Originally, the Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers International Alliance Local 254, a trade union based in Calgary, was founded on February 28, 1905. By April 17, 1907, the Edmonton branch, Local 371, was formed and on November 1, 1934, Local 371 was re-chartered to become Local 271, Edmonton. On July 22, 1924, the Union officially changed its name to Sheet Metal Workers International Association at their convention in Montreal, Canada.

Local 558 in Lethbridge was formed on July 8, 1953. The amalgamation of Locals 254, 271 and 558 into Local 8 was completed on May 1, 1973 and given jurisdiction over the Province of Alberta and District of McKenzie, NWT. As well as negotiating contracts for its members with the Calgary Sheet Metal Association, it operated an apprenticeship program for individuals learning the trade.

The romantic and colourful union, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), was founded in Chicago in 1905 to organize all workers regardless of nationality, craft, sex or race into one powerful class-aware union. The IWW pioneered innovative organizing techniques such as wobbly songs and poetry and successfully conducted strikes in many industries. The IWW was established by activists Mother Jones, Big Bill Haywood, Eugene V. Debs and others. Members included Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Helen Keller and wobbly poet and songwriter Joe Hill.

In British Columbia and Alberta, the union organizer was Arthur “Slim” Evans. Slim Evans was a colourful socialist and trade union organizer who played the leading role in organizing the On-to-Ottawa Trek of 1935.

Plumbers and Pipefitters Local Union 496 was chartered in 1904 in Calgary, Alberta. As the economy of southern Alberta became increasingly industrialized, the Local Union assumed jurisdiction over plumbers, pipefitters, steamfitters, sprinkler fitters, pipeline welders, instrument mechanics and non-destructive testing technicians working in building construction and maintenance, pipelines, refineries, gas plants, and other industrial installations. Local Union 496 was the first local union in western Canada to establish its own pension and health and welfare plans. It also established the Piping Industry Training School to develop skills in the pipe trades.

The United Association of Journeymen Plumbers, Steam Fitters, Steamfitters and Steam Fitters Helpers of the United States and Canada was established in the USA in 1889. Its most recent change of name was in 1947, when it became the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada. It is also known by the short form name United Association, or more informally, the Plumbers Union.
### January 2005


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**1905 Conference of industrial unionists in Chicago leads to the formation of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)**

**1915 Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) poet Ralph Chaplin writes Solidarity Forever**

**1962 Alberta New Democrats founding provincial convention**

**1975 Canadian Air Line Flight Attendants Association (CALPA) successful campaign to prevent Transport Canada prohibiting female flight attendants from working beyond the 13th week of pregnancy**

**1983 Samuel Gompers, first president of American Federation of Labor, born**

**1994 Women of Fort Saskatchewan’s first democratic refinery union (the need for OPEC?!) local and women’s local SDA**

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**Well I suppose it was like most of the black people that came over, they were looking for a better life, a better place to raise their children. They wanted freedom. My father’s uncle had this plantation and was going to sell it. But the white people around him, they wanted his plantation. So they decided to get rid of him; in fact they were going to lynch him and take the plantation. He and his family moved to Oklahoma. When they got to Oklahoma the Jim Crow Law was enforced and they had no rights. So they decided they wanted to move where there was freedom. That’s the reason they moved to Keystone—maybe 80 miles from Edmonton. They moved out in the bush so they could have their own government. Well yes.**

—Gwen Hooks, African-Canadian schoolteacher about how she came to teach school in Breton, Alberta

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**New Year’s Day**

**1905 The 1,000,000th claim for compensation by an injured worker is filed with the Alberta Workers’ Compensation Board in its 40th year of operation**

**1954 Workers of Fort Saskatchewan’s first democratic refinery union (the need for OPEC?!) local and women’s local SDA**

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**1959 Teacher Mrs. Brooker Edwards, Grassland School, Amber Valley, Alberta.**
February

1958 Olga Danowich, nee Oschipok, in sewing room of Hatchwear Uniforms factory, Calgary, Alberta.
### March 2005

**First International Women's Day started in New York City by garment workers.**

1978

**Canadian Human Rights Act (HRA) takes effect, outlawing discrimination on the grounds of age or marital status.**

1908

**Delegates from 11 union locals in western Canada meet at the Western Labour Conference in Calgary and form One Big Union.**

