"Our union they do fear, let's stand together, workers, and have a union here."
Work, Protest and Labor Unions

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
US/NC Social Studies 8th, US History 11th

Keywords: US strikes, labor unions, labor history, Loray Mill 1929 strike, textile mills in the South

Teaching Standards: See Appendix1

Synopsis: Most of my kids will be getting a job within the next two years. Minimum wage, better pay, safer working conditions, better standard of living, apprenticeship programs, saving lives, better benefits, civil rights protections, fair treatment for women, and overtime pay are just some of the benefits that they will receive as they work their summer jobs at Chick Filet or Auto Bell, and as they move on into more long-term positions after high school or college. So, why do they need to know about the history of unions? Their pay check is a result of the protest and struggle American workers have engaged in over the last 100 or more years. It is crucial for them to comprehend the sacrifices and struggles that the American laborers undertook in order to get these kids to enjoy a minimum wage, and work within a safe and orderly environment. It is guaranteed now but was not always. My goal is to feature lessons about the American labor movement from late nineteenth century to the 1950s. Subjects covered will include the rise of the labor movement in the US, labor unions, strikes, and moving on in to the South, textile mills and the Loray Mill strike of 1929.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 136 students in 8th grade US/NC History.

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"Our union they do fear, let's stand together, workers, and have a union here." [1]
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Rationale

How do I explain what a union is to a thirteen year old in the South? Do I tell them that North Carolina ranks dead last in the United States in union membership (3.1%) compared to California's 18.4 % or New York's 24.9%? Why? Most of my kids will be getting a job within the next two years. Minimum wage, better pay, safer working conditions, better standard of living, apprenticeship programs, saving lives, better benefits, civil rights protections, fair treatment for women, and overtime pay are just some of the benefits that they will receive as they work their summer jobs at Chick Filet or Auto Bell, and as they move on into more long-term positions after high school or college. So, why do they need to know about the history of unions? Their pay check is a result of the protest and struggle American workers have engaged in over the last 100 or more years. It is crucial for them to comprehend the sacrifices and struggles that the American laborers undertook in order to get these kids to enjoy a minimum wage, and work within a safe and orderly environment. It is guaranteed now but was not always. My goal is to feature lessons about the American labor movement from late nineteenth century to the 1950s.

The US/NC curriculum taught in eighth grade allows me to feature US events first and then zoom in on NC events. I cover early issues in our labor system, particularly slavery, almost immediately at the start of the year. The first recorded prosecution against strikers actually occurred in New York City in 1677! There are several similar events throughout the 18th and on into the 19th century and I will bring these up. Many people came to the US as some sort of slave or indentured servant and the labor movement has been with us in some shape or form since our inception. Once the Civil War ended, the US became an industrial power. In order to get to that position and maintain it, we needed a never-ending supply of workers. Immigration brought in that supply of workers. It also led to lower wages and horrific working conditions. New York's infamous Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and Upton Sinclair's publication of *The Jungle* changed the way the government and business owners viewed the business of America. Unionization became a crucial aspect of the worker's needs becoming met. 1914's Clayton Act helped to legalize strikes and boycotts. The Depression's Public Contracts Act and Fair Labor Standards Act helped to set out labor standards, which included minimum wage, overtime, and child labor standards. The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 (aka: Wagner Act) essentially legalized unions, collective bargaining, and strikes. Programs such as Social Security began during the 1930s. Ending child labor in 1949, passing the Equal Pay Act, and a varietyof Civil Rights Acts passed in the 1960s aided in ending discrimination in the

workplace. Explaining the journey it took to get to that Chick Filet paycheck might help students understand that it is more than just a paycheck!

Once I spend some time on the whole US labor picture, I intend to zero in on the textile industry here in North Carolina, specifically the Charlotte region. Evidence of our textile industry is in all of our little towns surrounding Charlotte. These same little communities thrived on the production of cotton products. King Cotton helped us move into the Civil War. The movement of textile facilities from the North to the South after Reconstruction changed our landscape. Before the Civil War we supplied cotton to the North for their mills to produce finished products. After the Reconstruction era we began to have the wherewithal to actually take cotton from the field, to the factory, and back out to the world via the railroad. With these factories came issues about long hours, low wages, and poor working conditions. The Loray Mill was owned by Northerners looking to take advantage of our poor white labor pool. Although starting much later than our Northern brothers, we too entered a time of protests and strikes. The fact that our communities suffered strikes and violence in 1929 and 1934 is a little remembered fact to most living in Charlotte today. Kids travel by car and bus every day past the old shotgun mill houses and textile mills along Highway 115 from Huntersville and into Cornelius and Davidson. I would like to make that history come alive for them.

Some of the Common Core Standards I will be addressing in this unit include but are not limited to the following: citing specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, specifically with photographs, political cartoons, and newspaper accounts; integrating visual information, again in the area of photos and political cartoons; and distinguishing among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment, specifically in the area of primary source accounts. The North Carolina Standards I will be addressing include: 8 H 1.3: Using primary and secondary sources from newspapers and books in order to interpret various historical perspectives (governments, union, workers); 8 H2.1: Explaining the impact of social and economic conflicts on the state and nation; 8 H 3.2 – Explaining how changes were brought about by technology innovations in the textile mills; 8 E.1.1: Understanding various economic activities within North Carolina, specifically in the growth of mills in the Piedmont region; 8 C and G 1 – Analyzing democratic ideals which shaped viewpoints on the scope of government, specifically looking at the rights of unions and their organizers.

Background

I teach eighth grade US/NC History in a suburban six through eight grade middle school in Cornelius, outside Charlotte, North Carolina. The towns of Huntersville, Cornelius, and Davidson, where the school draws from, were once farming and mill villages that grew up along old Highway 115 that today have become primarily suburban bedroom communities. Old shotgun houses and textile mills from the early 20th century dot the communities and hug the railroad line that brought raw cotton in and finished textiles out.

