rollin' these days, I cannot say. He pulled the pin, and a few years ago I did too. I do remember though, how much I wanted to be like him.

Now my son-in-law wants to be like me. Fathers, you must understand, are probably the toughest judge of any man who becomes a son-in-law, but here was one I was not afraid to stake my reputation on. So when he told me what a hard time he was facing in trying to bust into the profession, I called my ex-boss to get him a road test and an interview.

After working for that company over thirty years, I had to explain to that S.O.B. exactly who I was!



Larry Penn and his Model 22 White Mustang in 1950.

COWBOY DAYS

Larry Penn ©1989

When I was young I used to drive
Like a cowboy I would ride
Hell bent for leather
And here I come
I was young and green and tough
And the trucks
Were never big enough
But now my cowboy days are done

I used to give it all I had
It made the older men
Look bad
I wasn't mean
But I sure was dumb
I thought the boss
Would realize
Here was a trucker
He could prize
But now my cowboy days are done

Young man listen
To what I say
You'll be old
Yourself some day
And you'll have trouble
Doin' what you done
And the boss man
Won't recall that
You did anything at all
You'll know your cowboy days are done

I ride old Paint I lead old Dan
I'm a goin' to Montan'
O're the trail of Hoolihan
They feed in the Coulee, they water in
the draw
The're tails are all matted
The're backs are all raw
Ride around little doggie
Ride around slow
The fiery and the snuffy are rarin'
to go

I worked on your road I worked in your
town
All I got to show
Is the muscle in my arm
Got a blister from the saddle and a callous
on my hand
But I won't have to work
When I get to Montan'
Ride Around

Old Bill Jones had two daughters and a
song
One went to Denver
The other went wrong
His wife she died in a pool room fight
But still he keeps singin'
From morning till night
Ride Around

When I did take my saddle from the wall
Lead out my pony
Lead him out of his stall
Tie my bones to the saddle turn his face
toward the west
And we'll ride the prairie
That we love the best
Ride around little doggie
Ride around slow
The fiery and the snuffy are rarin'
to go

THE WRECK OF THE CARL D. BRADLEY

"Lake Michigan steams like a young man's dreams"

Gordon Lightfoot

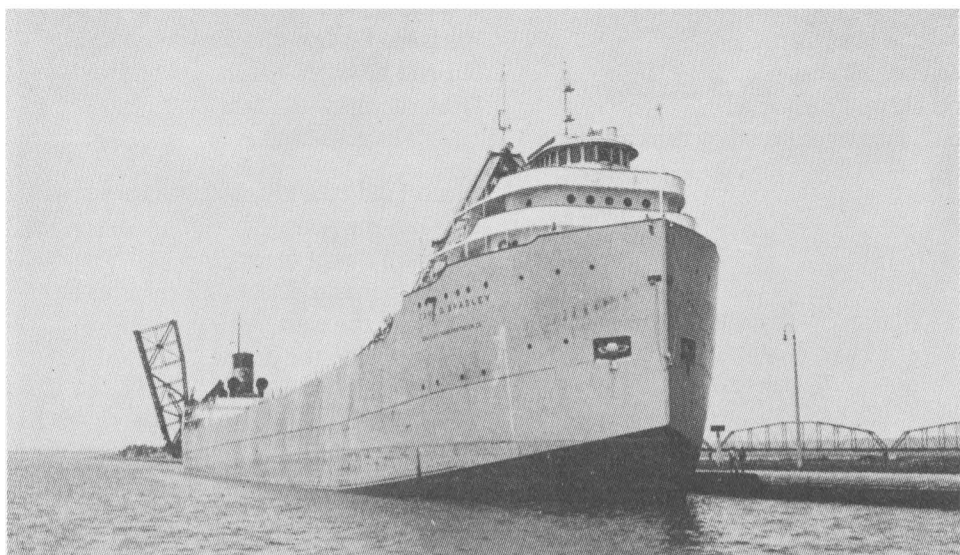
Even a casual study of Great Lakes history, its lore, and wonderful ships cannot be undertaken without becoming aware of the important contribution made by Wisconsin industry and Wisconsin workers. We share that "Heritage of the Lakes." Our cities and ports are part of that vast network of commerce and steel that built America. We are Shippers and Shipbuilders and Sailors. We are proud of triumph, and torn by tragedy.

