



## Thank You!!

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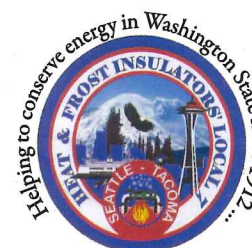
borrowed for some of the narration of this brochure. And to Brian Kamens, author of an unpublished manuscript *Tacoma Labor Landmarks Tour: a Guide to Labor Heritage Sites in Downtown Tacoma*.

Thanks to the Tacoma Public Library for the use of the historical photos from its collection. And, we thank the Washington State Historical Society for use of the image of the 1919 Labor Day Parade, Bolland 2273.

We thank Russell Grant and Ross Rieder for the contemporary images of the tour stations.

"We pledge ourselves to the more effective organization of working men and woman; to the securing to them of full recognition of an enjoyment of the rights to which they are justly entitled."

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TACOMA CHAPTER



PACIFIC COAST MARITIME HISTORY COMMITTEE



# Tacoma Labor Landmark Tour

## A guide to Labor Heritage Sites in Downtown Tacoma





# History of Labor

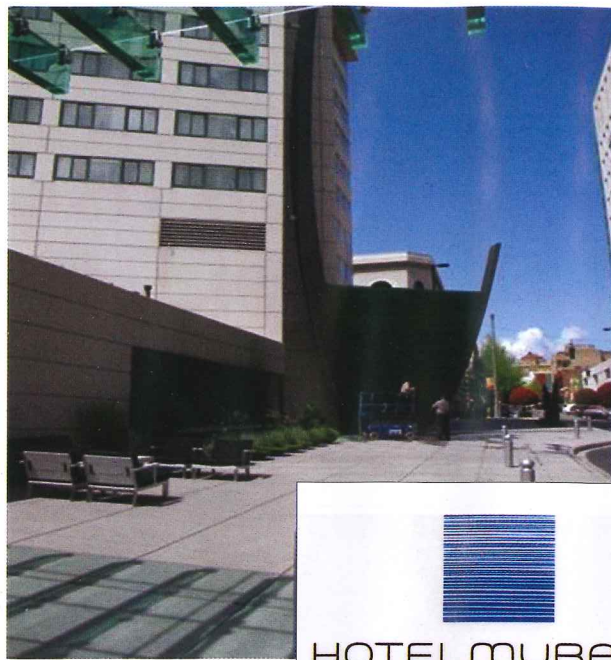
The little wooden town on Commencement Bay in Puget Sound country was ten years old when printers working on the two daily newspapers organized the first union.

- Tacoma Typographical Union charts September 30, 1883,
- Mt Tacoma Lodge 238, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers January 3, 1884,
- Mt Tahoma Lodge 192, Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, January 4, 1884,
- Knights of Labor arrived in 1885, organized Rainier Assembly 4206,
- On April 3, 1890, delegates from Cigar Makers, Carpenters, Stone Cutters, Bricklayers, Iron Molders, Tinnerns and Cornice Makers, Longshoremen and Knight's Assembly 4223 met in KoL hall to form Tacoma Trades Council, affiliating with AFofL.

The Tacoma labor movement survived the Panic of 1893. Through the toughest of times, organized labor would always reawaken with renewed strength and perseverance. The Alaska Gold Rush and the Spanish American War led to a huge growth in Labor's ranks. From smelter workers to streetcar employees, new union organized. The Wobblies were active in Northwest forests. Tacoma's organized shipyards played a crucial role in WWI. The end of WWI brought inflation, hard times and a government-industry attack on organized labor. Company "unions" were created. Then came the crash of Wall Street and the Great Depression. The unemployed formed organized councils as labor struggled to hold on. Tacoma's Hooverville, known as Hollywood on the Flats, housed the homeless. Led by the likes of Harry McIlvaigh, Paddy Morris and Ralph Chaplin, Tacoma's workers organized as never before. The election of FDR and the promise of a New Deal brought hope. West Coast Longshore workers, including Tacoma's, won an important strike in 1934. The 1935 lumber strike was another major victory for Tacoma Labor. The

Tacoma Labor Advocate reported on these tense events and the National Guard fought with pickets on the streets of Tacoma. WWII brought new immigrants to the Tacoma shipyards and other local industries. Victory Square was erected by Tacoma labor in one working day at 10th and Pacific Avenue.