The school is considered economically-advantaged in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. However, the recent recession has had an impact on the school. Our free and reduced breakfast/lunch percentages have increased from the mid-teens to the mid-twenties. I have about 136 students this year and they are divided into four classes. Due to the above grade level and at grade level distinctions given to Language Arts Honors (at least one year above grade level in reading), Language Arts Standard (below or at grade level), Math 8 (at grade level), and Algebra I (high school course), my students will also mostly be leveled (not intentionally). I will have two classes of above-grade level in both Math and Language Arts), one class of mixed levels (above-grade level in one of the core classes), and one class that is on or slightly below grade level. My on-grade level class may have students who actually read two to three years below grade-level. Scattered throughout these four classes are Exceptional Education (EC) students who may have processing disabilities in Math and Reading. I will also have eight EC Resource children. These students are classified as EMH (Educable Mentally Handicapped), with IQ's of 50 to 75. These students are main-streamed with their regular classmates for Science, History, and electives. Each teaching team consists of four teachers. There are five class periods a day, consisting of about 75 minutes per class. We rotate classes each nine-week quarter. So, our first-block class becomes our second-block second quarter, and our fifth-block rotates to first. It allows us to see each student in a different light and to take advantage of those times when a child may be a "sleeper" in first block but come to life in second block!

Content Background

When I first began this seminar, "Using the Collections at the Levine Museum of the New South, Charlotte as a New South City," I found myself in the turn of the twentieth century mill village and factory exhibit. The recorded sounds of a textile mill at work in the early 1900s reminded me of a History Alive activity I do in late February and early March of the school year. The lesson deals with female labor in the mills and factories up North. The labor was mostly immigrant and of course plentiful, due to land restrictions and political upheavals in Europe. Women piled into the factories to work, make money to feed their families, and carve out a place for themselves in their new homeland. Labor was cheap and wages were low. Accidents were commonplace in a society where factory owners were all-powerful and short cuts were abundant in order to keep profits high. The History Alive activity speeds up the drone of the machine sounds which in turn pushes the kids to work faster. Slow workers were to be replaced through a process that would eventually be called the stretch out. Workers were not to be trusted and exits locked to prevent "thievery." One of the greatest industrial tragedies took place in March of 1911. One hundred and forty-six workers, mostly young immigrant girls and women, died at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, most of them jumping to their death. The victims had been trapped by blocked exit doors and faulty fire escapes. The Triangle fire became "a galvanizing symbol of industrial capitalism's excesses and the pressing need for much needed reforms."[2] What is amazing about this fire in New York was that an estimated

100 workers died every day on the job in the US in 1911.[3] Have things improved so much in the US or the world recently that industrial fires and accidents are no longer news? Witness the Hamlet Fire in North Carolina in 1991 that left 25 workers dead. Echoes of the Triangle Fire could be felt at this tragedy, as well as the 2013 fire in Bangladesh, which killed over 900. I believe that my students will need to further study the origin of the labor movement in the US and North Carolina in order to comprehend how far we have come in the area of worker's rights, and also that there are still improvements to be made. My content material in this unit is geared to first address the labor movement as it developed in the North and West, and then move into the South as the 20th century begins.

There have been efforts by workers to better their conditions since settlement of the colonies in the 17th century. Many of these efforts were considered criminal. The movement would continue to grow as a result of a desire for better wages, shorter hours, and safer conditions within the workplace. This eventually lead to stopping child labor in the US, health benefits, and assistance to workers who were injured on the job. I am not sure this was all envisioned by the journeymen of tailors' who protested a reduction of wages in 1768 or the cordwainers (shoemakers) of Philadelphia in 1794.[4] As the 19th century moved in there appears to be some sort of sustained union movement among the American workers.[5] Most of these unions wanted to protect their jobs against the "diluted and cheap labor" of the time. In 1827, the Mechanics' Union of Trade formed in Philadelphia and a Typographical Union would follow in 1852. These national unions would bring together same trade workers across the cities in the US and Canada. These mid-19th century workers were skilled. By the 1830s a ten-hour work day was not unusual for workers in the northeastern cities. Federal jobs stuck to a twelve-hour schedule.[6] The first child labor law was enacted in Massachusetts in 1836. The employment of children was limited to those under the age of 15, unless they had attended school for at least three months prior to the year of their employment.[7]

What brought about the drastic changes which the nation began to see in the 1860s? The second wave of the Industrial Revolution, the success of the northern victory during the Civil War, and new waves of immigrant labor changed the nature of factories and worker's desires for rights. Newly released soldiers left the country farms and headed west for larger plots of land or poured into the cities for better paying jobs. The nation was growing in every direction, as was the need for labor. Although we were still an agricultural country in the 1860s, with the opening of the West by the onset of the railroads, we were clearly heading in the course that would lead us to become an industrial powerhouse. As the labor force swelled so did the need to protect laborers from the mistreatment by their bosses. Workers realized the tremendous powers held within the hands of supervisors and owners of factories. Organizations like the National Labor Union in 1866 and the Knights of Labor and American Federation of Labor, which joined together in 1886, as a result of the devaluing of the laborer and the lower wages, combined with worsening labor conditions. The federal government was not as willing to

intervene in labor issues because of the economic principles of laissez-faire, "which stated that the functions of the state should be limited to internal police and foreignprotection – no public education, no limits on hours of labor, and no welfare legislation."[8] Along with Darwinian survival of the fittest, the owner encouraged a dog-eat-dog ideology. Factory inspections fell by the wayside, hours increased, and the sweatshop was born.

