



HISTORY DAY 2017

LABOR HISTORY TOPICAL PRIZES

In a change for Minnesota History Day this coming year, the topical prizes in labor history will be presented jointly by:

- Minneapolis Labor Review newspaper
- St. Paul Union Advocate newspaper
- University of Minnesota Labor Education Service

A total of 8 labor history topical prizes of \$100 each may be awarded.

The prizes will include junior and senior division prizes for:

- Best Performance
- Best Documentary
- Best Exhibit
- Best Website or Paper

Over the years, we've seen many labor history projects at Minnesota History Day exploring some the landmark events in U.S. labor history, in particular the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in New York City in 1911.

We encourage students to examine labor history through a local lens and to research and explore topics in Minneapolis, St. Paul and Minnesota labor history.

National History Day, too, in presenting the 2017 theme, suggests that "another way to find a new spin on an old topic is to look to your own backyard."

Local resources

As invaluable primary sources, on-line archives are available for both the Minneapolis Labor Review newspaper and the St. Paul Union Advocate newspaper. Both began publishing more than 100 years ago and continue to publish monthly today, covering local, state and national labor news.

The Minneapolis Labor Review archive begins with the newspaper's first issue in April 1907 and is updated through the current year. Find the Labor Review archive at www.minneapolisunions.org

The Labor Review published a 100th anniversary labor history series in 2007, which may be a good place to find labor history topics. An index to the series may be found at www.minneapolisunions.org/mlr1907-2007_history_index.php The index includes a recommended "Minneapolis Labor History 101 Reading List."

The St. Paul Union Advocate archive covers the years 1900-2010. Find the Union Advocate archive at <https://advocate.stpaulunions.org>

The University of Minnesota Labor Education Service offers several online resources:

- The Workday Minnesota website, launched in 2000, includes an archive of contemporary labor news stories. Labor history stories and topics also may be found: www.workdayminnesota.org.
- A website created by Labor Education Service, www.minneapolis1934.org, is devoted to the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strikes and offers many resources.
- Another website created by Labor Education Service, www.whobuiltourcapitol.org, explores the stories of the workers who built the Minnesota State Capitol.

TOPIC SUGGESTIONS FOR THE 2017 THEME, "TAKING A STAND IN HISTORY"

Crusading journalist exposes harsh sweatshop conditions

In the 1880s, Eva McDonald Valesh went undercover to write a series of newspaper articles exposing the horrible conditions facing women working in a Minneapolis garment factory. Source: *'Joan of Arc' for St. Paul's working people*, Elizabeth Faue, and related materials, Workday Minnesota website, <http://www.workdayminnesota.org/articles/joan-arc-st-pauls-working-people-0>

Who Built Our Capitol?

Hundreds of workers, including six who died, built one of our state's most important buildings – the Capitol – in the early 20th century. But until recently, their story was little known. Source: *Who Built Our Capitol?* website, Labor Education Service, <http://www.whobuiltourcapitol.org>

Robley Cramer and the rise of the labor movement in Minneapolis

Robley Cramer served as editor of the Minneapolis Labor Review from 1915-1963, years which saw the local labor movement grow to its height of influence. From news stories covering the issues of the day in the Labor Review, to Cramer's outspoken editorials, to Cramer's personal papers and correspondence (located at the Minnesota Historical Society), students delving in to the career of Robley Cramer will find an abundance of examples of "Taking a Stand in History." Source: www.minneapolisunions.org/mlr2007-3-22_mlr_cramer.php

Women and the Iron Range miners' strike of 1916

When Iron Range miners went on strike in 1916, women played an important – but largely unrecognized– role in the struggle for better wages and working conditions. Source: *Rebel Girls: Women in the Mesabi Iron Range Strike of 1916*, David LaVigne, Minnesota History magazine, Fall 2016

Radical mayors: Thomas Van Lear of Minneapolis and William Mahoney of St. Paul

The local labor movement brought forth two mayors, Thomas Van Lear, Socialist Party mayor of Minneapolis from 1917-1919, and William Mahoney, Farmer-Labor Party mayor of St Paul from 1932-1934. Sources: Minneapolis Labor Review and St. Paul Union Advocate digital archives.

The Minneapolis Teamsters Strikes of 1934

In 1934, what was a small Teamsters local grew into a powerful union which shut down all trucking in Minneapolis, ultimately breaking the power of the anti-union Citizens Alliance and making Minneapolis a union town. Sources: www.minneapolis1934.org, <http://libguides.mnhs.org/1934strike>

The Strutwear Strike of 1935

Less well-known than the Teamsters strikes the year before, the strike by Strutwear workers — primarily women — also was a notable event in local labor history. Source: www.minneapolisunions.org/mlr2007-5-24_mlr_strutwear.php

Trailblazer Nellie Stone Johnson

Nellie Stone Johnson broke ground in so many ways: as a union activist, civil rights leader and elected official. She was the first African-American elected to citywide office in Minneapolis. Soon, she will be honored as the first woman and African-American to have a statue in the state Capitol. Source: Workday Minnesota, Special section on Nellie Stone Johnson, <http://www.workdayminnesota.org/articles/nellie-stone-johnson-trailblazer-politics-labor-and-civil-rights>

Women work the mines in World War II

Much like Rosie the Riveter worked on planes and tanks in World War II factories, women took over jobs previously held by men in the mines on Minnesota's Iron Range during the Second World War. Source: *Women in the Mines*, Stephanie Hemphill, Minnesota History magazine, Fall 2008

Luverne teachers' strike of 1974

Teachers in the small community of Luverne, Minnesota, were among the first people to exercise their right to strike under new laws passed by the state Legislature. Students also walked out in support. Source: Article by Mavis Fodness, Rock County Herald, reprinted on the Workday Minnesota website, <http://www.workdayminnesota.org/articles/luverne-teachers-took-part-historic-strike-40-years-ago>

Historic victory for Twin Cities janitors

After several years of organizing, the largely immigrant group of workers who clean Macy's, Best Buy and other major retail stores celebrated getting a union and having the opportunity to improve their wages and working conditions. Source: Low-wage workers chalk up another victory as CTUL members win union and numerous other articles and videos, Workday Minnesota website, <http://www.workdayminnesota.org/articles/low-wage-workers-chalk-another-victory-ctul-members-win-union>

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