1961

**Sixth of July.**

1917

**Delegate from the Provincial Council of Carpenters.**

1913

**First convention of the Provincial Council of Carpenters.**

1951

**Local 630 of Oil Workers International Union certified in Edmonton, the first local in the industry to last for some time.**

1980

**United Nurses of Alberta organize program of action to publicize low nurse wages.**

**Spring Equinox.**

1919

**Delegates from most union locals in western Canada meet at the Western Labour Conference in Calgary and form One Big Union.**

1915

**Canadian women win the right to vote in federal elections.**

1937

**Cesar Chavez born.**

1918

**Canadian women win the right to vote in federal elections.**

1977

**Parkland Nursing Home Workers (CUPE) begin a lengthy strike.**

1871

**Paris Commune founded.**

1911

**New York Triangle Shirtwaist Fire. 147 workers, the vast majority women, perish after being locked in the factory by the employer.**

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**Civil Service Association of Alberta (CSA), precursor to AUPE, formed.**

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March 1097 Interior view of mine shaft, Kent Coal Company, located at 10631 – 92 Street, Edmonton, Alberta.
We had thousands of unemployed in Edmonton who ate two meals a day at soup kitchens. We often had riots, when they would destroy all the dishes and throw away the food. They were a big force. We had thousands of people who were being evicted from their homes because they couldn’t pay taxes. We had thousands of people who had no place to go except dirty, cheap rooming houses, which were supplied by the authorities. So the idea of a hunger march caught on. The fact that we got 12,000 people is astounding. Edmonton had a population of 80,000 at that time, so this was an enormous event. The police tried to prevent people from coming in. The RCMP blockaded all the main roads but they got around that. The farmers came in during the night on the side roads—they couldn’t keep them from coming in.

—Ben Swanky, Leader, Alberta Labour Progressive Party, about the lead-up to the Edmonton Hunger March of 1932

Communications Workers of Canada strike against Northern Electric and Manufacturing Company Limited.
The worst mine event that I remember was the two Meyers boys being killed in the mine shaft. They were coming up off work and something happened to the cable. It came up so fast it hit the top and went right back down again. The two boys were killed. That was about the worst accident.

—Tilly Herman, miner’s wife, East Coulee, describing a mine accident in the Drumheller Valley in the 1940s
### June

1941 – 1945 During WWII, beet growers in Southern Alberta brought Japanese labourers from British Columbia to work in the sugar beet fields.

---

**But getting back to the police,** I remember one evening when we were all down there demonstrating. I turned and looked and here come twelve of them on horseback—not a very nice scene. We tend to think that we live in this free country where we have the right of free collective bargaining. That’s a farce if there ever was one. The right to sign your name on the paper for somebody to take it away, that’s all the right we have. Anybody who thinks that it’s free—they gotta be drinking something pretty good.

—*Gib Todd, National Representative, Communications Energy & Paperworkers talking about the Calgary Herald Strike of 1999*
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<tr>
<td><strong>1975 School children join Canadian Union of Public Employees caretaker picketers, Calgary, Alberta. Canadian Union of Public Employees were on strike over salary, overtime and job description issues.</strong></td>
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### July 3

- **1977 United Food and Commercial Workers Local 114 picketers at the High River, Alberta meatpackers go on strike.**

### July 4

- **1987 Amalgamated Association of Street Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employees of America Local 141 strike Calgary Transit July 11 to August 22.**

### July 5

- **1986 Spanish Civil War begins.**

### July 6

- **1982 United Farmworkers of America Local 280P pickets, Edmonton.**
- **1997 Canadian Auto Workers Local 4050 go on strike against Marriott Food Services, Michener Center, Red Deer.**

### July 7

- **2000 Communications, Energy and Paperworkers of Canada Local 115A strikers lose the fight for a union contract.**