Violent outbreaks of strikes took hold of the nation in the 1870s through the 1890s. Coal miners, known as the Molly Maguire's, protesting working conditions in the mines, burned and murdered in Pottsville, Pennsylvania in 1877. The Great Railroad Strike of 1877 was the result of a 10% wage cut. Federal troops were brought in to quell the strikers. Membership in the Knights of Labor reached over 700,000 by 1886. The Knights were champions of the unskilled workers and encouraged African-Americans to join. Over 60,000 African-Americans became union members. African-Americans "were deemed unfit for manufacturing" in many circles.[9] The Chicago Haymarket Square Riot of 1886 included trade unions, socialist unions, and supposed anarchists, and the cause they fought for was an eight-hour day. Four were hanged and membership within the group started to decline. Samuel Gompers spearheaded the American Federation of Labor. In the 1880s African-Americans were also encouraged to join but some felt this hampered the expansion. The AFL's constitution was adjusted so as not to include anything about "exclusion due to race" and membership continued to rise. The eventual passing of the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890 authorized federal action "against any combination in the form of trusts or otherwise, or conspiracy, in restraint of trade."[10] This was to be used as an injunction against workers to break any strikes. The place of African-Americans in American society was declining, in part due to the rise of white supremacy and Booker T Washington's famous speech, the Atlanta Compromise. The compromise was never actually put in writing. It was an agreement in which African-Americans "would not ask for the right to vote, they would not retaliate against racist behavior, segregation would be tolerated, basic education would be free (vocational or industrial), and liberal arts education was to be prohibited."[11] Other African-American leaders, like W.E.B. Dubois, did not agree with the compromise and encouraged African-Americans to engage in civil rights actions.

Violence continued with the steel industry's Homestead Strike in 1892. Skilled workers of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers had bargained for quite good wages and work rules. Andrew Carnegie, owner of the mill, was resolute to lower the mill's production costs by breaking the union. Although Carnegie was initially publicly in favor of mills, he did not want his company to be held back by possible strikes. He even ordered huge amounts of extra inventory in case of a strike. Carnegie's right hand man, Henry Clay Frick, declared the union to be elitist and not representative of all the workers. Frick's July 6 intent was to open the mill to nonunion workers. Pinkerton detectives were brought to the mill property. Thousands of men, women, and children lined the banks of the river in attempt to prevent the Pinkertons from landing.

Shots were fired, possibly by a boatman delivering the Pinkertons. Overwhelmed by 4 p.m., the Pinkertons surrendered. The fracas continued with the state militia arriving and an attempted assassination on Frick by a person not even involved in the strike. Support for the strike waned as did support for the union and in the end, the union voted for a return to work. This strike broke the Amalgamated as a force in the US labor movement.[12] A deepening recession that began in 1889 led to lower wages across the steel industry. By 1900, not one steel plant in Pennsylvania had a union.

North Carolina's political and business leaders would actually suppress any type of labor union organization. News of union organization and strikes in other parts of the nation stifled union growth here. The nonagricultural workforce of North Carolina was quite large as a result of the incoming textile mills. Few of these workers joined labor unions. The AFL had organized a few of the mills, but "waves of repression from mill owners and local and state governments frustrated"the effort to unionize in North Carolina. Charlotte and Greensboro saw some union successes in areas such as carpentry, masonry, and mechanics.[13] Better wages and shorter hours were negotiated here but not in the textile mills. William E. Faison, head of the Junior Order United American Mechanics (JOUAM) in 1905, spoke patriotically of labor "as the backbone of society," but was a Nativist and spouted venomous anti-immigrationist views. His favorite targets were Eastern and Southern Europeans. He considered them tricky and difficult.[14] Faison reminded everyone of the doomed 1900 textile strikes in Alamance. This strike would curtail any labor organizing efforts here for almost twenty years. [15]

There were other strikes and labor disruptions in the North and West. The Battle of Cripple Creek in 1894 involved gold miners. McKees Rock Strike in 1909 involvedmostly immigrants employed at the Pressed Steel Car plant, down from Pittsburgh on the Ohio River. The language barrier easily divided the Russians, Italians, and Germans, and their desire for higher wages and safer working conditions were defeated as a result of this barrier – conveniently so for the owners. The influx of immigrants created a system of lower wages, higher housing costs, cramped living conditions, and increased costs at the company owned general store. This same situation also repeated itself in the South with textile mills. Pressed Steel Car company owners resorted to pooling, which was similar to the stretch out that would be part of the 1929 and 1934 strikes in the South.

By 1900, we were looking at a large proportion of the nation's wealth in the hands of a few wealthy industrialists. About half of the US population did not own property. The average annual wage of a typical male was $500. Andrew Carnegie's yearly income was $23 million.[16] Life expectancy was 48 for whites and 34 for non-whites. The nation also had close to two million children under the age of 15 working in jobs and over five million women who worked for less than 10 cents in a ten-hour day. The face of labor's wages and conditions were on the cusp of change. African-Americans took up Booker T Washington's call to start their own businesses. The face of immigration also changed,

with a drop in Irish immigration and an uptick in Russian, Italian, and other southern European nations. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) became the next big union. Over 20,000 struck in New York over the conditions in sweatshops. President Taft vetoed attempts by Congress to halt the immigration of illiterate immigrants in 1913. President Wilson and members of the House Mines and Mining Committee paid attention to the Machine Gun Massacre in Ludlow Colorado. Wilson encouraged a truce between the union and owners and grievance committees at each mine. The Clayton Antitrust Act of 1914 gave more legality to unions and stated "that strikes, boycotts, and picketing were not violations of federal law."[17] By 1918, we would eventually see several states require a day's rest in seven, a movement to the prohibition of night work, maximum limits in the length of a work day, and minimum wage laws for women.

World War I would see new changes between labor and owners. Samuel Gompers and the AFL were highly supportive of the war effort. Strikes would be minimized and full employment would be gained.[18] Young men were encouraged to enlist in the armed forces. Anything to oppose the war efforts by anti-war IWW and left-wing Socialists were fiercely opposed. By 1917 AFL membership had reached 2.5 million. Demand for goods during war time soared. We were feeding the world by 1919 and farm prices did exceptionally well. However, farm prices began to decline by the early to mid-twenties, an early sign of a coming Depression. A new wave of immigrants from Russia began the early twenties Red Scare period. Any call to strike was brought on by Lenin and Trotsky, according to the then Attorney General, Mitchell Palmer. Sensitive to this type of propaganda, John Lewis' United Mine Workers withdrew the call to put 400,000 coal miners on the picket lines. Many ignored his call, but public media attention called the strikers to end five weeks into the work stoppage. They did get a 14% raise, but lower than they had hoped for.[19]

The 1920s brought about a decline for union members and the labor movement. Membership fell in the face of economic prosperity. Gompers died in 1924 and leadership became weak. In 1919 there were about 3,600 strikes and in comparison, 1929 saw only 900 strikes.[20] Economic prosperity in the twenties led to reasonably stable prices for household goods and food. [21] Employers led a campaign against unions and membership called the American Plan. Unions were labeled "alien to the nation's individualistic spirit." Red Scare tactics were often used to discredit unions and link them to communism. Signing of yellow-dog contracts, the practice of forcing employees to promise they would not join a union was not outlawed until 1932.[22] The labor movement fell in importance but the Depression would change that.

