



THE CARPENTERS' UNION IN CANADA

LOOKING BACK WITH PRIDE - LOOKING FORWARD WITH VISION

125 Years of History

Presented by the Carpenters' Union – Central Ontario Regional Council

By Edward E. Seymour Edited By Michael Wilson

Dedication

This commemorative publication is dedicated to the

Members of the Carpenters' Union,

past, present and future,

whose dedication and

commitment over the years

has enhanced and will continue

to enhance the quality of life

of all working people

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FOREWORD

This book was written to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America Local Union 27, one of the oldest Local Unions in both the United States and Canada. But it is much more than that.

It is a story of tenacity, trauma and triumph spanning much of the history of Canada and reflecting the significant political and social changes that occurred during that time – some of the most important influenced for the better by the Brotherhood.

And it is the story of the men and women of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America who are the Brotherhood. Skilled, talented and dedicated carpenters and other tradespeople who built most of the homes and places of business in our country's largest metropolitan area.

The history of the Brotherhood spans more than a century but its roots go even deeper into the fabric of human history – back to the Middle Ages and further. Unions are seen by many as the successors to the guilds of medieval Europe. Over the last three hundred years, they have developed into effective organizations aimed at providing benefits to Members through collective bargaining, industrial action and political activity.

The history of the Brotherhood echoes the evolutionary pattern of unionism in general. But it is in the details of that evolution and in the experiences of its Members that the true story of the Brotherhood comes to life.

Carpenter organizations have long sought to improve not only their own wages, working conditions and benefits, but to bring these benefits to all working people. The Brotherhood continues to fight for all of these as well as for other services – such as health care, education, and much more – that are vital to all of us. It has done so for 125 years and will continue to do so.

In closing, we wish to thank and acknowledge all the people who played a role in the research and creation of this publication. These include, but are not limited to: International Officers Douglas McCarron, General President and Jim Smith, Canadian Vice President; General Office staff Monte Byers and Sharon Banks; Carpenters' Union, Central Ontario Regional Council staff, the many Members, retirees and other contributors whose personal knowledge and experience was vital.

It should also be noted that this book is the product of the vision of the Carpenters' Union, Central Ontario Regional Council Officers who appreciated the significance of the 125th Anniversary as it coincided with the opening of our new office and training complex. Those officers are as follows: Ucal Powell – Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Tony Iannuzzi – President, Mike Yorke – Vice President, Claudio Mazzotta – Warden, Mile Vukovic – Conductor, Frank O'Reilly – Trustee, Joel Neville – Trustee, Joe Sleva – Trustee, John Deluca, Sean O'Dwyer, Carlos Pimentel, Walter Tracogna and Tony Ornelas.

THE BEGINNING YEARS

Early Days

A new society is built from the ground up and that made carpenters very valuable in early North American development. New houses, commercial buildings, wooden ships and wharves – Canada needed them all, and it was the skilled carpenters who built them.

Most of these artisans had carried their tools across the Atlantic, bringing with them the ‘guild system’ that categorized carpenters as masters, journeymen or apprentices. The unwritten rules of the ‘guild’ were based on centuries of tradition. Masters held and passed on the ‘art and mystery’ of the craft, saw to the long-term welfare of journeymen and to the training of apprentices. In the early years of North American development, masters, journeymen and apprentices shared common economic interests and worked together to establish reasonable fees for every aspect of the carpentry trade.

Over time, however, masters tended to view themselves as employers and this caused journeymen and apprentices to take on a more subservient role. As the division widened, journeymen and apprentices began to agitate for better pay and working conditions. This

ultimately positioned the masters (now the bosses) in opposition to the journeymen and apprentices (now the employees). One early result of this division was the first major strike in North America. It happened in Boston in 1825, when 600 house carpenters walked off the job seeking a ten-hour work day.

This and other historical evidence indicates clearly that carpenters were among the first North American tradespeople to organize into unions for their mutual benefit and protection, and Canadian carpenters helped lead the way.

The organizing spirit was spurred by a number of simultaneous developments. There were the new mechanical inventions and building materials that gave rise to factories capable of mass producing many items that had once been fashioned by the hands of carpenters. There was the continuing building boom that attracted speculators and a new breed of builders who had no connection to the tradition of craft-pride and who sought profits over quality.

The death knell for the ancient ‘guild system’ pealed loudly during this period as masters became contractor/businessmen and lost any remaining personal connection to journeymen and apprentices. At one time, a carpenter might

have worked for a single master for decades. By the late 1800s, he was more likely to have had many employers in a single year.

With the 'guild system' increasingly becoming an artifact from a previous time, unionism began to fill the gaps. But this was a slow process that ebbed and flowed with public opinion, political activity, feuds among competing trade organizations and worker activism. Most tradespeople saw the need for change in their daily lives and they wanted it, but many were also afraid of it. Better working conditions and pay were all to the good but losing your job for fighting for your rights was a constant and sometimes very real fear. Even more than today, it took great courage and commitment to be a union member.

Historical Fact

Early trade unions were often called Friendly Societies. The Friendly Carpenters – an 1870s Toronto-based local with more than 50 Members – was one of these.

The early Canadian experience – Trial, Error and Progress

Until the mid 1800s, the organization of trade unions in Canada was mostly local and usually resulted from a specific grievance or complaint. Sometimes the issue was resolved but often the

workers were literally beaten into submission. In either case, union activity generally ended when the initially contentious issue flamed out.

That changed in the 1850s. In 1857, work began on the federal government buildings in Ottawa, spurring the development of a fairly powerful building trades organization there. More importantly, two British organizations, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (A.S.E.) and the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners (A.S.C.J.) entered Canada.

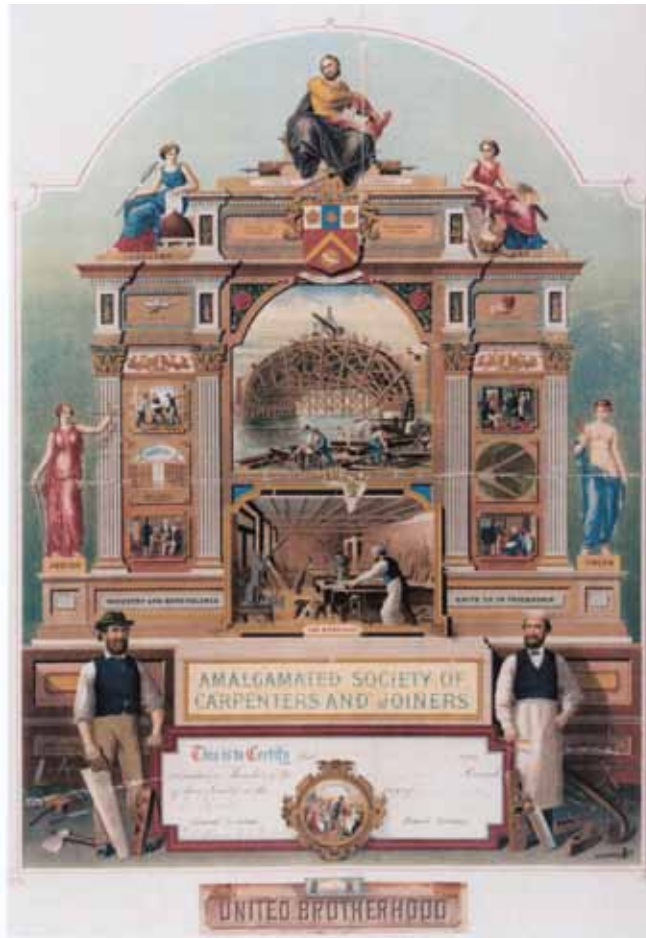
Historical Fact

In the 1850s, Canada's Typographical Union first established the concept of issuing cards to Members who traveled in search of work. Having a card ensured a worker would be welcomed at any local branch and aided in securing employment. The traveling card or clearance card as it came to be known by Brotherhood Members, has survived to this day.

By 1859, the A.S.E. had launched local unions in Montreal, Hamilton, Brantford and Toronto and the A.S.C.J. had solidified its position as the first permanent building trades' union in North America.

The A.S.C.J. grew during the 1870s, with locals or affiliates in Hamilton, Kingston, Toronto and St. Catharines. The spirit of unionism was

developing with particular fervour in Toronto where, in 1871, the Coopers International Union (barrel makers) led a coalition of union leaders in support of a central labour body that came to be known as the Toronto Trades' Assembly (T.T.A.).



Certificate from the Amalgamated Society of Carpenter and Joiners (A.S.C.J.)

By June of 1872, the T.T.A. had grown to represent fourteen unions with 15 locals and there were at least 21 unions active in Toronto.

In that same year, Canada's Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, introduced the Trade Union Act – a very important step in the growth of unions because it made them legal for the first time.

In their own words ...

“ *I am a working man myself. I know that I work more than nine hours every day, and then I think that I am a practical mechanic. If you look at the Confederation Act, in the framing of which I had some hand, you will admit that I am a pretty good Joiner; and as for cabinet making, I have had as much experience as Jacques and Hay themselves.* ”
(Well-known cabinet makers of the day)

*Sir John A. Macdonald,
Canada's first prime minister*

The Toronto Local of the A.S.C.J. was one of several that was strongly in favour of creating a central labour organization for Canada. The result was the Canadian Labour Union (C.L.U.), which held its first convention in Toronto in 1873.

During this time, Canadian workers began to strengthen their alliances with unions in the United States.

By 1878, nearly 20 years after the A.C.S.J. arrived in Ontario, the wage for a carpenter in Toronto was \$1.25 a day, with a first-class man receiving as much as \$1.50 a day.

Three years later, and after considerable agitation, carpenters succeeded in having their pay raised by 25 cents a day (although this amount was sometimes deducted when the building season ended in the fall) plus an additional 25 cents a day for a first-class man – placing a day's wages for a first-class carpenter at \$2.00.

Early Canadian unions had made some hard-won progress and were pushing strongly to recruit new members and develop new locals. Even so, many workers – carpenters among them – were reluctant to join and membership gains were modest into the late decades of the 1880s.

But, for carpenters, things were about to change – buoyed by the birth of the Brotherhood and Local 27.

Birth of the Brotherhood

There had been sporadic union activity across North America for many years. Most of it was confined to local issues and memberships. Along the way, there had been a few attempts to create a larger, stronger presence for carpenters but it was not until 1881 that a true national organization came into being.

In August of that year, 36 carpenters from eleven American cities met in a Chicago warehouse to form a national union. It took four days of heated discussion to pound out a constitution, a structure and a new organization that would also include Canada. With an initial membership of 2,000, the new national union was named the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (it was renamed the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America in 1888).



Portrait of 11 (out of the 36) delegates who attended the U.B.C.'s founding convention in Chicago in 1881

The Chicago convention was spearheaded by Peter J. McGuire, a 29 year-old carpenter who had already won a well-deserved reputation as a charismatic speaker and tireless organizer by the time he issued the call for a national carpenters' union.



*U.B.C. Founder and inaugural
General Secretary P.J. McGuire*

McGuire is remembered as one of the great labour leaders of the 19th century – spending himself to constant exhaustion through the 21 years of his stewardship as the Brotherhood's General Secretary. During that time, the Brotherhood experienced meteoric growth but it took a terrible personal toll on McGuire. By the 1902 Convention, he was worn to frailty and resigned, dying just four years later at age fifty-four.

OFFICIAL BROTHERHOOD EMBLEM

The official emblem of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America was adopted at the Fourth General Convention in Cincinnati, August, 1884.