The Carl D. Bradley was a limestone carrier owned by the Bradley Transportation Co. a subsidiary of U.S. Steel. She was 623 ft. and was the largest of the Great Lakes boats of that time.

Elmer Fleming was her first mate when she broke in two, and sank on November 18, 1958 during one of those gales that are legend on the lakes. According to Don Davenport's vivid account of the final moments in the pilot house, (*Fire and Ice: Shipwreck on Lake Michigan*, Northwood Press, 1983) Fleming asked the captain, "What do you want me to do?" His reply, "There is nothing that you can do!"

It's impossible to read accounts of this shipwreck and the events leading up to it and not come away with the feeling that it could have been avoided. For if not for the Gods of Profit, why were they still out on the lakes in November, when history has demonstrated so many times, that the weather is fiercely unstable at that time of year?

It's true that none of those lost with the Bradley were from Wisconsin, but by their hopes and dreams they were our own. And for those workers, we mourn.



THE WRECK OF THE CARL D. BRADLEY

Larry Penn ©1988

There's nothing you can do
Said the Captain to the crew
The weather it was cold and gettin' colder
The weather it was cold and the Bradley's gettin' old
And there is nothing that you can do Mister Fleming

There's nothing you can do
Said the Captain to the crew
The sea was on the rise and gettin' higher
The sea was on the rise made the Captain realize
That there's nothing that you can do Mister Fleming

Thirty years ago
The story should be told
And none of them will come around to sing
But a night so cold and long should not be without a song
And there's nothing that you can do Mister Fleming

There's nothing you can do
Said the Captain to the crew
The steering wheel went slack and getting slacker
The steering wheel went slack and the Bradley broke her back
And there's nothing that you can do Mister Fleming

There's nothing you can do
Said the Captain to the crew
The spar deck was awash and gettin' wetter
The spar deck was awash and the Bradley sure was lost
And there's nothing that you can do Mister Fleming

Thirty years ago

There's nothing you can do
Said the Captain to the crew
The First Mate came beside to wait for orders
The First Mate came beside the Captain when he cried
There is nothing that you can do Mister Fleming

There's nothing you can do
Said the Captain to the crew
The whistle blowing long and blowing shorter*
The whistle blowing long where another Laker's gone
And there's nothing you can do Mister Fleming

Thirty years ago

*The signal for "Abandon Ship" is seven long and one short whistle blast.

LOVE AND THE SHORTER WORK WEEK

Once upon a time men worked on the job and women worked in the home. In the 1950s and 1960s, many families were able to live on the money earned by one wage-earner. The average family consisted of a male wage earner who worked an 8-hour day, a housewife, and 2.2 children.

But the Ozzie and Harriet family of the 1950s has gone the way of the Edsel automobile. Women are working outside the home so our families can make ends meet. A family budget that once could be met with one wage-earner now requires two. Nearly one-third of the employees today are "contingent workers," employed on a part-time, limited term basis. Today's working families need at least two wage earners to survive and we're working the night shift, the weekend shift, the swing shift, the split shift. For young working people, this new economy poses serious problems.

"Love and the Shorter Work Week" is based on a song I heard performed at a rally of unemployed workers back in 1970. I changed the tune and added a "bridge." The song illuminates the difficulties facing young workers who would like to be able to spend some time together, but who find it impossible because, as the song says: "we're both working different shifts, and alternate weekends."

For every problem, there's a solution. In this case, reducing the work week to 30 hours would give workers more time to see each other while also opening up new full-time jobs to the unemployed and part-time workers. The notion of "30 hours work for 40 hours pay" is an idea that surfaces every time there is another recession and thousands of workers lose their jobs. Are you listening, Congress?



LOVE AND THE SHORTER WORK WEEK

Darryl Holter ©1989

Honey, I'm falling in love with you
Falling in love with you
Honey, I'm falling in love with you
When I least expected to
But you work nights and I work days
And I work all day on Saturday
There's gotta be a better way
'Cause honey, I'm in love with you

Honey, I'm falling in love with you
Falling in love with you
Honey, I'm falling in love with you
Can I come home with you?
Well, I called you up at half past eight
But you were gone on your lunch break
Ain't no way I can make a date
'Cause honey, I'm in love with you

Well, I'd like to hold you in my arms
And be more than friends
But we're both working different shifts
And alternate weekends
Well, I'd like to introduce you to
My mom and dad sometime
But when you get your hours cut
I'm working overtime