There were at least 250 rebellions involving 10 or more slaves from the 18th century and on up to the Civil War. Although these are slave rebellions and they opposed their ownership as humans, an important matter to consider here is that labor was also one of the reasons slaves rebelled. The institution of slavery and labor were intertwined in the German Coast Uprising, and the Vessey, Prosser and Turner revolts. A washerwomen's

strike took place in Atlanta in 1881. With slavery less than 15 years behind them, thousands of African-American laundresses struck for higher wages, respect for their work, and control over how their work was organized.[23] The women took on the business community of Atlanta and they were able to gain huge support. A full strike would have shut this city down! Labor revolts in the South were few before the 1920s.

So, why does the South lag behind the North in union development? A system that was so dependent on slave labor for over two hundred years was also one that was based mostly on agriculture. Plantations grew and harvested cotton but sent the cotton to the North for final production. It was much like our relationship with England during the Colonial period: The South grew/hunted/fished products, sent them to England for processing, and then bought the finished products at a higher price. They got wealthy and we remained colonies with limited processing abilities. The North/South relationship continued much along the same lines. Limited investment was made in a factory infrastructure. Southerners complained about the tariffs that northerners instituted but did little to fix the problem. The Civil War and Reconstruction ended this. Industrial facilities from the North migrated to the South, and southerners started their own industrial companies. The region would now produce the very items that it had transported northward to be finished off. By 1900, the textile mill industry was in full swing and moving to overtake production in the northeast. Laborers in these mills became the new "slaves" of the southern economy. The Piedmont of the Carolinas would be transformed with newly built railroad lines, textile mills, and the mill villages that grew up around the textile factories. By 1927, the Piedmont soon eclipsed New England as the as the leading producer in the world of yarn and cloth.[24] Poor white sharecroppers, tired of the brutal hand to mouth existence, came from all over the South to work at the mills, unknowingly exchanging one form of bare bones life for another. In many mill towns, whole families found themselves bound to the textile mills from childhood on and well into what today would be past retirement age. North Carolina's industrial growth was also aided by the growth of the furniture industry in High Point and cigarette industry in Durham and Winston-Salem. As with the textile business, these industries were connected by the growth of the railroads in North Carolina

Textile production soared during the Great War. Men abroad and here needed uniforms. Prices were good as were wages. And like crop prices, textile prices could not possibly be sustained at such a high rate and started to drop dramatically. British owned-textile mills would emerge in other countries like India. Shorter skirts from the flapper's fad also put a dent in the textile industry. As they had in the North, owners would cut wages, run mills around the clock, and make employees work even harder to keep their job. Over half the textile workers were women and they earned less than half for similar work done in the mills. Armed with stopwatches efficiency experts, like Frederick Taylor, were hired to make sure nothing was wasted in resources or time.[25] Taylor was regarded as the father of the scientific management movement. Rates of work were tied

to production. Scientific training and development of specific employees was considered more effective than passively allowing the employees to train themselves. Only the young and highly skilled might be able to keep up. This stretch out process would frustrate even the best of workers. Stretch outs in the 1920s forced mill workers in South Carolina, for instance, to go from tending 44 looms to now a staggering 90 plus. Public unrest began much in the same way as it had in earlier years up north.

A series of strikes began in Tennessee on March 12, 1929. The millhands returned after three months to a promise that the company would not retaliate against union workers, a promise not kept for very long. Simultaneous walk outs occurred in Marion (SC) and Gastonia (NC). The strikes were aimed at the stretch out, reduced wages, and increased hours. Warehouses were stocked full due to slowing sales. This actually benefited the mill owners because they could keep providing merchants for a considerable amount of time, while waiting for hunger, debt, and eviction to drive millhands back to work. Similar to northern strikes earlier on, mill owners used private police and state militia to force protesters back in line, back to work, or complete blacklisting from the textile trade. Governments in southern states were usually on the side of the textile mill owners and it was generally assumed that strikes were illegal, dangerous, and communist-inspired.

In March of 1929 in Gastonia, NC, a 33 year-old Massachusetts Communist, Fred Beal, had been secretly organizing a local union and directed strikers to demand a $20 weekly wage for a forty-hour week, recognition of the National Textile Workers Union, and an end to the stretch out.[26] Mill owners and government officials helped spread the idea that the strike was manipulated by the communists would help to establish "a still lingering and anti-union bias in the South." [27] The group to watch was actually those in power. They continued to harangue anyone who dared to challenge the inequalities of the class system.[28] Hundreds joined in from Bessemer City and Pineville mills. National Guardsmen were sent in to the city by Governor Max Gardner to protect mill property. Gardner was a mill owner. In keeping with the anti-communist rhetoric, local papers fanned the flames against the NTWU. They would accuse the union of race mixing, bloodshed, and the desire to overthrow the US government. NTWU's building "headquarters" was destroyed. The union had been assisting out-of-work millhands with food supplies. Striking workers were evicted from their homes. Many desperate workers returned to the mills but there was a hard core group of workers who refused. The situation appeared to be hopeless for the 300 or so strikers. On June 7, workers who marched to call out the night shift were attacked by sheriff's deputies. Police Chief Aderholt would be killed and several strikers were wounded. Sixteen strikers and members of the NTWU were indicted for the murder. Brutal depositions supposedly caused one juror to go insane. This resulted in the judge calling for a mistrial. The mistrial, rampaging local citizens, the murder of Ella Mae Wiggins, a pregnant mill worker, and continued negative press ended the Gastonia strike. Seven mill workers would be charged in Ella's murder but would be acquitted in less than 30 minutes, thus

showing the power of the mill owners and their ability to intimidate and even murder striking workers. The murder had occurred in broad daylight and with at least 50 people as witnesses. She was young, lived in an African-American neighborhood, which sparked flames of racism in the white community. She believed in organizing whites and African-Americans into the NTWU. Although her murder would also go unsolved, her great-granddaughter, Kristina Horton, who lives in Asheville, has a strong hunch who Ella's murderer was. Very little changed after that summer of 1929. The workweek was shortened and conditions at the Gastonia mill improved marginally. But the strike imbued a sense of self and that future generations would benefit in some way.[29]