The AFofL and the CIO, the dual movements of the American labor movement merged in 1955. Splits over the Vietnam War were followed by the oil crisis and a concerted attack on labor from the Reagan and both Bush administrations and their corporate allies. The fight to live in dignity goes on. After 120 years, the preamble of the Pierce County Central Labor Council's constitution reaffirms the obligations of the union movement.



The Murano Hotel is a convenient and central place to start the Tacoma Labor Landmarks Tour. Coincidentally, it is a union hotel. It is about a half mile to the outside limits of a circle around the hotel. All tour sites are within the half mile radius of the Hotel Murano

## 2 Tacoma Labor Temple 9th and Fawcett

This is the site of the second Tacoma Labor Temple, 950 Fawcett. Unfortunately, the labor council lacked the resources to maintain it, sold it and moved to IBEW 76 building.

The original Labor Temple was the old Baker Hotel built at 1355 Market St. The tremendous growth over the previous years, which promised to continue as war workers flocked to Tacoma, was filling union treasuries. Union members responded wholeheartedly the Labor Temple Corporation's request for one day's

pay. Remodeling of the Baker Hotel began on July 14, 1941 and in late October the unions moved in. The **Labor Advocate** was printed there. It had meeting halls, a lounge and a lunch counter. The entire building indebtedness was paid off by January 1943.



Union activist George L. McMurphy organized Tacoma's first carpenters' union in 1888.

The Carpenters' Hall at 1322 Fawcett Avenue has been a local landmark since it opened in 1954.

Local 470 was chartered on February 27, 1900.

## 4 The Rhodes Store 11th and Market



The Rhodes store was at the corner of 11th and Market. Down 11th to Pacific was the Peoples store. In the 1930s, only Montgomery Wards was not union. A situation rectified in the late 1903s. Seen here is Rhodes and how it looks today.

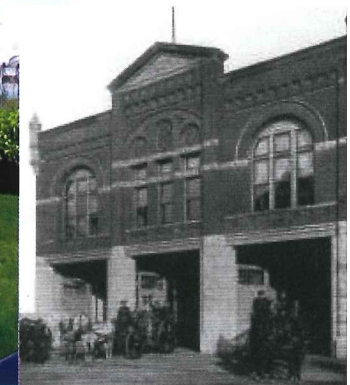
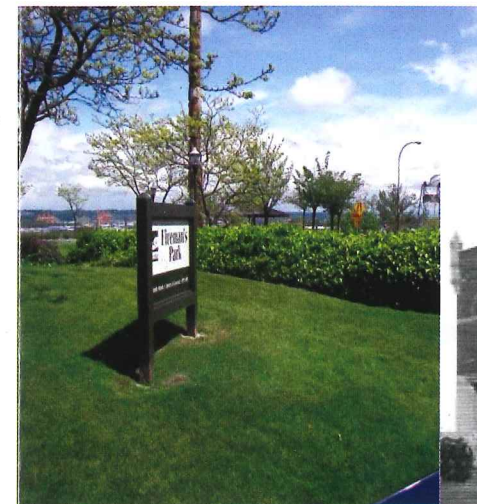


The Alpha Opera House (later the Brunswick Billiard Hall) was built in 1882 at the current site of the Bank of California. One of the city's first public meeting places, the Knights of Labor held its meetings there. The building was also the meeting place of the anti-Chinese citizens committee that expelled Tacoma's Chinese population in November 1885. Labor's minor but undeniable role in the horrible incident is a low point in Tacoma labor history. The building was the site of the formation of the Tacoma Trades Council, predecessor of the Pierce County Central Labor Council, on April 3, 1890.

## 6 Firemans Park 9th and A Street

Firemen's Park was originally the site of Engine House #6, built in 1890 and was demolished in 1974. Tacoma was the first city in Washington to establish a paid fire department. Within two weeks of the great Seattle fire of 1889, the Tacoma City Council voted to put its volunteer department on salary.