The emblem was originally designed by the old National Union of Carpenters, which was organized in September, 1864. The motto inscribed therein, "Labor Omnia Vincit," translated from Latin means "Labor Conquers All Things." The other elements of design, such as the rule and compass, have the following meanings:

The Rule: signifying the desire of the organization to live by the Golden Rule: "To do unto others as we would wish others to do unto us."

The Compass: indicating that we shall endeavor to surround our members with better conditions, socially, morally, and intellectually.

The Jack Plane: a tool emblematic of the trade.

The Colors: pale blue signifying ideas as pure, clean and lofty as the skies, while the dark red denotes that 'labor is honorable', and through honorable labor red blood flows through the veins of those who toil.

The Shield: or base of the emblem; indicating that those legally wearing the emblem are morally bound to safeguard and protect the interests of the organization and its members.

Source: The Carpenter, January/February, 2001

With the founding of the Brotherhood in 1881, the stage was set for mutual cooperation between carpenters in the United States and in Canada – all that was required was the will to make it happen.

The Brotherhood Comes to Canada

Following the founding convention in 1881, the Brotherhood moved quickly to secure international stature. This resulted in the replacement of A.S.C.J. locals by the Brotherhood, with Local 18 in Hamilton becoming the first outside the United States to join, thus transforming the Brotherhood into a truly international organization.

When Local 18 first organized, wages for a Hamilton carpenter were 17.5 cents an hour for a ten hour work day. Conditions were even worse in Toronto, where carpenters were lucky to get \$1.50 a day.

Led by Richard (Dick) Southwell, a gathering of Toronto carpenters met in March 1882 and requested a 50 cent per day increase from local employers. They were refused and responded by inviting McGuire to the city to discuss forming a union chartered by the Brotherhood.

McGuire met the Toronto carpenters at the Lennox Tavern, located near the modern day City Hall, and he outlined the aims and objectives of the Brotherhood in impressive fashion, according to the minutes of that historic meeting.

Those attending responded with tremendous enthusiasm and on April 18, 1882, Local 27 was established as an officially chartered Local of the Brotherhood.

Movement Milestone

The first officers of Local 27, all

Charter Members, were:

President: Charles Armstrong;

Vice President: James Stewart;

Recording Secretary: Alex Edgar;

Financial Secretary: Patrick Menton;

Treasurer: Robert Lee;

Sergeant-at-Arms: Robert Thompson;

Trustees: George Kerr; Thomas Ryves;

Adam Bell; and Business Agent: Richard Southwell.

Local 27 Immediately Fights the Good Fight

Local 27 took bold action shortly after its creation when the A.S.C.J. struck for an additional 50 cents a day. The Brotherhood was quick to join the walkout, followed by another union, the Friendly Society of Carpenters.

Although strike solidarity was broken when the Friendly Society decided to return to work, Brotherhood carpenters stayed firm for four weeks with their numbers swelling to almost 1,000 strikers over that time. The Typographical Union,

the Bricklayers and other trades pitched in with financial and other support. Several prominent concerned citizens approached the master carpenters (employers) in an effort to resolve the dispute. But it was Toronto Mayor William Howland who finally managed to get a compromise offer of 25 cents per day. The settlement included the promise that wages would not be reduced during the winter months, which had been a normal practice of the time.

“ We were out four weeks, and in that time our men acted heroically. All we asked was 50 cents advance per day. After awhile (sic) the bosses offered 25 cents a day as a compromise. ”

The Carpenter, May 1882

During the strike, Local 27 provided strike pay of \$3.00 a week for single men and \$5.00 for married men and helped to relieve the pressure by paying the cost of sending men to other locations to seek work.

In a single month, Local 27 had joined the Brotherhood and survived its first reasonably successful strike. Not bad!

Historical Fact

On July 22, 1882, a contingent of 400 Toronto carpenters joined more than 5,000 other workers in a parade and festival organized by the local Trades Assembly. The Carpenter reported it as 'the largest demonstration ever

held in Canada' and many trade unionists believe the event served as the inspiration for the international holiday for working people that we now celebrate as Labour Day.

Early Labour Day Parade



Members of Local 27 march in the Labour Day Parade

Members of Local 675 march in the Labour Day Parade



While job protection and gaining a fair wage have been the prime and ongoing concerns for Local 27 since its inception, it also took an early interest in other important aspects of its Members' welfare and ability to compete in the marketplace – issues that remain integral to the Local's mandate and focus to this day.

Among these was the almost immediate adoption of a plan for the complete reorganization of the trade which was aimed at keeping Members working and creating a better understanding of the trade among the broader public. This was combined with an early desire to provide Members with death and disability benefits.

In the meantime, wages were the pressing issue. In the spring of 1883, Local 27 struck for a second time for a wage increase to \$2.25 per day. An agreement was reached with the master carpenters but not all honoured it. Some began discharging the \$2.25 per day men and refused to employ others at that rate. Adding to the problem was a large influx of immigrants who were usually forced to take whatever wage they could get.

Progress was not easy for Local 27 or any union of the time. Organizers were often blacklisted by employers and the unions did not help themselves with periods of squabbling and member-stealing among various factions and organizations, many with short life spans.

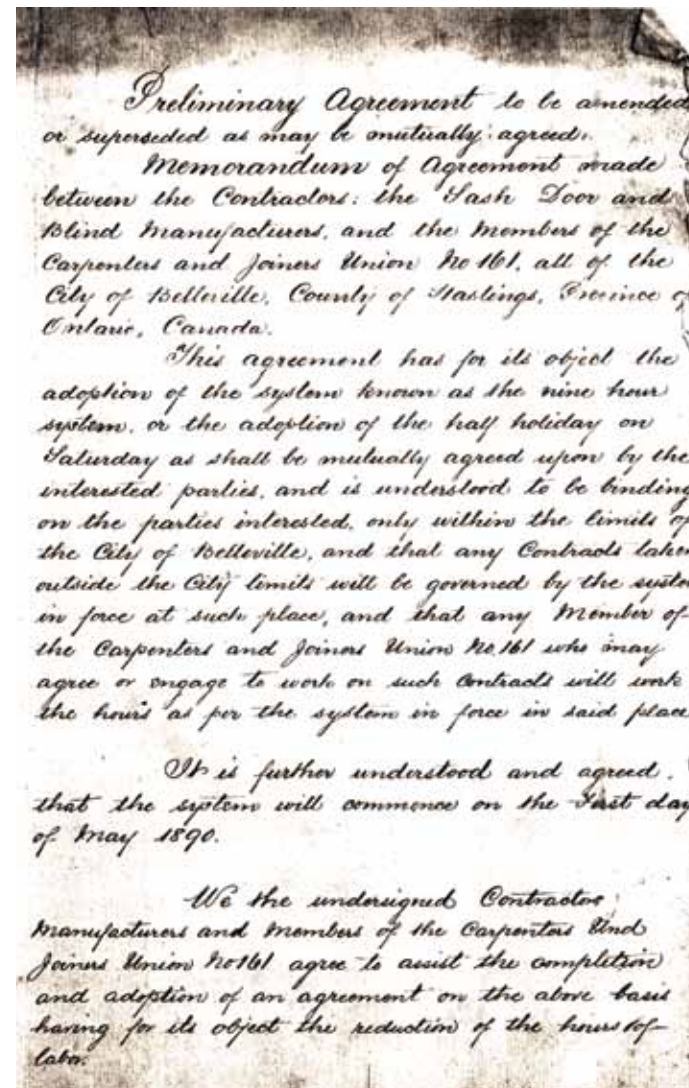
Fortunately, carpenters, like other tradespeople, could organize more successfully than the unskilled trades because they were skilled and also owned their own tools so they could move more easily to find employment.

Internationally, the Brotherhood, at its 1884 convention, established a death benefit of \$50 for a Member, and also instituted an important change in strike procedure. From that point on, when a dispute occurred, locals were required to appoint a negotiating committee to reach an adjustment. If this failed, a secret ballot vote was to be conducted and two-thirds of the membership had to approve strike action. The secret ballot vote had to be sanctioned by the General Executive Board.

In Toronto, millwrights, who had been organized since 1876, affiliated with Local 27. They were led by Toronto millwright pioneer, Henry Lloyd, who would later become the tenth General President of the Brotherhood.

Strikes, Strife and Progress

From the late 1880s to the dawn of the 20th Century, there was continuing labour unrest across and the growing Toronto area was not immune. Wages were low, hours long, working conditions poor and there was powerful discrimination against trade unionists. Workers had almost no leisure time and what little there was did not bring much satisfaction. Aside from sports and games, most leisure activities were far beyond the means of working people.



Copy of a "preliminary" agreement between the Carpenters' Union and local contractors from the City of Belleville and the County of Hastings, Ontario from May 1890

Even so, skilled tradespeople did have a pronounced advantage over those who were unskilled. Working conditions were slightly better and work hours

generally shorter. In Toronto, employers resisted granting a nine-hour work day to carpenters, but after lengthy negotiations they finally conceded. The annual gross wage was still low for carpenters because work was seasonal. In the winter months, outdoor work stopped and during that time carpenters, bricklayers and painters were forced to compete for jobs in the general labour market.

When strikes were called, the motivation was invariably higher wages combined with shorter hours and improved working conditions. These were the objectives of the 1887 strike by carpenters in Toronto – a strike that typified the solidarity that then existed among various trade unions, even where more than one organization represented the same trade.

During the Toronto carpenters' strike, three competing carpenters' unions – the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, the Knights of Labour (which also represented other trades) and the A.S.C.J. – cooperated in a concerted effort to gain a wage raise to 25 cents an hour from 22.5 cents, to limit hours of work to nine hours a day from Monday to Friday and five hours on Saturday, and to exclude non-trade unionists from employment on any job.

The bricklayers, stonemasons and other building trades were seeking similar concessions but when a federation of building trades' unions failed to get the employers to meet any of the demands, 700 carpenters and 400 non-union men walked off the job on June 11, 1887.

Two days later, a number of master carpenters agreed to the new rates and the strike committee allowed the 400 carpenters employed by those firms to return to their jobs, under a permit system. But when the striking carpenters realized the strike could not be settled while some men worked and others did not, the 'permit' carpenters were again called out on strike.

Strong picket brigades prevented non-union carpenters from working on the buildings at Toronto's Exhibition Grounds. In fact, much of the construction in the city was paralyzed, spurring Toronto City Council to try bringing the two sides together. It did not work and even though there was some talk of a general strike involving all of the building trades, the striking carpenters eventually returned to work at the old terms when the Knights of Labour broke the united front by severing their connection to the strike and permitting their Members to return to work.

During the strike, Member carpenters received much needed financial aid from their Locals and other unions contributed as well. The Brotherhood's national office also provided support and a benefit concert raised approximately fifteen hundred dollars. The non-union carpenters who had struck in support joined union ranks to take part in the financial assistance.

Movement Milestone

In 1888 the United Order of Carpenters – a union founded in 1876 – merged with the Brotherhood resulting in a name change to the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. Local 27 Member, Henry Lloyd, chaired the committee that negotiated the final terms between the two organizations.

As the 1800s drew to a close, rumbles of discontent spread through the Brotherhood, compounded by an economic downturn that stretched to the end of the century.

At the same time as locals were demanding a more equitable sharing of authority among the leadership and the District Councils, the economic downturn was adding to the everyday difficulties faced by the Brotherhood's Members. A depressed

economy meant fewer jobs and placed tighter control over wages in the hands of employers.

By 1893, the economic decline had deteriorated into a full-blown depression. In that same year, the Canadian government legislated an eight-hour day for all workmen and labourers who were employed either full or part-time by the government.

In the face of economic hardship that saw two-thirds of its membership unemployed, the Brotherhood bravely convened its 1894 convention in Indianapolis. To preserve scant financial resources, the Union's Executive Board decided to refuse all requests for strike action, except for those aimed at gaining an eight-hour work day.