### July 8

- **2000 After eight months of a bitter first contract fight, Communications, Energy and Paperworkers of Canada Local 115A strikers lose the fight for a union contract.**

### July 9

- **1987 United Nurses of Alberta begin legal strike affecting 2,500 nurses.**
- **1997 United Food and Commercial Workers Local 114 picketers at the High River, Alberta meatpackers go on strike.**

### July 10

- **1986 Short strike by United Packinghouse Workers of America Local 474.**
- **1997 Canadian Auto Workers Local 4050 go on strike against Marriott Food Services, Michener Center, Red Deer.**

### July 11

- **1986 International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental, and Reinforcing Iron Workers Local 173 charter voted.**

### July 12

- **1986 International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental, and Reinforcing Iron Workers Local 173 charter voted.**

### July 13

- **1986 Merit award for Wolfe’s, Viceroy.**
- **1986 Canadian Union of Public Employees, 474 Edmonton is granted a charter.**

### July 14

- **1986 A mass arrest of One Big Union members is coordinated by federal government.**
- **1986 A mass arrest of One Big Union members is coordinated by federal government.**

### July 15

- **1986 On-to-Ottawa Trek is violently repressed by RCMP in Regina.**

### July 16

- **1986 Federal monies became available to provinces that established universal, comprehensive, public, needs of health Insurance.**

### July 17

- **1986 Canada Day.**

### July 18

- **1986 United Nurses of Alberta begin legal strike affecting 2,500 nurses.**
- **1986 Short strike by United Packinghouse Workers of America Local 474.**

### July 19

- **1986 Sheet Metal Workers Local 561 formed in Lethbridge.**

### July 20

- **1986 United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1118, meatpackers at the High River, Alberta Cargill plant go on strike.**

### July 21

- **1986 Amalgamated Association of Street Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employees of America Local 141 strike Calgary Transit July 11 to August 22.**

### July 22

- **1986 United Farmers of Alberta government is elected. Four Labour members are also elected.**

### July 23

- **1986 Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union organizes two hotels and six restaurants after Calgary Trades and Labour Council threatens a general strike.**
- **1986 Sheet Metal Workers Local 561 formed in Lethbridge.**

### July 24

- **1986 Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union organizes two hotels and six restaurants after Calgary Trades and Labour Council threatens a general strike.**

### July 25

- **1986 Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union organizes two hotels and six restaurants after Calgary Trades and Labour Council threatens a general strike.**

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### July 28

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### July 29

- **1986 Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union organizes two hotels and six restaurants after Calgary Trades and Labour Council threatens a general strike.**

### July 30

- **1986 Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union organizes two hotels and six restaurants after Calgary Trades and Labour Council threatens a general strike.**

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There aren’t enough policemen to arrest us all. There aren’t enough judges to try us all. There aren’t enough jails to hold us all.

1906 Edmonton Trades and Labour Council granted charter

1911 Amalgamated Transit Union 569 granted charter

1961 Solidarnosc founded in Gdansk, Poland

1980 Solidarnosc founded in Gdansk, Poland

1981 Wardair locks out its flight attendants. The locksout lasts 13 weeks, with the company using scabs and a strike-breaking security firm.

1981 Edmonton Trades and Labour Council (forerunner of the EDTLC)

1918 August (15) Workers’ Compensation Act becomes effective for the coal mining industry. Trade union pressure led to passage of the Act and later its extension to most other industries.

1944 August 01 A federal bill establishing family allowances passes in the House of Commons

1940 The Unemployment Insurance Act receives royal assent. Labour had fought a long battle for a federal program of UI.

1961 Edmonton Club waitresses on strike in Edmonton, Alberta. Edmonton Club locked workers out when they asked for a 5 cent raise (to 80 cents/hour).

1961 Solidarnosc founded in Gdansk, Poland

1984 Solidarnosc founded in Gdansk, Poland

1918 Two month national rail strike of CPR shop and yard workers begins

1931 The CCF is founded in Calgary by labour, farmer and socialist parties, along with one union, the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees

1932 United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1118 settles strike

1918 Heritage Day

1918 August 01 Workmen’s Compensation Act becomes effective for the coal mining industry. Trade union pressure led to passage of the Act and later its extension to most other industries.