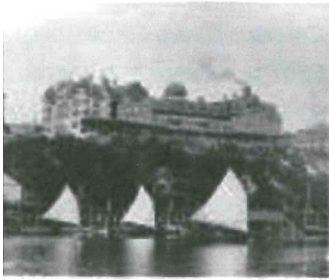
By 1917 fire fighters in Tacoma saw the need to organize and chartered local with the AFL. Until time, fire fighters worked hours a day with an hour off for each meal and even eighth day off. After six weeks, they got a weekend





## 7 Tacoma Hotel

10th and A Street

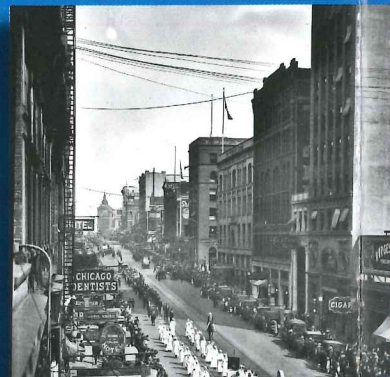


The modern Frank Russell Company building, constructed in 1988, stands at the site of one of the most glamorous hotels in West Coast history — the Tacoma Hotel.

Designed by architect Stanford White, the grand hotel opened August 8, 1884.

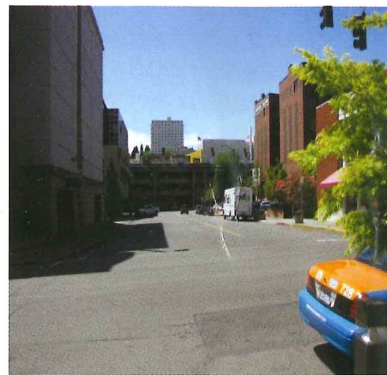
The hotel even boasted its own mascot, Jack the Bear.

We understand that the hotel and restaurant employees were union.



## 8 Liberty Square

10th and A Street



Pierce County has been of military importance to the United States since its founding. Fort Steilacoom began housing troops in 1850. The citizens of Pierce County voted to grant 70,000 acres to the federal government in 1917 for the construction of Camp Lewis. Union labor answered the call when lumber and other industries were vital to war efforts. During WWI Victory Hall at 10<sup>th</sup> and A Street was constructed by union labor in one day. During World War II, Liberty Center, the war bond drive center and public square, was dedicated on Labor Day, 1942.

## 9 Tacoma Building

1102 A Street

Built in 1910 at 1017 A Street. The Tacoma Building was the longtime headquarters of the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company as well as the Tacoma Commercial Club. The Weyerhaeuser Timber Company purchased 900,000 acres of Northwest lumber from the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1900.

Thousands of union workers would make the Northwest lumber industry a world supplier — once they got organized in the mid-1930s.



## 10 Murray Morgan Bridge

11th & A



The Murray Morgan Bridge (nee the 11th St Bridge) has been the gateway to Tacoma's port-industrial area since 1895. Companies such as the St Paul & Tacoma Lumber, Wheeler Osgood, Todd Shipyards, Olin Aluminum, Hooker Chemical and St Regis Paper were the predecessors of today's industrial base.

The present bridge was dedicated February 15, 1913. The Port of Tacoma was the culmination of a dream that started with the dredging of Foss Waterway in 1889. The former marsh and tide flats area is now one of the world's greatest ports. The bridge would play a crucial role in the great lumber strike of 1935. Over 2800 lumber workers

went on strike in June 1935, fighting for union recognition and a much needed wage increase. Employers pressured Governor Martin to send in National Guard and Troops from Eastern Washington patrolled Tacoma streets with fixed bayonets. On July 12, 1935, strikers confronted scabs crossing the bridge. A bloody skirmish between strikers and guardsmen ensued. With community and labor solidarity, including help from Longshoremen, the important strike was won.

The 11th Street Bridge (renamed after local author and historian Murray Morgan in 1997) remains a symbol of solidarity for the Tacoma Labor Movement.)