With a new century and the Brotherhood's 20th anniversary just around the corner, both the solidarity and fragility of the Union had become evident, even in Canada – but better days were ahead.

A New Century - Organizing and Merging for Strength

At the dawn of the 20th century, the Brotherhood was rapidly expanding, but not without growing pains intensified by internal squabbles, setbacks and economic uncertainties.

The first fourteen years of the new century witnessed the highest level of immigration in Canada's history when three million newcomers landed on our shores. Toronto was the preferred destination for many and the city's population soared from 208,000 in 1901 to 380,000 in 1911.



Two examples of Carpenters' Union Members working in the Toronto area in the early part of the 20th century



There was plenty of building going on in Toronto but with the expanding population of skilled newcomers, there were also more than enough tradesmen to do the work. Then in 1907 a major recession struck. By the following year, 40 per cent of Local 27's membership was idle and the Union was fighting hard to maintain a reasonable wage scale.

Early in the new decade there had been a pair of strikes in Toronto that had netted carpenters significant wage increases and a standard eight-hour day. This was achieved despite the fact that there were at least 60 employer associations in the area dedicated to 'divide-and-conquer' tactics aimed at defeating trade unionism. It was evident that Local 27 was equally dedicated to maintaining the hard-won gains of its membership.

Despite internal and external pressures, the Brotherhood continued to enjoy tremendous expansion, growing to over 200,000 members by 1910. A Brotherhood Union Card had become as crucial to a self-respecting carpenter as a complete set of tools. For those who knew the industry, it was a matter of common wisdom that, 'the craftsman without a card is a man without a trade.'

***The Brotherhood Achieves Dominance
and the World Goes to War***

Through the second decade of the 20th century – and in the face of powerful anti-union forces – the Brotherhood steadily gained ground, ultimately emerging as the dominant North American union. In Canada, the myriad effects of a world at war buffeted the Brotherhood, as our Members distinguished themselves at home and abroad.

In 1913, the Amalgamated Woodworkers' Union, which had been in direct competition with the Brotherhood for over 25 years, became a part of the Brotherhood. And in that same year, after decades of bitter rivalry, the A.S.C.J. finally merged with the Brotherhood. The Brotherhood was now the exclusive union representing carpenters.

At the same time, Ontario's carpenters were consolidating for strength. Led by Tom Moore, General Organizer for Ontario, who initiated a major campaign to establish a coordinated organization of all Brotherhood Locals, five conferences were held in 1912 and 1913, ultimately leading to the formation of a Provincial Council. The province was divided into five districts with representatives from each district constituting the Executive Board of the Ontario Provincial Council of Carpenters and Joiners.

In 1914, Canada joined Great Britain in declaring war on Germany. As the effects of a nation mobilizing for war rolled across the country, the construction industry was brought to a standstill. Many Local 27 Members left Toronto to seek work in other areas and as the country ramped up for the war effort, hundreds of carpenters were ultimately employed in the construction of munitions plants and troop camps across Ontario.

Tom Moore spent the next few years aggressively organizing new Locals in the province and the movement of Members from one Local to another gave rise to the concept of a Provincial Work Card that was soon operating efficiently throughout Ontario.

World War I ended in 1918. It had brought both incredible devastation and new-found prosperity to some but certainly not all. Prices soared – far outstripping wages which had increased 18 per cent compared with an 80 per cent increase in profits.

Still, some progress had been made. In 1910, wages averaged 42 cents an hour for an eight-hour day. By 1920, Toronto carpenters were earning 90 cents an hour, the same as plumbers and sheet metal workers but 10 cents an hour less than bricklayers and plasterers.

DECLINE, RECOVERY AND NEW GROWTH

Nationalism ascends as the economy descends

A resurgence of nationalism within the Canadian labour movement dominated much of the 1920s. By the end of the decade, the country would begin to experience its longest and harshest economic depression ever.

Cheap immigrant labour was on the minds of many trade unionists, including Tom Moore, who warned that any attempt to recruit large numbers of agriculturalists from central Europe would, in effect, be a conspiracy to furnish cheap labour for the farms, coal mines, railway construction and other industrial activities.



Depression-era photo



*Newcomers to Canada marching for their rights and
expressing their desire to become citizens circa 1921*

He acknowledged that most immigrants did end up working on farms, but was especially concerned about what happened to these people when the “harvest was over.” To Moore, the obvious answer was that they would migrate to the cities, competing for scarce jobs.

Moore also worried about the lack of a unified strategy between immigrant and native-born Canadians in demanding better working conditions and wages, and the absence of a uniform policy governing the professions or the trades. As a result, fully competent workers from other countries experienced difficulty having their credentials recognized.

Historical Fact

In 1923, the Brotherhood stood 9th on a list of the largest Canadian unions. Membership: 7,603. Many Brotherhood members from Canada moved to the United States throughout the 1920s causing a shortage of skilled carpenters in some Canadian locations.

A Rift in the Brotherhood

A 1922 federal government report stated “....it is understood that members of both bodies (the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners) were working in harmony.”

But the harmony was short-lived because later the same year several former A.S.C.J. Locals left the Brotherhood once again and reverted to their British status in order to operate under their regional charters granted by the British organization.

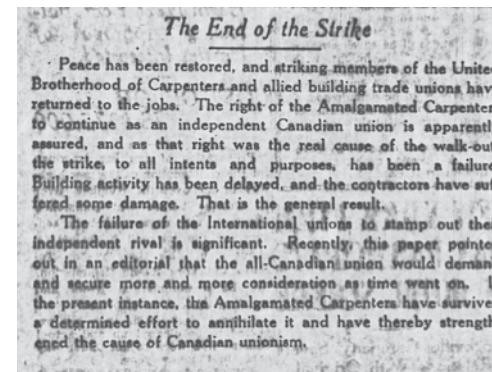
Adding to these problems was the changing technology, which impacted on carpenters more than on any other of the building trades. This was the main reason the Brotherhood insisted on protecting its jurisdictional turf.

Movement Milestone

Through the 1920s, the demand for the five-day week gathered momentum, attracting a number of allies including the National Industrial Conference Board in the United States and even Henry Ford, no friend to labour and known as a harsh employer, who admitted in 1926 that “Now we know from our experience in changing from six to five days and back again that we get at least as great production in five days as we can in six---. A full week’s wage for a short week’s work with pay.”

Striking Progress by Local 27

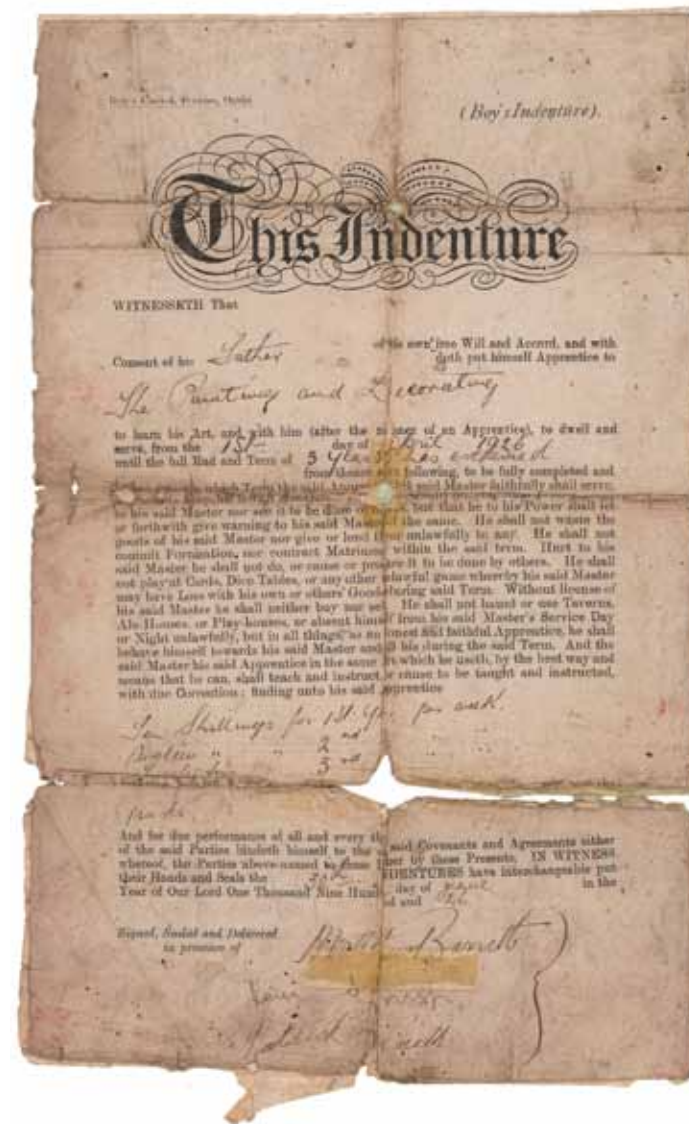
In late 1927, Local 27 successfully concluded a strike that resulted in a ‘very satisfactory agreement with the General Contractors’ Association of Toronto, signed not only by the officials of the Association and of the Brotherhood of Carpenters, but also by each member of the General Contractors’ Association.’



A page from a 1927 edition of the Daily Commercial News and Building Record announcing the end of a Carpenters’ Union strike

The agreement not only called for an increase of ten cents per hour, making the minimum wage rate one dollar an hour but also extended the District's jurisdiction to 50 miles to the east and west, and 25 miles from the waterfront. The General Contractors' Association also agreed with the Brotherhood's proposal that there should be only one organization of carpenters in Toronto.

The Brotherhood gained a further victory in the courts with a ruling on an injunction brought during the strike that declared the 'Brotherhood of Carpenters had done no wrong, they were within their rights to call a strike for a closed shop, an increase of wages, to strike against another union of carpenters and to induce other building trades unions to strike in sympathy to assist in obtaining the closed shop and an increased wage.' That ruling established a precedent and, according to a contemporary report in the Carpenters' monthly bulletin, 'is one of the greatest victories won by labour in a Canadian court.'



Copy of the 1926 Indenture assigning Patrick Smith (father of current U.B.C. Vice President Jim Smith) to an apprenticeship of three years – it was signed by Patrick's father Peter Smith because Patrick was under the age of 18 at the time of signing

The Depression Years

The great stock market crash of October 1929 ushered in the longest and worst economic depression ever to hit Canada.

Protection of the wage rate was an important issue through all of the depression years, and the Members at one Local 27 meeting rejected an application for membership because the applicant worked for 75 cents an hour when the carpenter rate was \$1.00 an hour.

Throughout this period the question of unemployment, unemployment relief and the rates of pay in certain jobs were regular topics of discussion and debate which, more often than not, became quite heated.



Depression-era photo



Depression-era photo

By 1931, problems were so acute in the city that the Building Trades' Council offered to accept a decrease in the hourly rate, only to be told by the contractors that it would make no difference. Despite these problems, Canadian union membership fell by less than 15 per cent during the depression. There were 67 strikes in Canada in 1931, the lowest since 1915, with only 20 ending with an agreement favourable to the employees.

Among the battles fought by Local 27 during this time was the strong opposition of the use of inmates to build jails and negotiations with the Builders' Exchange that resulted in an offer of 90 cents an hour and a five-day work week that was rejected by the membership.

Movement Milestone

The 1929 American Federation of Labor Convention was held in Toronto and included the 'largest gathering of carpenters at one celebration in the Dominion of Canada'. Among those attending were the Brotherhood's General President, Second General Vice-President and

General Secretary, as well as members of the General Executive Board and carpenter delegates from most of the large centres of the United States. Over 800 carpenters attended a dinner at the Royal York Hotel at which John Cottam, President of Local 27 and of the Ontario Provincial Council acted as toastmaster.