As the Depression deepened into 1933, workers felt the squeeze of mill owners. The National Industrial Recovery Act's regulatory body, the Cotton Textile Board, refused to act on the concerns of old mill workers who were forced to retire without a pension, and low paid and mill workers took things into their own hands. On July 14, 1934, workers in Alabama started a wildcat strike. By September 12, over 400,000 textile workers throughout the nation had walked off their jobs. This was "the single largest labor conflict in American history."[30] The National Guard was mobilized across the Carolinas and Georgia. Franklin Roosevelt was slow to react because of his dependence on the southern Democratic votes. The same tactics were used after the General Strike was called off on September 22: blacklisting, firings, mill village evictions etc.

The Depression brought increased unemployment and lower wages across the nation. In 1933 FDR's 100 day relief legislation began with the National Recovery Act. This was designed to foster collective bargaining for the unions, set maximum working hours and sometimes prices, establish minimum wage standards, and prohibit child labor.[31] Although eventually deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1935, it encouraged workers to join unions and it also strengthened those unions. This would be replaced by the Wagner Act later in 1935, considered a major action because it would make unions legal and protected at the same time. The Wagner Act established the National Labor Relations Board, which would help address labor complaints by issuing "cease and desist" orders against unfair practices in labor relations.

This the Supreme Court strongly supported. Membership in the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) grew to over four million under Lewis' leadership. CIO was able to unionize previously opposing industries, such as the steel, auto, textile, and public utilities. Sit-down strikes became more popular. Workers took possession of a factory and then refused to depart until demands were met. The steel and auto companies contested the sit-down's legality in 1937. They called upon Michigan courts to rescue their properties by issuing injunctions against the sit-down protesters. This in turn caused tensions to rise between both sides. The Governor, Frank Murphy, intervened to spread any further widespread violence.

The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 was passed by Congress. This outlawed detrimental working conditions by allowing for "minimum standards of living needed for health, efficiency, and the well being of workers."[32] Many considered this the most far reaching program for the workers ever adopted. This act would eventually provide for the maximum work week of 40 hours and a minimum wage of 40 cents an hour by 1945. Some 700,000 workers, including African-Americans, would be affected by the wage increase. The act, however, would not affect African-Americans working in the agricultural and domestic fields.

At the same time in 1938, the AFL expelled the CIO and its million members. Traditionally the AFL was organized by craft rather than industry. An electrician, for instance, would form his own skill-oriented union rather than joining with a huge auto-making union. The CIO formed unions, hoping to bring them into the AFL. The AFL refused to extend membership privileges to the CIO unions. The two organizations fought it out hard for membership. They both supported FDR and his New Deal program. The CIO leaned more to the left, while AFL hugged the big city machines.[33]

A. Philip Randolph, labor leader and civil rights activist, battled with the Pullman Company, largest employer of blacks in the 1920s. He sought to gain membership for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in the AFL in 1925. It was not until 1937 that Randolph was able to accomplish that goal. This made the BSCP the very first African-American union in the United States.[34] However, he withdrew the union a year later because of ongoing discrimination within the AFL. During the 1940s, Randolph took on the federal government. He utilized mass protest twice as a way of persuading the policies of the US government. Randolph planned a march on Washington to protest discrimination within the war industries but FDR issued an executive order that barred any racial discrimination in government defense industries, thereby putting a stop to the march. As a result of Randolph's persistence, the Fair Employment Practices Committee was formed.[35]

Between 1940 and 1945, union membership went from 8.8 million to over 14 million. Roughly 36% of America's workforces were members of unions. Women now added to the ranks in the form of Rosie the Riveters, as they produced wartime supplies for the nation. Both the AFL and CIO supported FDR in the war elections of 1940 and 1944. Opportunities for advancement in the labor movement, especially for young men, were wide open. The union men and women reflected the overall population of the US but few were from the South and from farms. Union leaders were heavily Democratic. The northern wing of the party was much more progressive and supportive of unions. Walter Reuther took control of the United Auto Workers and would soon join the anti-Communist frenzy shortly after the war ended. The days of high profits for the auto industry would emerge as millions of soldiers returned home from the war fronts. Cars floated off the assembly lines to men and women who were eager to leave the tough war years behind and start a new life. However, war production wound down and the

overtime hours dried up. War price controls were lifted and prices in stores increased by as much as 25%. A strong anti-union backlash began. Americans felt that the unions were arrogant and thankless for all the favors received during the New Deal and WW II.[36] The Taft-Hartley Act undermined the Wagner Act and now included restrictions on unions and management. Closed shops (contractual agreements in which employer hire only members of the union), were outlawed but union shops (new hire joining union 30 days after hire) were allowed. Amendments were added that required unions and employers 60 days' notice before undertaking a strike. This was a response to the postwar strikes in the steel, coal, and auto industries.