## 11 Perkins Building

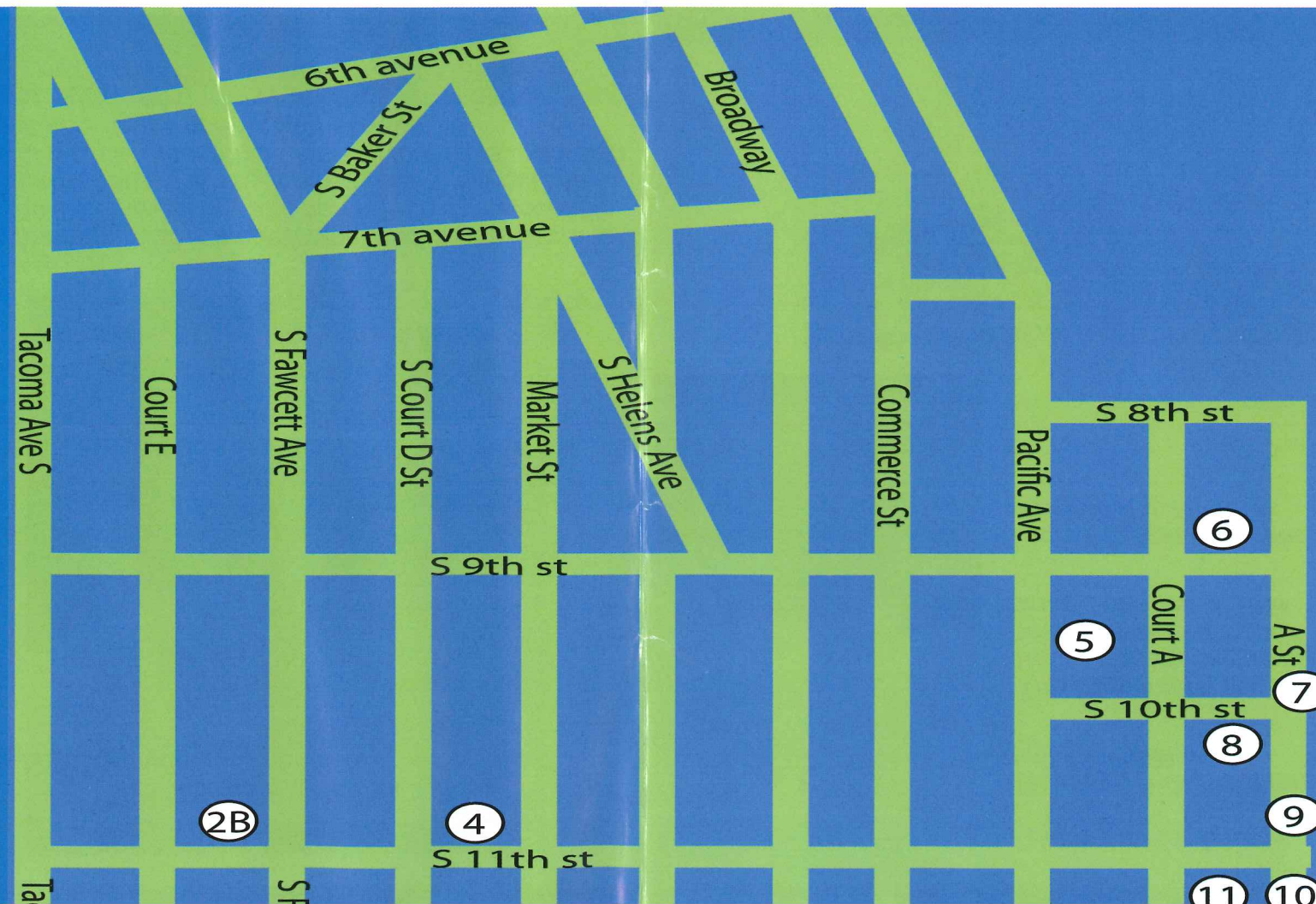
11th and A



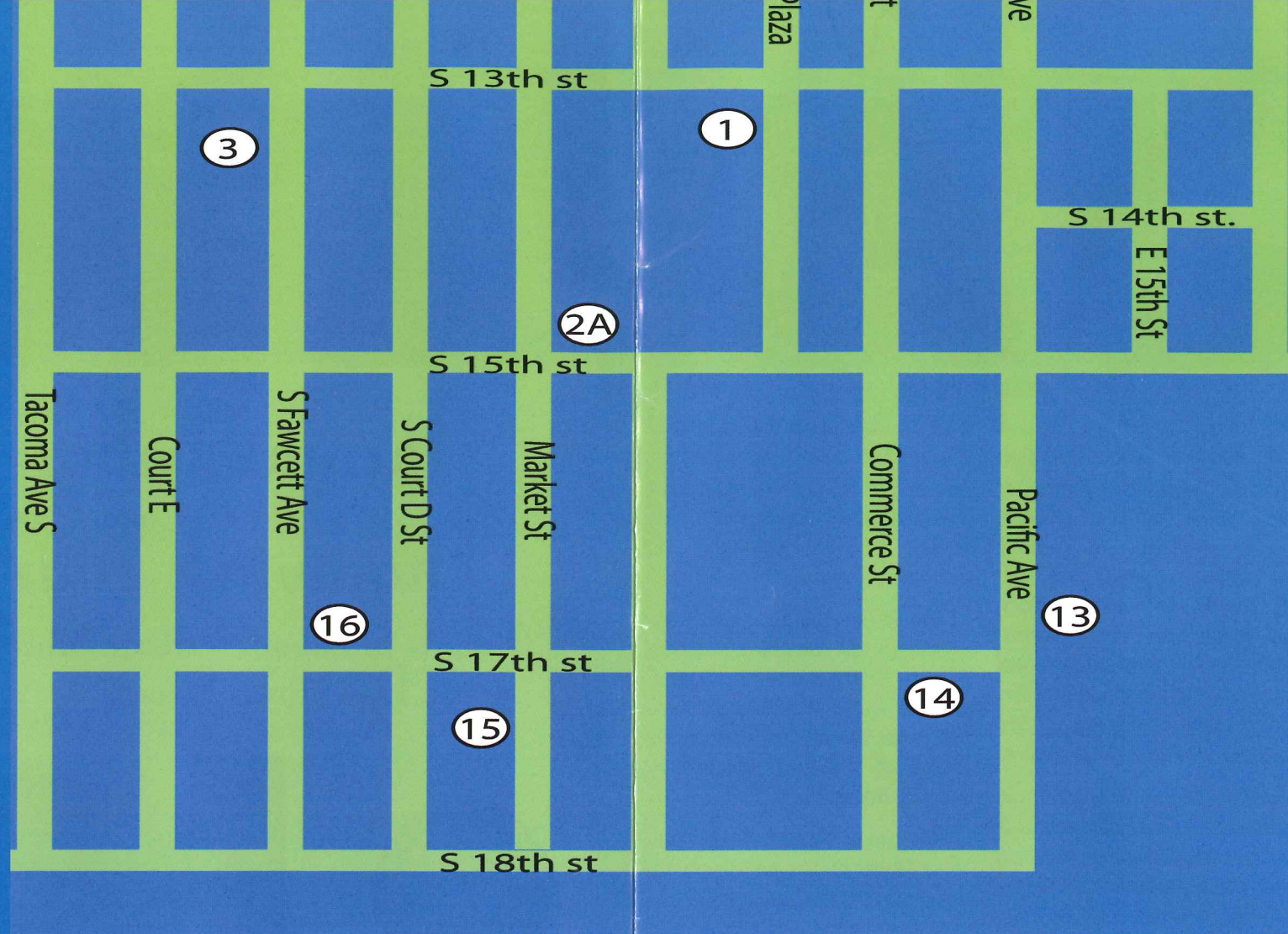
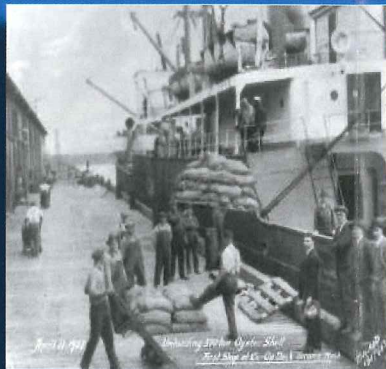
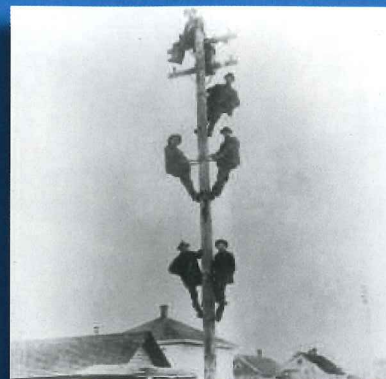
Tacoma Typographical Union 170 organized the first union in Tacoma in 1883. Union printers and reporters have struggled for respect and decent working conditions since the days of Tacoma's first major daily, the Tacoma Daily Ledger.

The Perkins Building, built in 1906 by newspaper magnate Sydney "Sam" Perkins, housed both the Ledger and the News.

Logos for the two papers can still be seen at the top







## 12 Federal Building

1102 A Street



Horse drawn mail cart. 19th century houses, seen in the background, were still prevalent in Tacoma Central Business District when a postal employee posed with his rig in front of the 12th Street entrance about 1920.