Honey, we can't go on this way
I think I'm gonna go insane
Honey, we can't go on this way
I want to hear you call my name
Honey, we can't go on this way
I need you more than I can say
We need 30 hours work for 40 hours pay
'Cause honey, I'm in love with you

PUTTING THE BLAME

The Reagan recession of the 1980s produced the largest number of plant shutdowns since the Great Depression of 1929. Although the causes of the recession were rooted in international trade policies and other decisions made at the national level, when the plants shut down, employers usually blamed workers and their unions. Business leaders complained that workers were paid too much so the company had to go out of business. It was a classic case of "blaming the victim." Workers who lost their jobs, homes and standard of living, were blamed. It was easier to blame workers than to look at the real causes for the recession.

Perhaps no state in the U.S. was hit harder by the 1980s recession than Wisconsin. Once known as "the workshop of the world," the Milwaukee area lost about 40,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs. Well-established manufacturing firms that were locally owned were gobbled up by multi-national corporations and then were closed down or sold off to pay off the debt caused by leveraged buy-outs.

This song, written by Tom Juravich, captured the frustration workers felt when they were blamed for the plant shutdowns. "They're movin' my job to who knows where and puttin' the blame on me." The last verse turns the tables and puts the blame "where it ought to be."



PUTTING THE BLAME

Tom Juravich ©1982

Well, I always drive this way to work
Today I'll drive once more
But I won't come back on Monday
morning
They're closing the old plant doors
They say they can't make it
They're pulling out you see
They're moving my job to who knows
where
And putting the blame on me

(Chorus)

They're putting the blame, putting the
blame
Putting the blame on me
They're moving my job to who knows
where
And putting the blame on me

Well, they talk about quality
As if it's our downfall
The way they talk about us
You'd think we had no pride at all
But if you saw what they gave us to work
with
And the speed they move the line
It's a wonder we can make anything
In so little time

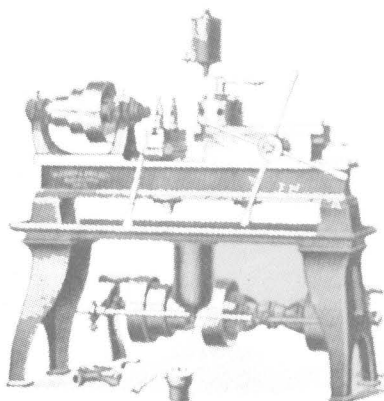
(Chorus)

They say that I get paid too much
I don't produce enough
They say that I'm the reason that
Profits ain't going up
Well, they make good money off me
They're making money still
Where do you think they got the cash
to move the mill?

(Chorus)

It's time we stepped forward
And had our story told
About all the years they worked us
While they lined their pockets with gold
They may have closed the plant down
That much you can see
But I'll be damned if I let them
Put the blame on me

I'll be putting the blame, putting the blame
Putting it where it ought to be
On the folks that own and run this mill
And not on the workers like me

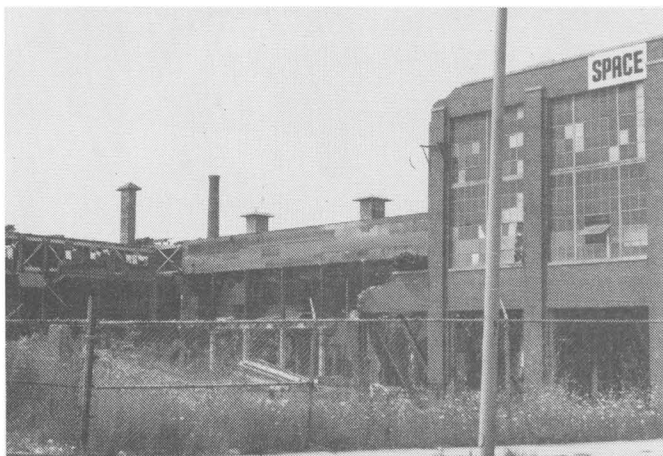


SO LONG, IT'S BEEN GOOD TO KNOW YA (Rustbowl Version)

Almost everyone remembers the infectious chorus to this great song by Woody Guthrie. When I was a kid I used to think this song was about relatives saying good-bye after a family reunion or Thanksgiving. Only later, when I examined the words to the verses, did I understand that Woody was describing how towns in the western U.S. were uprooted and destroyed during the Dust Bowl years of the 1930s. Unable to survive, entire families abandoned these drought-bound areas for a new life, usually heading for California.