The American labor movement has been in a steady decline since the 1950s. A third of the American labor force was unionized in 1952 (not in the South); by 2012, those percentages were 10% overall and 5% for the private sector. As a result, "the collective voice of American workers has weakened, wages have stagnated, and income inequality has increased."[37] The merger of the AFL and CIO in 1955 ended the era of experimentation and expansion. The CIO was no longer "a radical dynamo" or threat to the AFL who had twice the membership.[38] The merger also derailed some of the more liberal policies of the CIO as far as Civil Rights and membership of African Americans. There was expansion into the white collar sector (teachers, clerks, public employees) but also a problem of union corruption. The CIO was not as susceptible to incursion by criminal groups as was the AFL's trucking, longshoring, and entertainment unions. Republican campaigning during the 1950s offered opportunities to allow them to pull away the working-class vote from the Democrats. They played on the racketeering of Davie Beck and Jimmy Hoffa. The public grew cynical about the unions and their leaders. Additional restrictions on organized labor were passed with the Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959. This regulated the internal affairs of unions and the officials' relationships with employers.

The UAW, meanwhile, funded and supported the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. The 1970s brought Latinos into the union field with Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers. Although small, there has been some success in enlisting Latinos for a hotel industry union. Females have always been under represented in the union activities, in part because of the notion of the women's place being in the home. Female membership in the "pink-service" sector unions have risen considerably since the 1990s.
Women today make up about 45% of all union members. But membership overall has dropped. During the 1960s about one in four workers was in a union. Today those numbers have fallen to about one in ten.[39] The declining numbers hit the private sector unions hardest. This is where male membership used to be the strongest.
But "starting in 2011, a wave of state-level legislation weakening collective bargaining rights for public sector workers has directly targeted teachers and other unionized female-dominated occupations." [40] This assault is a real problem, since female union workers earn an average of more than $5 an hour more than nonunion ones and have more

benefits and job security as well—and non-union workers in unionized fields benefit from this advantage.[41]

I think when my students look at their first paycheck there will be a lot of whining and complaining. Instant joy and sudden abysmal gloom! The $7.50 an hour has taxes, social security, and maybe uniform costs taken out. They got a guaranteed hourly wage. As children, in most cases, they are guaranteed a safe working environment and are limited in the amount of hours they work during the school year. There is no stretch-out or pooling. They are not forced to buy from the mill village general store, spending money they have not earned yet, and getting in debt to the store and the store's owner, probably also the textile mill owner. Thirteen-year-old students aren't picked up by the truancy police and being returned to the factory instead of the school. Thirteen year olds may take a lot for granted but when they go to work in a couple of years they will have the guarantees which were fought for over a hundred years: better pay, a guaranteed minimum wage, safer working environment, civil rights protections, gender protection, and many more guarantees that will follow them into their life's chosen profession.

Strategies

The laborers of America will be covered during the first quarter. Students come with knowledge of indentured servitude and slavery. I complete the picture with more in-depth details. So many of the 17th century immigrants coming to America came as indentured servants with the eventual plan of getting free land under the headright system upon release from their seven year contracts. Examination of primary source materials is an integral part of eighth grade History classes. There is an evaluation model. Students will be familiar with the SOAPSTONE model.[42] This also will have been covered since week two as we do a lot of primary sources. SOAPSTONE is:

- S = Subject of the piece
- O= Occasion, time, place, setting
- A=Audience, who is this directed to
- P=Purpose, why was this piece written, painted, etc.
- S=Speaker, who's voice is telling the story
- TONE=Attitude or emotional characteristics of the piece

AP (Advanced Placement) classes in high school use this a lot and many middle schools adopted this practice several years ago in order to familiarize kids with this early so that there are no surprises for them in high school. There are also several more writing components to this Document Based Question format that help with the interpretation piece. It is a great asset for the kids to have this foundation when evaluating and interpreting primary sources. The writing pieces in this AP-DBQ element are also a part of the Common Core and Essential Standards in North Carolina. SOAPSTONE is

essential for political cartoon evaluations and basically for any historical primary source. I need to make sure students use this as a reality check. Primary sources are wonderful but so much might be left out and on purpose. Comparing several pieces within that historical period can make for a better evaluation.

Another interpretation tool I want to use is the PAPA Square.[43] It is similar to a SOAPSTONE activity but in a slightly different format. These all offer me multiple ways to get to the heart of a text, characters who participated in various events, and author's opinions and purpose. There are also some additional tools I have used in the past to develop critical reading skills that I will utilize. A fellow teacher gave me some links from the ESC Online Writing Center that contain questions relating to the authority of the writer, author's perspective, logic of the writer's argument, ways in which the writer gets your interest, writer's use of language and style, and ideology that informs text. There are also several good items to pull from this site when checking for actual reading, understanding, and interpretation.

I also utilize FRAME (facts, reflection, assumptions, maintain open mind, expand your experiences). We do a lot of these same activities within the context our chosen historical era many times. What the students are comfortable with, having done it before, allows me to move on more efficiently. I will also utilize the OATs, responding to writing, SOAPSTONE, and diamond analysis fold from August on. There would be no surprises when they have to do it in the activities listed below.

Another activity I liked was the diamond fold. The folding process creates a diamond in the center of the paper with four triangles off to the sides. The diamond is synthesis and the four triangles could serve as vocabulary (written and illustrated), compare/contrast with actual historical events, personal connections, or solutions to problems that the historical figures like Ella Mae Wiggins encounter.

Students like to take many of the lessons and turn them into skits. I can take an average class and make about six skit groups. They are given the general background and then do a little research with the iPads to fill in any holes. They then perform the skits in a competition fashion. The winning group, voted on by their classmates, provided the most accurate information and left no historic holes in their presentation of the material.

Activities

These activities, along with class discussion, will take place over a two-week period of time

Activity One: Supplies needed: Political cartoons and Social Justice lesson plan. Days: This is done throughout the year. First time doing this: Examine editorial cartoons from the "Using Editorial Cartoons to Teach Social Justice" lessons http://www.tolerance.org

that detail strategies in teaching editorial cartoons: What do you see in the images, what does the text say, what events from past or present are within the picture, and what is the artist trying to say? FRAME can also be one of the ways these cartoons can be utilized with the facts, reflection, assumptions, maintain open mind, expandyour experiences set-up.