The Building of Maple Leaf Gardens

Frank Selke had a dream: He wanted to build Maple Leaf Gardens. But during the Great Depression, getting enough money to fuel his dream was virtually impossible. Then Frank had an idea. At the time, Selke was a member of Local 353 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. So he put his electrician's union card in his pocket and headed to a Local 27 meeting – and that's how Members of the Brotherhood became prime constructors and part owners of what would become a world famous shrine to hockey.

At the regular meeting on June 2, 1931, it was reported that “Brother Selkie (sic) of the Electricians’ Union requested permission to present a proposal by the Arena Gardens Company.” By a 36 – 35 vote of those present, Brother Selke was granted five minutes to address the meeting. Selke presented his proposal: as the arena was not fully financed, the workmen would allow 20 per cent of their wages to be paid in stock to allow the building to be completed this year.

Local 27 bought 80 preferred shares at \$10 each and 16 shares of common stock in Maple Leaf Gardens earning regular dividends on them. They were sold in 1996 for approximately \$80,000 when the Air Canada Centre was built and replaced Maple Leaf Gardens as the new home for the Toronto Maple Leafs hockey team.

This money has since been used to grant two annual bursaries of \$2,000 each for the children and grandchildren of Local 27 Members.

In recognition of his contribution to hockey, the NHL created the Frank Selke trophy. This trophy is presented annually to the NHL player considered to be the leagues best defensive forward. It is, in many aspects, a fitting tribute for a trade unionist who believed in moving forward in the promotion of workers’ rights, while at the same time defending against the forces that would deny these same workers their rightful place in society.



Lending a hand – Carpenters’ Union Members play a crucial role in the construction of Maple Leaf Gardens

Surviving the Depression

Sometimes it is not the improvements a union negotiates that are significant, but rather what it prevents the employer from taking away. This was certainly true during the Great Depression years, when Brotherhood Members survived a tough ten years in a stronger position than they would have been without their Union.

From the start of this period to its end at the outbreak of war in 1939, Local 27 experienced few gains. By 1940, more than a year after the declaration of war, the Local's wage rate had risen to \$1.00 an hour, the same as it had been in 1929.

Although it was difficult, the Local's Members eventually emerged victorious over the employers, the government, the relief system and competing unions.

It was through astute negotiating, combined with an organized strategy that the Local survived as well as it did. More employees were hired, the initiation fee was reduced, and there was a constant campaign against unfair employers, all of which lessened the impact on the membership.

From the Depression's onset, the Builders' Exchange constantly sought to reduce wages.

Local 27 was in almost constant contract negotiations with the employer and, for the most part, the membership directed its negotiating committee to stand firm on the proposals.

During this period, both the government and the contractors pressured the Brotherhood to negotiate jointly with the Amalgamated Building Workers, but it was difficult for Local 27 to agree to work co-operatively with an organization that frequently undermined the Local's efforts.

Relations between the Amalgamated Building Workers and the Brotherhood had become so strained by January 1938 that the District Council ordered Local 27 to refuse to work at the Canadian National Exhibition (C.N.E.) if Amalgamated Building Workers were present. The government's failure to enforce the Industrial Standards Act continued to be a problem, which was attributed to the fact that labour had no representative on the Industry and Labour Board to express its point of view.

The Builders' Exchange served notice that, effective March 1, 1939 it was going to cancel its agreements. In response, the Building Trades Council requested copies of all existing agreements, together with copies of each union's constitution. Local 27

passed a motion to visit the Builders' Exchange to inform them that reneging on the current agreement was unacceptable, and that the Local expected both a wage increase and a closed shop.

The employers were seeking a blanket agreement with all the building trades' unions and, expecting protracted negotiations, the District Council requested that Local 27 pay the full expenses and wages of the negotiating committee. The Local approved this request.

In April 1939, the provincial Department of Labour led a conference aimed at getting all Toronto building trades to comply with the Industrial Standards Act. But at a Local 27 meeting in May, the membership learned that under the Industrial Standards Act, carpenters' work was to be split into two classes: an "A" class paying 90 cents an hour, and a "B" class wage set at 75 cents an hour. The Local sought to win an agreement with the contractors before the Act was signed and succeeded in getting 90 cents an hour.

However, in June 1940, the Local received a final agreement from the Builders' Exchange and it was the same as had been accepted at a previous mass meeting of the Local with a single clause added: "This is an open shop agreement."

The Local returned the agreement to the Builders' Exchange unsigned and directed the negotiating committee to apply for conciliation if the Exchange did not co-operate.

Reducing Expenses to Protect Members

With unemployment rampant, the Brotherhood sought ways of reducing operating expenses while providing as much financial support as possible to its Members.



*Protesting and marching
for better lives*

*Depression-era photo depicting the grave toll
taken on families during this period*

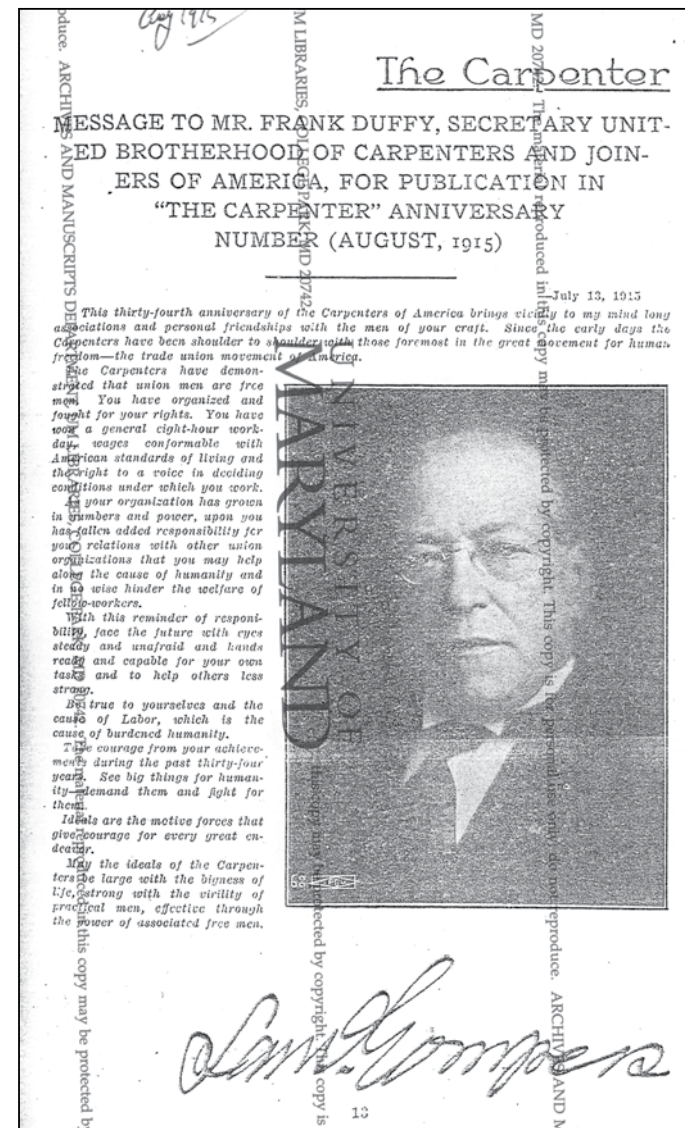
The pain of unemployment was devastating. The incidence of alcoholism, divorce, emotional depression, and suicide soared during the early 1930s. Proud carpenters, whose sense of self-worth was wrapped up in their craft and their ability to make a living as independent tradesmen, were unable to put bread on the family table. Local Unions tried a variety of ways to ease the pain – lowering dues, negotiating for shorter work weeks and forbidding overtime but all these attempts had only very limited success on the fundamentally-crippled construction industry.

One suggestion from Local 27 called for a reduction in the General Officers' salaries as a cost-saving measure. The Local also protested efforts by the Brotherhood to change the constitution to discontinue the spousal funeral benefits and the disability benefit.

U.B.C. General Secretary Frank Duffy, who succeeded founding General Secretary P.J. McGuire and started serving in 1901



Despite the efforts of Local 27 and the Union itself, total Brotherhood membership fell from 300,086 in 1928 to 134,059 in 1932, while the number of Members in arrears of dues for the same period rose from 3,384 to 100,016. By 1933, Union General Secretary, Frank Duffy, reported that fewer than 30 per cent of the Union's Members were employed.



Article from *The Carpenter* (the U.B.C.'s official publication) – August 1915

Struggling to Maintain Jobs and Protect Jurisdiction

Throughout the Depression there was always some project under construction but unemployed workers were competing for the few jobs available. The unionized pay rate was far superior to the rate paid to unorganized carpenters but maintaining the rates was a constant struggle for Local 27.

The Local's representative inspected the construction sites regularly and sometimes found Members on jobs working for less than union scale. This could not be tolerated if the Union was to maintain the wage rates negotiated, and often Members were instructed to leave jobs. Failure to do so resulted in financial penalties, suspension from membership, and ultimately the loss of rights regarding both pensions and benefits.

Union officers followed up job site visits by urging the contractor to enforce the agreement. Often they were successful. Others, however, violated the agreement on a regular basis making it necessary for the Union to take more drastic action.

There were regular reports of contractors being labeled "unfair" and this information was passed to other trades. Because the Union was unable to secure the closed shop, there were often unionized Local 27

Members, Amalgamated Building Workers, non-union carpenters and government relief recipients working on the same project together at different pay rates.

Efforts to combat this situation took many forms, one of which was to request that the Building Trades Council work with the Fair Wage Officer to have a clause inserted in municipal agreements that only competent mechanics would be selected to perform the work.

Regular reports were received at meetings regarding 'scab jobs,' as was the situation in the construction of the Donlands Dairy. To put pressure on this particular project, the Building Trades Council was asked to send a letter to all Locals requesting that they and their Members stop purchasing products from the Donlands Dairy. Often these tactics worked, but on other occasions they did not, and more than once that resulted in the premises being picketed.

Protecting wages was not the Local's only fight. It was in a continual struggle to protect its jurisdiction from the intrusion of other organizations. Policing the agreement was a particularly onerous task. In May 1932, a business agent reported that back wages had not been paid to carpenters working on the North American Life building and that Members working

on the second shift at the same building were “stood off” until 5pm, and were then expected to work an eight-hour shift at the straight-time rate. The Local was successful in getting all back wages paid.

Historical fact

In 1933, over 30% of adult male workers were unemployed. There was no unemployment insurance, no federal relief, and only municipal (city) relief, which ranged from \$13.00 for a family of four to an average of about \$6.00 or \$8.00 per week in most cities. Until the depression ended most workers were paid an average of \$12.00 to \$15.00 per week.

In 1935, the initiation fee was reduced to \$3.00 for all carpenters for an indefinite period. The Local also endorsed a Trades and Labour Council resolution requesting funds to purchase a series of radio broadcasts to counter “propaganda” against the international trade union movement.

In September 1938, there was a problem with hiring at the Canadian National Exhibition. The Local referred the issue to the District Council, directing that body to sign an agreement with the Exhibition Board which would require that all of their carpenters be hired through Local 27. The Local requested that both the electricians and the painters co-operate with the request and thereby attain closed-shop status.