Fifty years later, in the industrial towns of Wisconsin, we witnessed a similar wrenching phenomenon as workers lost their jobs, families disintegrated, and large numbers of people left the "rust-belt" for the "sun-belt." In 1984 I was asked to play at a labor rally organized by the steelworkers and other unions on Milwaukee's southside. I took Woody's wonderful dustbowl ballad and gave it a rustbowl setting among the abandoned steel mills and factories. Leaving the chorus intact (except for the substitution of "rust" for "dust"), I rewrote the verses to represent the various type of workers in a community: the steelworkers, a carpenter, a waitress, laid-off union members. Like the people in Woody's dustbowl towns, we're all in this together. When one group goes down, we all go down.

In an effort to conclude the song on a more upbeat note, I adapted and used one of Joe Glazer's verses from "Too Old To Work." The reality is that while many people left our state, many more stayed and tried to improve the situation. A lot of our union brothers and sisters in the automobile industry, in steel, or manufacturing lost their jobs and had to take new, non-union jobs in the service sector. This song is dedicated to those who stayed and fought to make things better.



Allis-Chalmers Hawley Road Plant in Milwaukee in the process of demolition.

SO LONG, IT'S BEEN GOOD TO KNOW YA

Woody Guthrie

The steel plant shut down just yesterday
Factories and mills they are rusting away
And people who dreamed the American dream
Say goodbye to their jobs, their homes and their friends

(Chorus)

So long, it's been good to know you
So long, it's been good to know you
So long, it's been good to know you
This rusty, old rust it's a-getting me down
I've got to be moving along

The carpenter put all his tools in the box
He snapped the lid shut, fastened the lock
Nobody's building he said with a frown
I got to find work so I've got to leave town

(Chorus)

The waitress swept up the coffee shop floor
She cried as she hung the "closed" sign on the door
There's a fast food job waiting near the interstate
She can work all day for the minimum wage

(Chorus)

It's a sad sight down at the union hall
They sit on old benches and lean on the wall
Instead of producing the goods that we need
They study bus schedules and make plans to leave

(Chorus)

There's no easy answers, there's no easy cures
But crying won't change things that's one thing for sure
But working together we'll get there someday
And when we do we won't have to say

(Chorus)

UNION MAID

Pete Seeger tells the story of how Woody Guthrie wrote "Union Maid." In 1946 Pete and Woody were traveling around the country, using their music to help with union organizing drives. After a successful rally of oil workers in Oklahoma, a couple of women workers came up to Woody. "You've got a lot of good songs," they said, "but you don't have any songs about female workers." They made a good point, because the number of women in the workforce had grown tremendously since the outbreak of war in 1941. And despite various efforts to push women off the job and back into the home, many women stayed in the work force even after the war had ended.

When Pete awoke early next morning, he saw Woody bending over his beat-up old typewriter. "We have to have a song about women workers," said Woody, "and now we've got one: Union Maid." In vintage Guthrie form, the song was written to a recognizable and easy-to-sing tune, "Red Wing." In his lyrics, Woody paints the picture of a brave union militant who is unafraid of "the goons and ginks and company finks." The chorus, perfect for picket line sing-a-longs and labor rallies, answers the question posed by "Which Side Are You On?"



UNION MAID

Woody Guthrie

There once was a union maid
Who said she wasn't afraid
Of the goons and ginks and company finks
And the deputy sheriffs who made the raids
She went to the union hall
When the meetings they were called
And when the legion boys came 'round
She always stood her ground

(Chorus)

Oh, you can't scare me I'm stickin' with the union
Stickin' with the union, stickin' with the union
Oh, you can't scare me I'm stickin' with the union
Stickin' with the union, 'til the day I die.

The union maid was wise to the tricks of the company spies
She never got fooled by the company stools
She'd always organize the guys
She'd always get her way when she stuck for higher pay
She'd show her card to the national guard
And this is what she'd say

(Chorus)

The modern union maids are also not afraid
To walk the line, leave their jobs behind
They're not just the ladies aide
They fight for better pay and they will get their way
They're workers too the same as you
And they fight the union way



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Darryl Holter and Larry Penn