International Longshore and Warehouse Union History

• The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) represent over 45,000 working women and men in California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii, Canada and Panama

• The ILWU has more than 60 locals up and down the coast which consist of Longshore, Warehouse, Manufacturing and Production Workers. It also branch out to Watchmen, Clerks, Ferry and Tugboat Workers, Tourism, and Agricultural Workers

• Organized in 1933 – 1934 after 15 non-union years on the waterfront, the union that emerged during labor's national upheaval during the mid-1930s had grievances like discriminatory and degrading hiring, hours that sometimes stretched well beyond 8, 10, or 12, and unsafe conditions that resulted in an unacceptable injury rate in San Francisco and elsewhere.

• The main demands in 1934 were for union control over the hiring process and a coast-wide contract to keep ports up and down the coast unified and free from ship owner efforts to play ports against one another.



The Strike of 1934 also known as Bloody Thursday

 In San Francisco, the strike peaked with the killing of two strike supporters on Bloody Thursday, July 5, 1934

• The two men who died were shot in the back, at least 100 other strikers were injured in that battle that raged up and down Embarcadero.

• The killings and the protest parade up Market Street, which gained public sympathy for the striking worker.

• General Strike July 16-19 that is all trades in San Francisco struck in sympathy this is famous to this day.



Harry Bridges

•The union emerged from the Bloody Thursday 1934 under the strike's leader president Harry Bridges.

• During the strike, a strong rankand-file activist, Harry Bridges, emerged as the longshore's leader.

• He served as the president of the ILWU between 1937 until his retirement in 1977.

• He has still remained as the face of the ILWU in many ways ever since.



The March Inland



- During the 1934 strike and through the years 1934-1937, the union first expanded beyond the waterfront in San Francisco and in Los Angeles.
- In San Francisco, some 8500 Warehouse workers were organized into the ILWU by 1938.

Affiliated Areas

• By 1946 there were 26,000 new ILWU members in Hawaii's sugar industry.

• The union survived a strike for survival in Hawaii that year and has been a significant institution in the island ever since.

• Many pineapple workers also were organized successfully in those years as sugar and pine, but left the islands in later years.

• The ILWU successfully organized hotel workers in the emerging tourist industry

• ILWU local in the island is still the biggest single local in the ILWU.

•The Canadian longshore workers also affiliated with the ILWU in 1944.





Mechanization and Modernization

• With the coming of containerization, the union concluded a Mechanization and Modernization (M&M) contract with the employers in 1960

• The Contract allowed the employers to install containers, which replaced "break bulk: or hand worked cargo handling, in exchange for certain benefits







In 1980 the InlandBoatmen's union of the Pacific (IBU) joined the ILWU as an autonomous affiliate. It still enjoys that status.

In the very recent past (2012), maritime workers in Panama- tug boat captains and longshore workers affiliated with the ILWU on a similarly autonomous basic.



Organizational of ILWU Locals in the Last Few Decades



Powell's Books ILWU Local 5



VCA Vet Hospital Workers ILWU Local 6 Unionized in 2018

Anchor Brewery ILWU Local 6 Unionized in 2019



ILWU supports the working class, by finding ways to help unionizing workers for a better gain

Present Day at the Port

• ILWU Longshore Division and the PMA contract negotiation in 2002, which ended up in a locked out all waterfront workers in the Pacific Coast.

• One of the Union's most pressing issues today is still the potential automation of the longshore operations on the waterfront.

• Present day there we have already one automated terminal in the port of Los Angeles/Long Beach.

• The ILWU's other existing issues are the City of Oakland's plans to build a ballpark on port industrial land (Howard Terminal) for the new Oakland A's stadium.

• ILWU will always fight to maintain the jurisdiction with the Port. We also believe in maintaining the relationship of all port worker around the world, i.e. ITF, IDC, MUA.









ILWU Looking Towards the Future

•ILWU will always work to protect the 45,000 workers.

•ILWU will always fight for a fair contract, health insurance, job security, workplace safety standard and more importantly education.

•ILWU partnered up with the district council to fight for immigration, civil rights, civil liberty, racial injustices, social injustices, economic injustices, and the basic right to organize.

•ILWU long championed with these struggles and will continue to fight, and strive for the union members and the working class.