Well, the hotel [Chateau Lacombe] was opening up. So I went to McDougall United Church close to there and talked to the grand old minister. “Yes,” he says, “you can have the basement. Bring them down, sign them up down here.” So Evelyn used to go up the stairways in the hotel when we were organizing chambermaids. Evelyn would take about six hats with her. She’d change her hat on the main floor and take the elevator up. Pretty soon they’ll get to know her by her hat, so she’d change it.

—Doug Tomlinson, Union Organizer, Alberta Local, Hotel & Restaurant Workers Union, about working with his wife Evelyn Tomlinson

1834 British National Trades Union founded

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1961 Edmonton Club waitresses on strike in Edmonton, Alberta. Edmonton Club locked workers out when they asked for a 5 cent raise (to 80 cents/hour).
**September 2005**

**Labour Day**

- 1920: Edmonton Free Press becomes Alberta Labour News, serves as official paper for AFL.
- 1946: Alberta Farmers’ Union stages 30-day strike demanding minimum feed price for wheat.
- 1946: Alberta Farmers’ Union begins 30-day strike demanding minimum feed price for wheat.

1904: Plumbers and Pipefitters Local receives first charter as largest plumbers and pipefitters local in Canada and one of the largest in North America.

- 1912: IWW organizes a strike of 250 sewer workers.
- 1918: Borden government bans 14 organizations, including IWW, Social Democratic Party, Chinese Labour Association, and Ukrainian Social Democratic Party.

1918: Borden government outlawed publications and meetings in 14 languages; labour press one of key targets.

2003: Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Local 1900 walk out in Edmonton in effort to ratify contract with A-Channel.

- 1946: Alberta Farmers’ Union begins 30-day strike demanding minimum feed price for wheat.
- 1946: Alberta Farmers’ Union begins 30-day strike demanding minimum feed price for wheat.

The split with the US came when we merged with Gas Coke, International Chemical Workers. We should have been able to merge in Canada without them merging in the US—the kind of autonomy we have now. We were quite sad when [the International] Convention rejected our position. The rank-and-file didn’t want us to leave, because we were the progressive unit at their Conventions. They said we could do things in Canada that they can’t do in the US, and that’s likely true.

—Neil Reimer, National President, Energy & Chemical Workers Union, about the 1979 split of the Canadian section from the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers Int. Union.
It separated the community, because Newcastle was the hotbed of radicalism. Anybody around a coal mine, particularly members of the union, was perceived as being in the Red camp and everybody else was in the other camp. It affected the way we chose our friends—not only as adults, but as kids. There was a young person I went to school with and we became quite chummy to start with. But her father was an RCMP officer—he had been in the RCMP at the time of the On-to-Ottawa Trek [1935] and had been in Regina, and had been injured in that attack. Right away that separated us. My mother paid for it more than we did. It wasn’t so bad for the kids, but it affected the valley and the whole community.

—Jan Tarasoff, teacher and member of Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple. Association about the effects of the Cold War during her childhood in the Drumheller Valley

October 1933 Unemployed demonstration during the Great Depression, Edmonton, Alberta.
So I started with Calgary Transit as a cleaner, then I became service man and trolley repairman. In 1961 I participated in the first strike. Strikes in general shouldn’t be necessary, but they really create solidarity between members when they know they’re all in the same boat; they have to look out for each other. My wife became involved also. The late Senator Harry Hayes was the mayor of Calgary then. He was not one to respect unions. One of his favourite expressions was, “You should all be rickshaw drivers in China, then you’d know what it would be like to have a job and be happy.”

—Gunter Bruckner, President and activist, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 583, about a transit strike in Calgary
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The government can make all the laws it wants, but it can't stop people from going on strike. They can make laws saying that you can't strike, and if you do, they will be the penalty. They may indeed make you pay the penalty; you may refuse—but they cannot prevent you from going on strike. Our nurses would discuss that. How are they going to make me do this? OK, they can fine me, but they still can't make me go to work. They could get the army out and march me to work, but can they make me work? No.