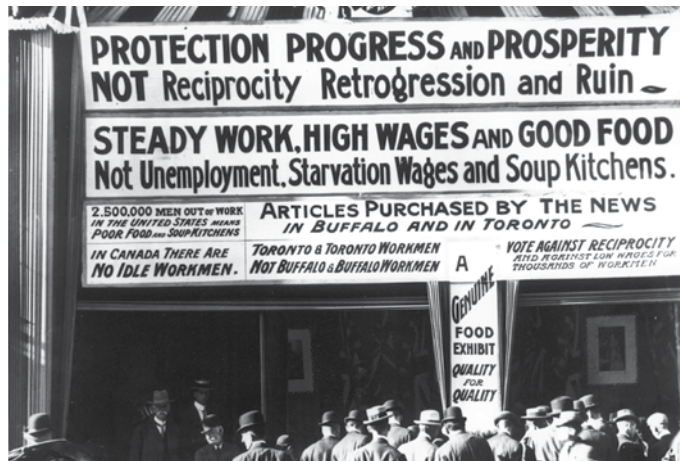
Those working on picketed job sites realized that the work they performed at significantly lower rates could be shut down by the Union – so many opted to join the Union. In doing so, they not only had the opportunity to earn higher wages, but also to receive steadier employment because they were no longer at the mercy of those employers who used the availability of unemployed workers as an excuse to depress wages.

Many contractors also capitulated because they could not get their work completed and that, combined with their inability to get bank loans and their narrow profit margins often meant bankruptcy for them if the job site was shut down for extended periods.

The combination of reduced initiation fees, increased organizing activities, and increased picketing of unfair job sites resulted in substantial successes. One significant coup from the new organizing efforts took place when Local 1820, another Brotherhood Local in the city, opted to join Local 27. At its March 8 meeting, Local 27 welcomed the Members of Local 1820 and assumed any debt owed by them to the Labour Temple.

Canadian Workers Fight Another War

Britain declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939, and Canada followed suit seven days later. But as far back as 1933, when the Nazis crushed the German trade union movement, the Brotherhood had publicly supported a boycott against German-made goods until 'the German Government recognizes the right of working people in Germany to organize with bona fide trade unions of their own choosing and until Germany ceases its repressive policy of persecution of the Jewish people.'



Protesting against reciprocity (a.k.a. "free trade") with the United States in the late 1800s/early 1900s

Unlike government attitudes during World War I, Prime Minister William Lyon MacKenzie King recognized immediately that Canada could not ignore organized labour. As a result, a long-

standing bill promoted by J.S. Woodsworth, leader of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (C.C.F.), was passed into law. Woodsworth, a pacifist, was one of only two Members of Parliament who opposed Canada's entry into the war.

Woodsworth's initiative marked the first time in Canada that it would be against the law for an employer to fire an employee simply for joining a union. Prime Minister King believed correctly that it would



J.S. Woodsworth, leader of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (C.C.F.), precursor to the New Democratic Party (N.D.P.)

help swing T.L.C. Members behind him in the forthcoming federal election. King also attempted to convince Tom Moore, T.L.C. President, to serve as Minister of Labour in his War Cabinet. However, the elderly Moore did not feel he was up to the task and declined the offer. Nevertheless, it was an indication of how Labour's influence had grown.

Local 27 held a meeting two days after war was declared and quickly passed a motion requesting that the Carpenters' District Council "call a mass meeting to discuss how best the Union could assist the country during the present crisis."

At the same meeting, the business agents reported that carpenters were all being hired at the Employment

Bureau. Union wages were being paid, but men were working overtime at straight-time rates. A motion was passed directing the Executive to send a letter to the Defence Minister asking him to receive a delegation from Toronto that subsequently met with the Prime Minister and his Cabinet in Ottawa, at which it was promised that union wages and conditions would prevail on all government work in the District.



World War II airplane

Men were being sent to Canada from the shipbuilding industry in Britain. Local 27 requested that U.B.C. General President Hutcheson contact British labour organizations asking them to inform the Local regarding both the arrival of their men, and to instruct them to contact Local 27 upon their arrival in Toronto.

Problems did arise. In early 1940, two Local 27 Members working at the Royal Canadian Air Force (R.C.A.F.) Hunt Club were replaced by

two ex-servicemen; the Employment Bureau of Toronto was not dealing fairly with labour; and the R.C.A.F. job at Malton was reported as unfair.

On the other hand, the government mandated that 50 per cent of the carpenters at work in Ottawa must be union men and the Department of Militia and Defence recognized the erection of all wall board as carpenters' work.



Portrait of the 12 General Presidents who had presided over the U.B.C. from 1881 until 1951

From War to Peace and New Prosperity

By 1942 there were still unemployed carpenters in Toronto, a situation Local 27 regarded as intolerable. There were thousands of unemployed at a time when both manufacturers and the government were claiming there was a labour shortage. As far as Local 27 was concerned, as long as there were unemployed, there was no shortage of labour.

In 1942 the War Labour Board approved an increase from \$1.00 to \$1.03 per hour, but this still lagged behind the \$1.10 per hour rate that had been negotiated in 1930.

By mid-summer 1942, Local 27 had a special membership meeting to respond to a Building Trades' Council and National Joint Conference Board request to extend working hours in the construction trades. The recommendation was for a 48-hour week (nine hours a day, Monday through Friday, with the balance of the hours to be worked on Saturday). Local 27 Members refused to comply with the request because some of their Members were still unemployed. The recommendation was rejected unanimously.

At the time, this might have seemed unpatriotic. However, to put these actions into the proper perspective, it should be remembered that Local 27 Members had suffered long periods of unemployment throughout the Depression and now, when the country was engaged in the third year of a war, many Members still remained unemployed. If the labour shortage had been real instead of perceived, there would likely have been a different reaction. Local 27 regarded it as unconscionable that men would be asked to work overtime when so many of its Members had no work at all.

New Source for Members

There were many non-unionized woodworkers in Toronto and Local 27 believed they should be in the Brotherhood. The membership adopted a motion that the General President be asked, through the District Council, to provide the services of organizer Andy Cooper to assist in bringing those workers into the Union. By October 1942, the Council asked for both moral and financial support for an organizing drive in the city. Local 27 donated \$100 to the drive and appealed to head office for additional support.

The Local continued to press for support in its efforts to organize the trade. It supported a Building Trades'

Council request for a ten cent per capita tax or a lump sum donation to finance an additional business agent for the homebuilding sector. The Local also presented a written submission to the War Labour Board requesting a ten cent per hour increase, and succeeded in getting two cents per hour that year.

In mid-1943, Local 27 submitted a resolution to the Ontario Provincial Council convention calling for the adoption of the 30-hour week. Other resolutions requested that highest wages in construction in Ontario be paid along with holidays with pay for the construction industry. To give credence to its “holidays-with-pay” resolution, the Local adopted a motion at a July meeting granting “to its staff what it advocated for all workers.” The motion read: ‘Whereas we advocate holidays with pay in the building industry, we start with our own Local and give the Business Agent and the Financial Secretary a week’s holiday with pay.’

The Local also came to the defence of returned servicemen. In one example, from February 1944, it adopted a motion supporting a Trades and Labor Council request that free hospitalization be granted to all returned servicemen and condemned the government for deducting hospital fees from discharged service personnel. The Local pressed

for shorter hours of work in the shipyards rather than suffer layoffs. In 1944, it requested that head office grant Local 27 Members, who had joined the Armed Forces before the U.S. entered the war, the same privileges as those who joined after, and the General President agreed.

The Post War Period

On May 22, 1945, just two weeks after the war ended, Business Agent Alf Ward reported to Local 27 that the Building Trades’ Council was establishing a committee of ten, with five representatives from the Council and five members from the Contractors’ Association, to act under the auspices of the Selective Service Act and study all questions regarding manpower availability for priority jobs. Following a meeting with the War Labour Board, it was reported that a wage increase could be expected. A four cent increase to \$1.11 over 1944 rates was granted. At the time, the trade was still busy with 600 houses being built in blocks of 200.

The adoption of the Veterans’ Land Act at the end of the war, and the implementation of special educational incentives to assist the returning forces with gaining additional formal education and training, as well as the introduction of unemployment insurance and family allowance (the ‘baby bonus’) all served to stimulate the economy.

After the war, there was a tremendous influx of immigrants from the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and many other countries. Their entrance into Canada had a profound impact, not only on the Brotherhood, but the nation as well.

One of these new Canadians was Frank Colantonio, an Italian immigrant who would eventually become an organizer and president of Carpenters' Local 1190.

In his book 'From the Ground Up – an Italian Immigrant's Story', Colantonio describes his arrival in Toronto in the following way:

“*Toronto's Union Station reminded me of a medieval cathedral. Its sheer mass and its high, vaulted ceiling seemed designed to awe the people who entered, making them feel small and insignificant. That is how I felt on that summer morning as I stood in the great hall of the station holding my cardboard suitcase in one hand ... Here I was on the threshold of the fastest-growing city in Canada, equipped only with determination to work hard and make a go of it. I was anxious and excited at the same time. I didn't know at that time that I was simply one of the earliest in the postwar wave of Italians who would settle in Toronto. By 1965 more than 125,000 of us would have arrived. I didn't know that, within months of my arrival in 1949, Ottawa's Associate Commissioner for Overseas Service would express to his colleagues the prevailing*

attitude of many Canadians. In October, Laval Fortier wrote, 'The Italian South peasant is not the type we are looking for in Canada. . . . I doubt that he could ever become an asset to our country.' ”

Frank Colantonio's experiences were mirrored by thousands of young men and women who left their families to come to Canada in search of a better life. As part of the research for this book, several Italian-Canadians and immigrants from other countries were interviewed, and each one was asked the same question: Did you ever have any regrets about coming to Canada? Every one had the same answer – they had no regrets at all.

But creating a new life in a new land is never easy. Canada was changing and so was the Brotherhood. As the 1940s came to an end, General President William Hutcheson tendered his resignation after 36 years in office. His son, First Vice President Maurice A. Hutcheson, would be appointed in his place earning him the title 'Prince of Carpenters.'

ONTARIO GENERAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION						
BUILDERS EXCHANGE - 1104 BAY STREET TORONTO 5 ONTARIO						
TELEPHONE KINGDALE 4032						
October 26, 1949						
WAGE RATES IN TORONTO						
ROOFERS	ELECTRICIANS	PLUMBERS	CARPENTERS	PLASTERERS	SHEET METAL	
1.00	.87½	.90	1.00	1.00	.90	
1.12½	.80	1.00	.80 - .90	1.25	.85	
1.25	1.15	1.25	1.00	1.30½	1.09½	
1.35	1.25	1.25	1.10	1.37½	1.15	
1.10	1.25	1.25	1.10	1.12½	1.09½	
1.00	1.00	1.00	.90	1.00	.90	
.90	1.00	.85	.60 - .80	.75 - 1.00	.75	
.75 - .90	.85 - 1.00	.85	.60 - .80	.75 - 1.00	.75	
.90	1.00	.90	.80	.90	.75	
.90	1.00	.90	.80	.90	.82½	
.90	1.00	.90	.85	.90	.87½	
1.05	1.00	1.00	.95	.90	.99½	
1.00	1.00	1.00	.90	.90	.90½	
1.05	1.10	1.00	.95	1.00	1.00	
1.15	1.10	1.10	1.00	1.10	1.08	
1.14	1.15	1.15	1.03	1.10	1.08	
1.18	1.16	1.16	1.05	1.10 - 1.16	1.14	
1.19	1.17	1.17	1.07	1.17	1.14	
1.23	1.21	1.17	1.11	1.21	1.18	
1.35	1.35	1.30	1.20	1.30	1.28	
1.60	1.65	1.68	1.35	1.50	1.46	
1.75	1.65	1.60	1.50	1.60	1.65	
1.80	1.75	1.75	1.60	1.90	1.75	
		(To Dec, 31)				
1.80	1.75	1.75	1.60	1.90	1.75	
(To May 1)	(To June 1)		(To May 1)	(To May 1)	(To May 1)	

Listing of the Ontario General Contractors Association's wage rates in Toronto from October 1949

PROSPERITY, COMPLACENCY, TROUBLE AND CHANGE

Adjusting to Change

Like all trade unions, Members of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters are justly proud of their craftsmanship, but during the 1950s, this pride led to the exclusion of many potential union members.