Letter Carriers and Postal Workers have worked out of the Federal Building since its construction in 1910. The 2010 image shows a little has changed.

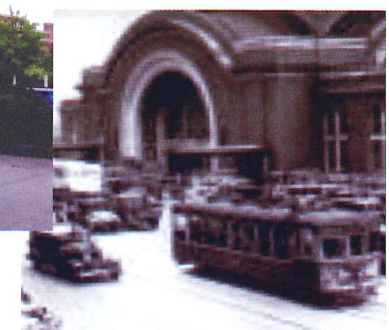
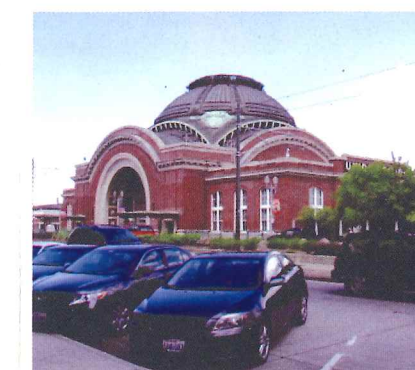
## 13 Union Depot

1717 S Pacific

The Northern Pacific Railroad chose Tacoma for its western terminus in 1873, but Tacomans would have to wait until April 30, 1911 for the opening of their grand railroad station, Union Depot.

The center of the city's transportation system was designed by the firm of Reed & Stem, who also designed Grand Central Station. Working people, immigrants, and soldiers off to war were all affected by Union Depot.

The last train left the station on June 14, 1984. Headed for demolition, caring citizens campaigned to save the historic building. It reopened May 15, 1992 after renovation into a federal courthouse.



## 16 Operating Engineers

1555 S Fawcett

In Tacoma the Stationary Engineers Association was organized June 10, 1891, with the help of the Trades Council. The National Association of Stationary Engineers, with which the Tacoma group affiliated, evolved into a self-help society rejecting trade union activities and affiliation, while the AFL international Union of Steam Engineers became the recognized representative of the craft. In Tacoma, NASE split in 1903, the dissidents affiliating with the IUSE as Local 194, and promptly affiliating with the Tacoma Trades Council.

After wandering around in

the political/union desert until 1916, the Tacoma engineers became Local 606 of the International Union of Steam and Operating Engineers. In July 1935, the hoisting and portable engineers who were members of Local 606 petitioned for a charter to separate themselves from the stationary engineers. They received a charter to Tacoma Hoisting and Portable Engineers Local 612 on August 1, 1935.



## 15 ILWU Hall

1710 S Market

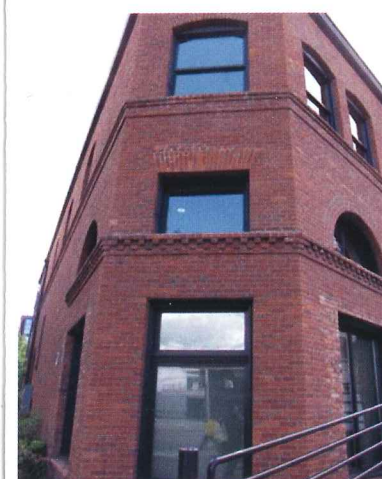
Longshoremen first organized in Tacoma in 1886 and have played a major role in shaping the West Coast labor movement ever since.

Tacoma was part of the West Coast maritime strike of 1934 and longshoremen provided major support during the lumber strike of 1935. The Longshoreman's Hall was constructed in 1952 and served as their hiring hall for 50 years.

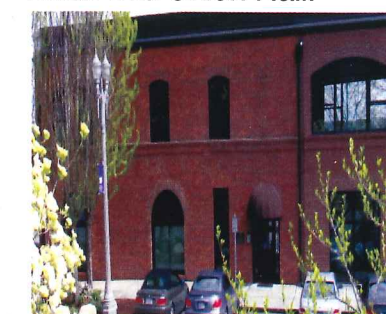


## 14 Villard Depot

17th and Commerce



From 1883 until 1892, this site was the Northern Pacific Railroad Passenger Terminal. When the depot was relocated across Pacific Avenue, this building was constructed. The structure contained a variety of uses over the years, including the Teamsters Local 313 Union Hall.



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