—Mary Ethier, President, United Nurses of Alberta, 1980-1989 about Alberta Government response to the 1982 nurses' strike

1980 Nurses at the Mewburn Pavilion at the University Hospital in Edmonton. Before tearing down the Mewburn to make way for the new emergency wing of the University Hospital, the Mewburn was the centre for cancer care and dialysis.
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When I started in 1973, there was very little work that wasn’t union—certainly all the commercial and industrial work, and even the residential, to quite an extent, as well as pipelines and all that kind of stuff. It was a good time overall, a good environment for working people. But when the 1980s came along, the whole world changed. There was massive unemployment, and there was Bill 110, which in a sense made it legal for a contractor to use a spin-off company if he so desired and the 24-hour lockout—all of these things were just crippling to a union.

—Jack Hubler, Business Agent, United Association of Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 488, about circumstances which gave rise to the ‘Dandelions’ in the 1980s.
The Alberta Labour History Institute (ALHI) was formed in 1999 by a group of trade unionists, community activists, archivists and historians, who decided to take the first steps to collect, preserve and publicize the stories of Alberta’s working people and their organizations. We incorporated under the Societies Act and are governed by a board that has been growing steadily.

ALHI has done considerable work to spread the story of unions and cultural communities by capturing the life stories of workers and trade unionists on film and in print, collecting and archiving records and artifacts of trade union and working class history, organizing Labour History Day as part of Edmonton’s History Week, and publishing and distributing a Labour History Calendar. We also provide speakers, displays and walking tours on labour history for conferences, meetings and other events, and are committed to building research capacity for history students. Some examples of recent and on-going projects include:

- **An Oral History Project**: As part of our ongoing efforts to preserve our history, ALHI has been interviewing labour activists of years past. This project has captured the voices and stories of dozens of Albertans who have played a vital role in union and working class history.

- **A City Called Home website**: ALHI contributed pictures, oral history clips, timelines of events and other information to “A City Called Home,” Edmonton’s 2004 centennial project. Our contributions ensured that the struggles and successes of the working people of Edmonton were not forgotten.

- **Piece by Piece—The GWG Story**: The Great Western Garment (GWG) Company was established in Edmonton in 1911, becoming a wholly owned subsidiary of Levi’s in 1972. In September 2003, Levi Strauss announced that it would be moving all of its North American manufacturing jobs to Haiti. The Edmonton plant closed in March 2004, marking the end of an important era in Edmonton’s history. In partnership with the University of Alberta’s Work and Learning Network and Don Bouzek of Ground Zero Productions, we have been working to preserve the history of the GWG/Levi’s plant and the stories of its workers.

- **Labour History Map**: A new effort, this travelling map will be held by rank and file members who contribute their insight and experiences helping to define where we are today.

ALHI began its work with funding from a number of sources, including Alberta Culture, unions and individuals. Even though volunteers conduct most of our work, we require on-going support to continue our activities. Please consider some of the following ways in which you can become part of this effort:

- Make a financial donation to support the work of ALHI.
- Submit a bulk order for our next Labour History Calendar, either for resale or distribution to your officers and members.
- Invite a representative of ALHI to make a presentation at your next meeting or educational event (PowerPoint and video available).
- Provide names and contact information of individuals who should be interviewed.
- Form a Labour History Committee to spearhead union history work in your organization. ALHI can provide technical assistance in this regard.

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### What we do

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### For further information

Contact our President Dave Werlin at 780-483-8999 or dwerlin@telus.net.

Joanne Janzen, Administrator
Alberta Labour History Institute
8206, 10132 – 105 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 1C9
Phone: 780-420-1400

### To donate, send a cheque to:

ALHI Calendar 2005

This is the fourth edition of the Alberta Labour History Institute calendar. The purpose of the calendar is to create an awareness of the Institute and the work with which we are involved.

The cover photograph is from the Glenbow Museum collection. The photograph is of the 1929 installation of gas transmission lines from Viking to Edmonton, Alberta.

Photos courtesy of Glenbow Museum, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners Local 1325, United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Edmonton Archives, and Donalda Cassel.

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