Following World War II, the combination of the return of Canadian servicemen and the large influx of new immigrants created a great demand for residential housing throughout the 1950s. Prior to that high-growth decade, a builder completed perhaps a dozen homes in an entire year. This was obviously no longer adequate, particularly in Toronto. During this time, the number of homes an individual builder would construct in a year rose into the hundreds. Many builders switched to apartment construction, and the first of these were three to four stories high. As the decade progressed, high-rise complexes were being built, as well as strip malls, the forerunner of the modern-day shopping mall.

At the beginning of this construction boom, the work was sometimes shoddy, particularly before

the introduction of strict building codes. To complicate matters further, smaller contractors were often turned down by lending institutions, which resulted in serious cash flow shortages. Lacking the funds to pay their employees, many paycheques bounced, and builder after builder went bankrupt.

Men who were laid off during the fall and winter months found that, when they returned in the spring, they were paid even less than the year before. The Building Trades' unions turned away hundreds of immigrants especially if their own 'out-of-work' list was long – and this was especially true for workers in the residential sector.

The Brotherhood's position regarding who was to be admitted, and in what circumstances, was mishandled from the outset and the consequences were far-reaching. Some of the Locals preferred that the newcomers remain unorganized rather than become part of the Brotherhood. Any suggestion of change was regarded as a threat to those who clung stubbornly to office even when opinion was overwhelmingly against their style of leadership.

Had the Brotherhood embraced the new trade unionists coming from many other countries, they could have built a much stronger

organization. Work was plentiful in post-war Canada and especially in Toronto.

During the same period, Local 27's membership had risen from 300 to approximately 3,500, and almost all of them were employed in the commercial and industrial sectors. Carpenters' wages were \$2.20 an hour. The Local also enjoyed a 'closed shop' agreement.

A NEW HOME FOR THE UNION.

On November 4, 1953, the Brotherhood moved into its new home at 169 Gerrard Street East, Toronto. The Globe and Mail newspaper hailed the new complex as 'a monument to fine craftsmanship.'

The new building contained an auditorium, library, offices, lounge, and an efficient kitchen. Its architect was J. H. W. Bradfield. The Chairman of the building committee was T. Teddy Jackson. Dora de Pedery Hunt, who would become an award-winning sculptress and design architect, carved a wooden panel to adorn the front of the building. The carving now has a prominent place on a wall at the offices Vaughan.

"We are one of the oldest crafts. Every building is a monument to labor, and a fine building keeps up a great tradition. I think this building will be a worthy monument to modern Canadian workmanship."

T. Teddy Jackson, November 1953



Unveiling of artistic carving that adorned Union headquarters on Gerard Street in Toronto, 1953

Local Under Trusteeship

Despite gains made in wages, membership and benefits, behind-the-scenes activities were about to lead to a period of major upheaval for Local 27.

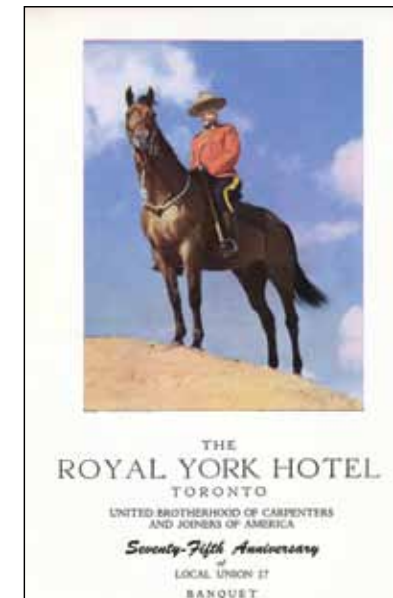
There was a special meeting of Local 27's Executive Board on May 8, 1956 that ultimately shook the Local from top to bottom. On that night, Executive Board member Andy Cooper dropped the bombshell that General President Hutcheson had instructed him to take charge of the District Council because the election of Local 27 officers was not in accordance with the constitution. Cooper said he had been instructed to hold another election as soon as possible

and that any candidate needed to qualify according to the Constitution before his name could be placed on the ballot. He also advised that any candidate who did not qualify would be notified of his disqualification by mail and summoned to the office where he would be given the reasons for his disqualification.

What ensued at that meeting, and at special and general meetings held for the decade to come, was a series of accusations, suspensions, power-plays and resignations. Sides were taken, funds were spent without proper notice, members were suspended and barred without reasons given and the constitution was twisted into an unrecognizable knot.

It was not until June 1960 that Local 27's membership and the District Council finally had their opportunity to a fair vote. The result was the election of Sam Billington as President of Local 27 (he was installed on July 12, 1960) and Angus Smith as Secretary-Treasurer of the District Council. Both of these men had been active in the fight to restore democracy to Local 27.

The period from 1952 to 1961 was certainly tumultuous and the decade to follow would, in some respects, prove to be equally so.



Pages from the Banquet Program celebrating Local 27's 75th Anniversary in 1957

UNITED BROTHERHOOD OF CARPENTERS AND JOINERS OF AMERICA

GENERAL OFFICERS

General President	M. A. Hutchinson
1st General Vice-President	John R. Swenson
2nd General Vice-President	G. Wm. Blair
General Secretary	Richard Livingstone
General Treasurer	Frank Chapman
Executive Board Member	Andrew V. Cooper
Secretary	

TORONTO DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS AND MILLMEN

President	Arthur Bonner
Vice-President	John Mitchell
Secretary-Treasurer	Alfred Ward

LOCAL UNION 27

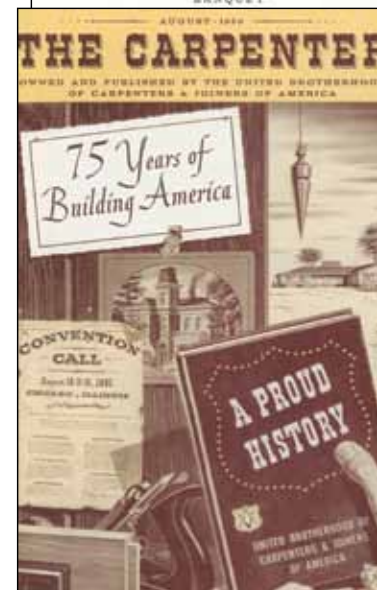
President	E. J. Gentry
Vice-President	Marion Kent
Recording Secretary	Ernie Tadmor
Financial Secretary	George Redwood
Treasurer	John Dyck
Trustee	J. R. Spence
Trustee	F. Thompson
Trustee	F. Ward

75TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

Chairman	Arthur Bonner
Secretary-Treasurer	Alfred Ward
	E. J. Gentry
	Marion Kent
	J. Garland
	S. Billington

50 YEARS MEMBERSHIP

Fred Haines	William Dunn	Dave Donnelly
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Cover page of The Carpenter commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the U.B.C. in 1956



Announcement of Local 27's 75th Anniversary

A Turbulent Decade

Internal union strife and jurisdictional disputes have plagued the Brotherhood at various times throughout its history. During the 1960s, dissension was rife as union competed against union, and Brotherhood Locals competed against each other over jurisdictional turf. Corruption also reared its ugly head in construction trade unions, and before the decade was over, there would be demands for an independent inquiry into certain sectors of the industry. Both contractors and unions would be asked to account for their actions.

The introduction of new technologies and materials for the construction industry exacerbated their difficulties as unions fought to maintain their turf.

At this time, the carpenters and lathers were competing for the same work, with the emerging drywallers organized into Lathers' Local 97, which had received its Charter on August 24, 1901. According to Colin Weller, a now-retired Local 675 staff representative, the only way one could become a Member, or even get into the trade, was through a relative who was already a Member.

In 1963, meetings were held between the Carpenters' Union, industry officials and Lathers' representatives

in an attempt to resolve the dispute. Representatives from Local 27 attended those meetings. The Toronto Brotherhood received authorization from the International's General Office in Washington to negotiate with the Lathers, but any agreement was to be forwarded to the General President for approval before it was signed by the Local's officials. Concern was expressed that regardless of whether wood or metal studs were involved, the work must continue to be performed by members of Carpenters' Locals. Unfortunately, the talks ended in failure.



*Pages from the Dues Book
belonging to Norman LeBlanc,
dated August 27th, 1963*

At a subsequent meeting, it was reported that the Lathers and the Carpenters had agreed to a moratorium against raiding until November 1, 1963 and that a meeting would be held with all the contractors in the industry on October 15, 1963 in an effort to resolve the dispute.

Part of the problem was that plastering was rapidly being replaced by drywall in both the residential and commercial sectors. The plastering process involved the application of wet plaster to wood lath, but now, with the introduction of drywall, that was no longer necessary. Drywall was not only cleaner, but cheaper and could be erected much faster. It soon became the material of choice.

A September 1964 Toronto District Council of Carpenters' meeting heard that the Brotherhood continued to certify companies doing drywall applications. The Lathers' Contractors' Association was advising its members not to employ carpenters in an effort to circumvent applications for certification.

The Brotherhood had withdrawn from the National Joint Board in 1963 because of its dissatisfaction with the manner in which disputes between the Lathers and the Brotherhood were being addressed. The Union returned in 1965 and a special conference of all interested parties was called for and held in January 1966 in Washington, DC. Taking part in that conference were the Carpenters' General President, Maurice A. Hutcheson, William Sidell, representatives of the Associated General Contractors, the National Acoustical Contractors' Association, the Gypsum Drywall Contractors' International, and Contracting Plasterers' and Lathers' International Association.

Noticeably absent was the Lathers' International Union, interpreted by those present as an indication of its unwillingness to co-operate in seeking a resolution to the outstanding jurisdictional issues.

The Brotherhood used the opportunity to submit statements and job lists from over 600 employers all attesting to their preference to have the Carpenters' Union perform ceiling systems' work instead of the Lathers. The Carpenters won the day and achieved jurisdiction for the suspended acoustical ceiling work.

In March 1967, Local 27 announced that the jurisdiction over drywall and polycoustics had been resolved at the international level. At the May meeting that same year, however, it was revealed that the Lathers sought an injunction against the Carpenters in the Drywall and Acoustical field.

At a later meeting, held in September 1967, Basil (Bud) Clark advised that it was necessary to continue the fight against the Lathers to ensure that work remained within the Brotherhood's jurisdiction.

Over the next six years, jurisdictional fights between the Carpenters and the Lathers were overshadowed by aggressive organizing in other sectors of the building trades, sporadic violence, job-site sabotage and accusations of corruption.

The Action Years

The 1970s and 1980s were years of non-stop action for Carpenters' Union. The Brotherhood would celebrate its 100th Anniversary, and evolve in some important ways. Toronto would see most of its locals vote to become one with Local 27. The Lathers and the Carpenters would merge both locally and internationally, and there would be province-wide bargaining – all of which would serve to strengthen the Local.



*U.B.C.'s 35th General Convention which took place in Toronto in 1986
– the only general convention to ever take place outside the U.S.*

Internally the Local was consolidating for strength, while at the same time breaking away from the Canadian Labour Congress over Canadian autonomy issues. When the labour movement should have been

united against an onslaught of anti-union fervour, it divided itself instead – a boon to the corporate sector but a detriment to union membership.