I will utilize these as warm-ups. The cartoons and primary source drawings will be taken from the vast collection of *Harper's Weekly* (especially those of Thomas Nast), Library of Congress Political Cartoon Collection 1865-1900, and the National Archives Political Cartoon Collection. There are thousands! Every subject is touched upon – nothing is held sacred. I will switch out and put in some letters, journal entries, shipping bills of lading for immigrants, etc. Some are disturbing but my students have been looking at these since the second week of school. The idea is to look at everything about US History, not just the pretty parts. SOAPSTONE and Library of Congress both have worksheets that engage students with political cartoons and primary sources. I would have students put the blank forms in their notebook – saving paper – and then just answer the questions about each cartoon or photo/illustration in their notebook. Sample primary source sheets are also posted on large boards in my room. I can switch off with the PAPA Square when there is more reading involved.Some of the political cartoons I will be utilizing:

- http://www.ushistory.org/us/37b.asp
- http://www.ushistory.org/us/38b.asp
- http://www.eagleton.rutgers.edu/research/americanhistory/ap_progressive.php
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Afl_too_powerful_american_employer.jpg
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Afl_inconsequential_american_employer.jpg
- http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ncl2004000340/PP/
- http://www.eagleton.rutgers.edu/research/americanhistory/ap_progressive.php

- How does the writer/illustrator get the student to identify with him? Give examples
- Does the writer/illustrator assume that you have particular interests or maybe values?
- What does the writer want you to believe? And what supporting evidence does the author provide?
- What information do you have about the writer? Is he/she knowledgeable? Why/why not?
- What biases might be present?

Activity Two: Supplies needed: Website listed below, IPads or Chrome books. Days: One or two. The American labor movement is filled with song and music. They were

similar to hymns and delivered a message. The songs reflected their lives in the mines, mills, factories and farms where they labored their lives out. The agony of the workers as they toiled for miserable wages in unsafe and unsanitary conditions can be heard from the 19th century and on into the 20th century. Many were passed down orally. After the Civil War, songs began to appear in books. The songs and music convey a sense of history to students. The AFL-CIO has a huge compilation of songs. A site that I am going to utilize is: Union songs http://unionsong.com/songs.html. The site has over 800 songs and poems by over 200 authors. There are also lists of films.

One of the more popular songs would be Solidarity Forever, by Ralph Chaplin and written to the tune of John Brown's Body. Chaplin was a member of the IWW. He was imprisoned for his union activities. Although he later distanced himself from the song, the song continued to be heralded by the CIO and other groups. Students can use this and other songs listed below to uncover the story of the American working-class life, work, culture, ideology, and organizations.[44] I think this would be excellent for group work activities. Students can make an interactive world wall with the words of the songs and then gather as a whole class group to look at similarities and differences across the songs and also a period of time. Students can visualize the defeats and triumphs of various labor struggles. Heroes such as Joe Hill, Mother Jones, and Union Maid are celebrated, while Casey Jones (scab for the S.P railroad) and Old Man Sargent (Winnsboro Textile Mill, SC) are vilified. The Winnsboro song is on YouTube and sung by Pete Seeger.
There songs include:

- "Drill Ye Tarriers Drill"
- "Erie Canal"
- "Take This Hammer"
- "Haul Away, Joe"
- "John Henry"
- "I Don't Want Your Millions, Mister"
- "Get Behind Me Satan"
- "The Mill Mother's Song"
- "Linthead Stomp" Huber wrote Ella's song above and this one

I think my primarily gifted class would be able to visit the Library of Congress: The Learning Page" which features "Stand Up and Sing: A guide for Writing a Reform Song" and the accompanying "Reform Song Rubric" in order to write a labor song. They can look at a specific historic labor era or focus on present-day issues in American farm work or Asian clothing sweatshops (Bangladesh building collapse and fires). They can also visit the US Labor and Industrial History Audio Archive
at www.albany.edu/history/LaborAudio/ This site contains a variety of interviews and oral memoirs.

Activity Three: Supplies needed: I Pads, Chrome books, paper Days: Two to three
I want students to assess Progressive efforts to regulate big business, curb labor militancy, and protect rights of the workers and consumers.[45] Also, evaluate Progressive attempts at social and moral reform. The whole idea that workers are a "sub-species" can be seen in all areas of the nation – i.e. lintheads and they don't need a bath tub! Interspersed throughout the labor unit I want to look at questions such as these: How have unions changed our lives? Economically, what types of changes have come about to help employees? Should unions have the ability to strike in order to have their demands met? What opinion do your parents have of unions? This activity will involve some lecture/discussion in regards to the Progressive Era. There are some readings from *The Jungle* that I can utilize in the class. Students will create a political cartoon from those readings. Another part of this activity involves viewing child labor photos of Lewis Hine and poverty in big cities by Jacob Riis.

- Time line of labor events 1800 to 1950's
- Reading excerpts from *The Jungle*
- Design and illustrate political cartoons based on *The Jungle* readings, Triangle Factory Fire, Lewis Hine child Labor photos, and Jacob Riis New York City photos of workers in poverty. http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/nclc/
- Design a survey for students and adults to take. The survey will have questions about the labor movements, union struggles, and do unions still serve a purpose today.

Activity Four: Videos and films Supplies: YouTube clips, union themed movie clips. Days: One or two. These can be placed interspersed anywhere within the activities. Diamond fold process. The folding process creates a diamond in the center of the paper with four triangles off to the sides. The diamond is synthesis and the four triangles could serve as vocabulary (written and illustrated), compare/contrast with actual historical events, personal connections, or solutions to problems that the historical figures like Ella Mae Wiggins encounter.

- Fight for Your Rights! The Pullman Strike (9:32) First national strike in US www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9fXXKZV7Js
- Origins of the Labor Movement (3:40) Role of coppersmiths in early America www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-95bn8lFyc
- Union Labor History 1 (2:32) Unions essential to the economy www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHSMAa6cSTk
- Labor Unions (3:33) Samuel Gompers with modern music www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdu2wrOZVsY
- The Rebel Girl Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and the I.W.W www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHNwKN5D-Co

- Pullman Porters Union and the Civil Rights Movement Parts 1 and 2 (16:35) www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwcD28NdURs
- Unionization of Ford 1941 (7:11) www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrw_WRhUfoq
- Where Do You Stand? Stories from the American Mill Cannon Mills in the 1960's, with emphasis on Charlie Cannon and his control of every sector of the town. Facilitator's guide at www.newsreel.org/guides/wheredo/WDYSSudyGuide.pdf
- *Norma Rae* Union organization attempts in the South in the 1970s.
- *Cry of the Children* (1912) Pre-World War One reform movement involving child labor and the textile mills. (USA: Thanhouser Studios) Controversial because it actually shows child labor in the mills circa 1912.http://vimeo.com/18500930 Vintage silent!