As a consequence of all this, the decade would see not only the best, but unfortunately also the worst of the union movement.

The Franks Commission ushers in province-wide bargaining

Nineteen seventy-six was a watershed year for the Brotherhood and other unions in Ontario. Donald E. Franks, who had been appointed by the Ontario Minister of Labour to head an Industrial Inquiry Commission into the bargaining patterns in the construction industry, released his report, which contained a very significant recommendation: the call for legislation for single trade bargaining.

Less than two years later, the Ontario government passed legislation permitting province-wide bargaining. On March 3, 1978, then Labour Minister Bette Stephenson designated the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America and the Ontario Provincial Council as the employee bargaining agency to represent all journeymen and apprentice carpenters, other than millwrights. All of this required that changes be made to the Carpenters' Union's by-laws and trade rules.

*Delegates attending the 53rd
Annual Convention of the
Ontario Provincial Council*



In accordance with this, the Ontario Provincial Council held meetings and five geographical areas were established.

All of these established areas have approximately the same number of members with the exception of Toronto, which has a larger membership.

From each of these five areas, two delegates were selected by the members in each area to sit at the bargaining table.

The Labour Relations Act divided the construction industry into seven sectors:

1. Industrial, Commercial, Institutional (ICI)
2. Residential
3. Sewers and Watermains

4. Roads

5. Heavy Engineering

6. Pipe Line

7. Electrical Power Systems

The updated amendments to the Act legislated that a province-wide agreement be negotiated to cover the ICI sector. The United Brotherhood agreed that, since the old agreements covered more than just the ICI sector, the provincial agreements should cover those sectors as well.

While the law was amended to institute province-wide bargaining 'in the ICI sector,' changes were not made to the certification procedure. A union was still certified as a bargaining agent for all sections of the construction industry unless they were modified by a subsequent agreement.

Carpenters tested in first province-wide negotiations

At the 1978 negotiations, 6,000 different contractors were represented at the bargaining table and the Carpenters proposed that the scope of the ICI agreement be extended to other sectors. If not, the Brotherhood argued, the Union would have to bargain with the same contractors for local agreements to cover the other sectors.

The Brotherhood struck on July 4, 1978. Of the 25 different sets of negotiations which took place in the construction industry that year, the Brotherhood was the only Building Trades Union to walk out in support of its position.

By July 29, 1978, of the 31 contentious issues on the table at the beginning of the strike, 29 remained outstanding. By this time, the Union had been in negotiations for seven months!

A bulletin issued to the membership on September 10 announced the settlement of the provincial agreement, and overwhelmingly recommended its acceptance to the membership.

The agreement provided for a \$1.00 per hour increase effective as of September 1978, and a further 50 cents per hour as of May 1, 1979.

Although accepted by the membership, the matter of the 100 per cent hiring hall, which would apply across the province, remained a contentious issue.

All wage increases were still governed by the Anti-Inflation Board and subject to its approval, which set back the date of the wage and benefit increases from September 6 to November 1, 1978.

John Cartwright, Toronto and York Region Labour Council President and a Local 27 Member says that, “a major goal for the union was the inclusion of a subcontracting clause that protected carpenters’ jurisdiction.”

Toronto Locals merge

Throughout 1979, the Toronto locals within the Brotherhood discussed the possibility of a merger into one Local for the entire city and surrounding area. For many the merger made sense, but for others it meant losing their local autonomy. To them, bigger was not necessarily better.

The April 1979 Carpenters’ District Council of Toronto and Vicinity meeting reported that Locals 27, 666, 681, 1133, 1747, 1963, 3277 and 3233 would conduct a referendum regarding a merger into one construction union local.

A committee was established to formulate the rules and procedures for the proposed merger and to prepare a letter to the membership concerning the referendum. On the committee were Ed Stewart from Local 27 (who served as Chair), Fred Leach from Local 3233, Frank Rimes from Local 27, L. Butler from Local 666, William Armstrong from Local 681, Gary Crawford from Local 3233, Ermans Masaro from Local 1963 and Robert (Bob) Copp from Local 1747.

These rules were accepted for the merger:

- That Local 27 would be the new Local's number because it was the oldest local.
- That October 1, 1979 was the target date for the merger.
- That the Carpenters' section of the District Council would remain until all Toronto construction locals agreed to the merger.
- That draft by-laws were to be presented to the membership of the merged local.
- That regular information bulletins to record progress would be provided.
- That a letter should be sent to all locals justifying the merger.

The justifications for the merger were many and included:

- Consolidation would save on overhead costs
- Increased strength at the bargaining table
- Elimination of duplication of services; with nine locals there was a "considerable waste of money"
- One location from which all business could be conducted
- Lower dues

Before the merger could take place, several changes had to occur including the drafting of new local union bylaws and the election of new officers for the merged local.

As further justification for the merger, the Committee pointed out that from January 1974 to March 1979 the Locals' membership had dropped by 1,060 and that Members in Toronto had worked 40,000 person hours fewer in March 1979 than in December 1978.

That, combined with the 700 unemployed Members registered for work, had caused a serious reduction in income.

As a consequence, the Committee stressed that the Union 'had no alternative but to pool our resources and to strengthen our organization by voting and working towards the merger of the construction locals for the benefits of every member.'

It was also noted that the Locals had property valued in excess of \$2 million, which was 'doing absolutely nothing for the membership but earn interest.' In addition, over the most recent four-year period, the nine Locals had incurred total expenses of approximately \$560,000 for sending 97 delegates and 57 officers plus financial secretaries to conventions, district meetings and Local meetings.

Results of the Referendum to Merge

The referendum to merge the Toronto Locals was held in 1982. Locals 1133 and 3277 decided not to participate.

The Locals approving the merger represented in excess of 3,000 Members, while those who voted against represented slightly more than three hundred.

The by-laws provided for full time officers including Manager, Business Agents, Organizers, Financial Secretary, and Treasurer.

An Apprenticeship Training facility was provided for, as was a Strike Fund, and a Contingency Fund for the relief of Members who were retired, became ill, or were long-term unemployed.

ORIGINAL OFFICERS OF THE 'NEW' LOCAL 27

Ermans Masaro	Joe Campbell
Matt Whelan	Bill Thornton
Frank Rimes	Lorenzo Monaco
Tony Bucci	Phil Robichaud
Sam DiPietro	Jim Smith

The United Brotherhood and the Wood, Wire and Metal Lathers International Unions merge

When the Lathers' Local 562 decided to compete in the commercial drywall sector in the early 1970s, an agreement was signed undermining the terms and conditions of the Local 97 agreement. Contracts were awarded at a lower bid price in the commercial and industrial sector. By 1978, the Brotherhood, which had considerable leverage through its recently-negotiated sub-contracting clause with the General Contractors, began to demand that the General

1968 Charter of Wood,
Wire and Metal Lathers'
International Union



Contractors live up to the agreement by subletting work only to those contractors who had employed Brotherhood Members. It became obvious to Lathers' Local 97 members that they were being squeezed by

the lower-paid Local 562 Members on the one hand, and by the Carpenters on the other. It also became evident that if they were to continue earning a living in the construction industry, they would have to do something about the situation created by Local 562.

A further problem arose when the Provincial Accreditation Order became law and required each trade to negotiate one provincial agreement for all its members. When the Ontario Provincial Council of Carpenters became the bargaining agent for all carpenters, including drywall, acoustic and installation, the Drywall Council and the new Local 1617, supported by the Drywall Contractors' Association, requested that the Labour

Relations Board change the order and remove the Drywall Industry from the Carpenters' Provincial Accreditation Order and to issue an Accreditation Order to the Ontario Drywall District Council and to the Drywall Contractors' Association.

Both the Ontario Provincial Council of Carpenters and the General Contractors opposed changing the Accreditation Order. The Board ruled that it would not be changed. The bargaining agent for the Drywall, Acoustic, Lathers and Insulation in commercial construction remained with the Carpenters' Collective Bargaining Agency.

The Drywall District Council successfully negotiated an agreement with the Carpenters, which gave the Drywall District Council a provision permitting it to negotiate an agreement covering all drywall, acoustic and lathing members in all locals affiliated with the Drywall Council in the Province.

When the 1978 negotiations added a strong clause to the Provincial Agreement stating that all work claimed by the Carpenters' Union, including interior systems, could only be sub-contracted to a sub-contractor employing Brotherhood Members, an immense problem developed for contractors who had agreements with Local

562. They could no longer bid on any job performed by most of the General Contractors in the province because the General Contractor was obligated, by agreement, to use Brotherhood Members. This also meant that Local 562 Members would be excluded from the work as well.

Now isolated, Local 562 had to consider a merger. Throughout 1978 and 1979, Local 562 attempted to negotiate a merger with the Carpenters and Local 1617. A Merger Agreement between the Brotherhood and the Lathers was signed on April 13, 1979.

When consolidated at the Local level, former Lather Members would have protected priority on all work assignments, work allocations and job referrals to lathing work, until such time as the membership of former Lather local unions specializing in the field had been exhausted. All Lather Members were given full rights, privileges and benefits in accordance with the Brotherhood's Constitution and Laws.

The integrity, identity and jurisdiction of the Lathing craft would be maintained as it had previously been for cabinet makers, millwrights, and various other trades. All benefit plans were to be maintained, merged or consolidated with programs provided by the Brotherhood.

In the July 1978 referendum, 11,000 members of the Lathers' Union voted overwhelmingly in support of the merger with the Carpenters. The Brotherhood appointed Second General Vice President, Patrick Campbell, to ensure the transition was accomplished "in a most expeditious and fair manner." President William Sidell stated, "... this affiliation should not be viewed by anyone as a defeat or victory, but rather as the consequence of technology and the coming together of two great organizations to strengthen the Labour Movement and the Industry."

General President William Sidell retired at the end of 1979. He regarded overseeing the affiliation of the Wood Wire and Metal Lathers' International Union with the Brotherhood as a crowning achievement to his labour career. The merger ended almost 80 years of jurisdictional disputes between the two organizations.

Local 675 granted Charter

The merger of the Brotherhood and the Lathers meant that a new Local, representing Lathers was created in Toronto. Local Charter 675 was installed on January 27, 1980 for the newly-merged locals 562 (Lathers), and 1617 (Acoustic/Drywall.) The Charter covered acoustic, drywall, lathing and insulation.

The first Local 675 membership meeting featured the installation of the two main union officers, drawn from the two merged locals. Gus Simone, former head of the Lathers' Local 562 was appointed Business Manager and Norm LeBlanc, former Business Manager and Financial Secretary of Local 1617 Acoustic/Drywall became the Financial Secretary and Business Representative. Board Member John Carruthers said the merger was a difficult one to accomplish, and that the international wanted experienced people to lead the new local.

Gus Simone, first Business Manager of Local 675



Local 675 receives its Charter from the U.B.C. on January 27th, 1980

Members who attended the inaugural meeting were told they would continue to work under the terms of the collective agreements of their former unions until new agreements were negotiated in the spring. Leaders of Local 675 agreed that the collective agreements had to be merged immediately, and that the first priority in bargaining that year was to eliminate the disparities between the agreements through one agreement.



Granting of Local 675's Retirees Charter in 2004

Approximately 160 Lather Locals had merged either with an existing Carpenter Local or another Lather Local and former international representatives of the Lathers were integrated into the U.B.C.'s international staff.

The merger had taken place with a minimum of problems and the integration of former Lather

affiliates was equally problem-free. Many smaller affiliates had been merged with Brotherhood Locals and the affiliation was described as “a success beyond our earlier expectations.”