All of these and more come from the Labor Union Resources for Teachers website.[46] There are books, more YouTube video selections, and movies listed on the website.

Activity Five: Supplies needed: Skit props Days: Two. Students will recreate the Loray Mill Strike of 1929. Students do skits all year, so this would not be a new activity to them. They are broken up into six groups and each group activates prior knowledge from the above activities and what I have taught them about the Loray strike from the day before.The probably will need to do a KWL chart to see what they need to research once clips and articles have been completed. View these quick clips

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SKfCyrAorA Mill Mother's Song
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3TjG09aUXM Interview with ex-Firestone (former Loray) worker
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1qSMaow1rE Passaic Strike

Students will view the following photos and artifacts from the Levine Museum of the New South:[47]

- Cotton Fields exhibit: Cotton gin, sharecropper house (juxtaposition of the lives they left behind and the new lives they were about to take up).
- Textile Mill and Mill Village Exhibit: Geographical distribution map of textile mills in Charlotte area, main textile mill display, photos of male weavers and Kannapolis Cannon Mill in 1940s, Lewis Hine photos of child laborers; Spinner Hattie Hunter photo in Rock Hill circa 1909, child labor statistics sign, 1929 photo Loray Mill strikers, National Guards dispersing strikers photo, Loray Mill rendering, photos of Wiggins and Aderholt, 1934 Gastonia strike photos, absence of black laborers in the mills photo, Loray Mill village photos(families on front

porch, individual homes), Charlotte's Sue Boarding house, mill stores, and the life size photo of mill workers and their supervisor on a Sunday afternoon.

Students in the group need to then develop a quick timeline of strike activities. Next, I want students to look at five viewpoints of the Loray strike. They must read the * and can choose one other.

- http://www.marxists.org/archive/weisbord/Gastonia.htm *
- http://www2.lib.unc.edu/ncc/ref/nchistory/jun2004/*
- http://jwa.org/onthemap/site-of-1929-loray-textile-mill-strike
- http://nchumanities.org/programs/road-scholars/blood-cloth-ella-may-wiggins-and-1929-gastonia-strike *
- http://nchumanities.org/programs/road-scholars/blood-cloth-ella-may-wiggins-and-1929-gastonia-strike *

As a group, each student should be responsible for an article, while student number six becomes the recorder for the event. Groups then compare/contrast videos and articles within the group. I estimate that this will take about 45 minutes of the 70 minute class period. Taking their KWL charts, timelines, and recorders notes, students will then create a strike in the form of a skit. The rest of the class period will be used for organizing. They are free to bring appropriate props – clothing, tools, etc. from home. Students will regroup the second day and spend the first half of class polishing the skit. The last half of class is used for presentation.

Appendix

North Carolina Essential Standards:

- 8 H 1.3: Using primary and secondary sources from newspapers and books in order to interpret various historical perspectives (governments, union, workers). Primary source use is an integral part of the History class in eighth grade and using a variety of sources to confirm reliability is also vital.
- 8 H2.1: Explaining the impact of social and economic conflicts on the state and nation. Labor unrest and union organization are examined in all areas of the nation.
- 8 H 3.2 – Explaining how changes were brought about by technology innovations in the textile mills. The use of the stretch out in Gastonia is forefront in the Loray Strike. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3TjG09aUXM Interview with ex-Firestone (former Loray) worker is a perfect example of technology changes.
- 8 E.1.1: Understanding various economic activities within North Carolina, specifically in the growth of mills in the Piedmont region.

- 8 C and G 1: Analyzing democratic ideals which shaped viewpoints on the scope of government, specifically looking at the rights of unions and their organizers in all areas of the nation.

Common Core Standards:

- Gathering of relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, access the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrating information in final product (especially in video shorts and songs).
- Determine central ideas in primary and secondary sources (political cartoons and labor songs). This also determines the viability of the source as reliable.
- Determine meaning of union and labor terms.
- Determine point of view in labor political cartoons. POV is essential when reading a variety of literature pieces and also when examining political cartoons. Integrate visual information in the charts, photos, political cartoons etc. with other print, photo, or video info. The Levine photo collection "Cotton Fields to Skyscrapers" is used multiple times in the aforementioned activities.

Annotated Bibliography

This is a list that I would use for both students and teachers.

"Cotton Fields to Skyscrapers," main exhibits, Levine Museum of the New South. Many exhibits and artifacts are interactive. These exhibits show Charlotte emerging from the Civil War into the 20th and 21st centuries.

Cry of the Children (1912) Pre-World War One reform movement involving child labor and the textile mills. (USA: Thanhouser Studios) Controversial because it actually shows child labor in the mills circa 1912.http://vimeo.com/18500930 Vintage silent!

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US Labor and Industrial History Audio Archive
at www.albany.edu/history/LaborAudio/This site contains a variety of interviews and oral memoirs.

Where Do You Stand? Stories from the American Mill Cannon Mills in the 1960's, with emphasis on Charlie Cannon and his control of every sector of the town. Facilitator's guide at www.newsreel.org/guides/wheredo/WDYSSudyGuide.pdfThis is a local story and helps students to see the impact on a small town of a mill closing.

Materials for students are also listed within the activity

SOAPSTONE, FRAME, PAPA Square, editorial cartoon lessons from Teaching Social Justice, *Harper's Weekly* political cartoons, iPads or Chromebooks, white construction paper, color pencils/markers, specific websites listed within each activity, and photos from the Levine Museum collection.

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