Norm LeBlanc says one of the most significant achievements he witnessed over his extensive labour career was the establishment of a separate local for the drywallers, which he believes the Brotherhood had never really looked upon as a trade in its own right. “We did not want to be carpenters, we were Lathers and Drywallers.” He is convinced that the Lathers and Drywallers benefited from the Merger. “We were 300 members absorbed into an organization of 5,000. We have a pension plan and a health and welfare plan.”

Toronto Locals merge – but it takes a while to make the merger a reality

The 1982 merger of seven Toronto Locals with Local 27 ramped up the combined membership to more than 4,000.

The merger had triggered controversy before the vote and it continued to a source of problems for some time afterward.

A possible merger between Local 27 and Local 2679 (an industrial local) was discussed in 1988. The

Local 2679 Executive was concerned about its status within Local 27 should they agree to the merger. Local 27 gave assurances that, when the merger took place, Local 2679 could elect a five-member industrial strategy committee, and a three-member grievance committee. The industrial representatives would be elected by the industrial membership, and industrial representatives could also contest for Executive positions. They would continue to have input in the Industrial Apprenticeship Program.

Henceforth the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Allied Workers, and the Local would consist of two sectors – industrial and construction – with each sector electing its own business agents. The Executive Board and Business Manager were elected by the entire membership.

In the residential sector, major battles between Local 1190 and Labourers’ Local 183 continued. Local 1190 had not participated in the 1982 merger and it was seeking to represent residential framers. Local 1190 had received its Charter in 1956 and represented the high-rise trim carpenters. In 1981, Tony Iannuzzi and Gus Simone worked to expand Local 1190’s members into the residential framing sector.

The Toronto Building Trades had an existing agreement with the Metropolitan Toronto Apartment Builders' Association which covered a number of Locals, including Local 1190's trim carpenters. When Local 1190's residential framers were added to the agreement, the Labourers' Local 183 objected and challenged the entire agreement at the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

In an effort to resolve the long-standing dispute between Local 183 and Local 1190 over which union should have jurisdiction in new house framing, the Building Trades' Council decided in favour of Local 1190.

In 1983, Local 1190 organized the first strike by frame carpenters. The strikers visited construction sites in cavalcades of up to 150 trucks to determine if anyone was working. The builders attempted to break the strike with Local 183's support but they were unsuccessful and an agreement was reached -- the first ever, for frame carpenters.

By 1985, low on funds and weary from its protracted battles, Local 1190 merged with Local 27.

In March 1987, the Toronto District Council of Carpenters' won membership approval to lay charges

against Local 183 Labourers with the Central Ontario Building Trades' Council for violating Building Trades' Council bylaws for raiding and improperly infringing on other affiliates' jurisdictions.

Finally, in August 1991 a peace treaty was signed between Local 183 and Local 27, ending two decades of fighting in the commercial and residential sectors. The two unions agreed on clear divisions beginning on May 1, 1991, which brought a measure of peace between the two organizations for a few years.

THE SECOND HUNDRED YEARS BEGINS

Struggle to Survive

C.L.C. and Building Trades' split

While the Brotherhood was merging and consolidating for strength, a threat to the Brotherhood – and to the entire Canadian labour movement – emerged. It arrived as a demand for more Canadian autonomy within international unions and would ultimately lead to a split between the Canadian Labour Congress (C.L.C.) and the Building Trades' unions.



Meeting of the Canadian Labour Congress

Many Canadian trade unionists, including those in the Brotherhood, clearly recognized that if

accommodations were not made for Canadians within international unions, particularly with respect to the C.L.C. guidelines for Canadian autonomy, which they regarded as minimal, the concept of international unionism would not survive.

By 1980, the Canadian Labour Congress reported that most international unions had taken concrete steps to grant some special status to their Canadian members, including amending their constitutions to comply with the guidelines and thereby enabling the Canadian leadership to have more independence from the United States. The amendments permitted the election of Canadian officers solely by Canadian delegates at Canadian conferences.

It was also in 1980 that twelve construction unions, representing 350,000 workers, withheld all or part of their dues from the C.L.C. – a tactic intended to put pressure on the C.L.C. One of them was the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners. Local 27 drafted a resolution for presentation to the Provincial Building Trades' Council Convention, opposing the move.

The matter threatened to split the entire Canadian labour movement. Those who opposed the action stressed that doing so weakened all unions and

would result in inter-union raids and loss of work, seriously undermining the Carpenters' jurisdiction to the detriment of building tradesmen everywhere.

On March 11, 1981, about a year into the per capita boycott, Dennis McDermott, C.L.C. President, announced that fourteen Building Trades' unions would be suspended on April 30 if per capita dues were not paid.

As a result, the Building Trades announced their intention to establish a new central labour body on May 1, 1981 to be called the Canadian Federation of Labour.

Canadians did not want to choose between their international unions and the C.L.C. As seen by Brotherhood conventions for the duration of the dispute, they wanted to be part of the C.L.C. and the Brotherhood and many resented having to choose between the two.

Local 27 never felt comfortable outside the C.L.C. Certainly the issue was the subject of debate at every Brotherhood convention from the beginning of the split until the Brotherhood returned to the C.L.C. family in 1990.

The C.L.C./Building Trades dispute and its consequences are a tragic episode in Canadian labour history and one for which both sides paid a price. Neither side could claim victory. If there were any spoils, they went to the anti-union forces, which were much more united against labour after the split than before.

Dissension in the ranks

Democracy, for all its virtues, is a difficult process. This is particularly true within the labour movement. Many scenarios played out within Local 27 during the 1980s. A group of enthusiastic young men, dedicated trade unionists with a vision of a different kind of trade unionism, began to exert their presence within the Local and the Canadian labour movement.

The issues were many, including the continuing fight for Canadian autonomy, greater democracy within the Local, free trade, the Union's role within the Canadian Labour Congress, the hiring hall, province-wide bargaining and jurisdictional issues.

Interestingly, many of these radicals in Labour's past are now the leaders of the present-day trade union movement precisely because of their forward thinking. In the Brotherhood, their names are

familiar – Jim Smith, current Canadian International Vice President; John Cartwright, President of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council; Ucal Powell, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Central Ontario Regional Council of Carpenters, Drywall and Allied Workers, and Financial Secretary of Local 27; Frank O'Reilly, recently-retired Local 27 President; Mike Yorke, Local 27 President and Vice-President of the Regional Council.

In 1982, Frank Rimes was elected to the position of Local 27's Business Manager. John Cartwright, Jim Smith and 18 others also ran for the six Business Agent positions and for Trustee and Conductor respectively. Cartwright and Smith were elected along with Rimes.

O'Reilly recalls that Cartwright was absolutely thorough when he took on a project – particularly when the matter dealt with workers' rights, discrimination or discipline. "He did an absolutely superb job."

Over time, the Cartwright-Smith team expanded when two additional members, Ucal Powell and Michael Connolly, came on board.

Powell was a Local 1963 Member before it merged with Local 27. Cartwright remembers having

been introduced to Powell by a mutual friend, who told him: "You have to meet Ucal Powell because you have so much in common."

Powell acknowledges that he was active in Local 1963 and that his activism increased over the years as he came to recognize there were many things the Local should have been doing and was not. When he joined Local 27 through the merger, the issues were small. He and Connolly just asked questions at Local meetings and persisted in seeking answers that they believed were not forthcoming.

Powell and Connolly suspended from holding office

Ucal Powell and Michael Connolly discovered that it didn't take much to get into trouble in Local 27. In August and September 1985, they challenged meeting chairman Matt Whelan over his rulings on matters related to collective bargaining. In their challenges, Powell and Connolly requested that meetings be conducted in a manner consistent with the Constitution, and both believed that their challenges were completely in conformity with procedures outlined in the Union's Constitution. Nevertheless, both were charged by President Whelan and in October 1985, found guilty and barred from holding office for two years.

They appealed the decision through union channels and filed charges with the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

John Cartwright was in the forefront of efforts to ensure that Powell and Connolly were treated fairly. He wrote to the General President, Patrick Campbell, in January 1986, asking whether a Trial Committee could make a recommendation in its report with respect to penalty. In reply, the General President assured Cartwright they could indeed make a recommendation, but that the Local, or District Council, could choose to accept it as a whole, in part, or reject it entirely.

The suspension of the two Members caused heated discussions in both Local 27 and District Council meetings

In a complaint to the Ontario Labour Relations Board, Powell and Connolly named U.B.C. President Patrick Campbell, Local 27 Business Manager Frank Rimes, Local 27 President Matt Whelan, and Local 27. Their complaint sought a declaration that the respondents violated the Ontario Labour Relations Act. A cease-and-desist order was also requested, with all penalties and prohibitions against them removed.

Both complaints cited important differences of principle with respect to collective bargaining between themselves, Matt Whelan and others. Connolly also cited William Armstrong's inaccurate portrayal of events in the relevant meeting minutes.

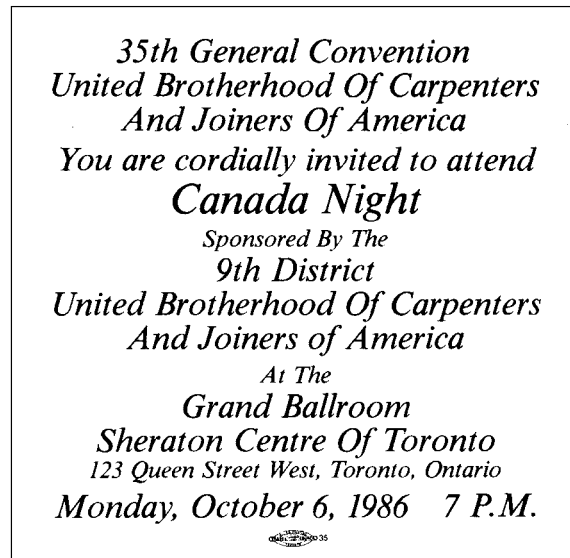
The Labour Board dismissed the complaints citing an unwillingness to become involved in internal union matters. Powell's and Connolly's appeals to the International were denied.

An "underground" newsletter – the Blue Print – supported Powell and Connolly and other trade unionists who had been suspended by their unions for similar activities.

Bob Reid recalls Powell and Connolly "kicking up a stink at meetings." But he also acknowledges that "Ucal was right, he was just – disturbing, but he was making good points. Matt Whelan was the President, they were giving him a pretty rough time of it, there is absolutely no doubt about that."

Reid agreed to Connolly's request to be a witness at his trial. Reid remembers telling the trial committee that he did not think Connolly did anything inappropriate. Even today, Jim Smith believes the charges against Connolly, Powell and others were, for the most part, "frivolous."

Powell and Connolly were denied the opportunity to attend the Convention held in Toronto in the fall of 1986, the only Brotherhood convention ever to be held in Canada. Both picketed the event to bring attention to their situation.



Invitation to "Canada Night" – part of the U.B.C.'s 35th General Convention. Held in 1986 in Toronto, this was the only U.B.C. General Convention ever held outside the United States

By 1986, John Cartwright, Jim Smith, Ucal Powell and Michael Connolly were becoming a formidable group. They, and others of like mind in the Brotherhood and other construction trades' unions, held regular meetings to discuss and devise strategy. Smith recalls that Cartwright was more involved in

that than he was. He had an extensive network and his union life and social life were intertwined. He was very active in his efforts to get the Brotherhood to change. "We, along with others, were trying to change things and it wasn't too long before people began to realize that their intent was not to be a danger to the Brotherhood, but to be an asset."

Cartwright and Smith had developed a good rapport with the membership. They were regarded as two of the prime promoters of the Quarter Round, Local 27's newsletter. The Blue Print's circulation on all construction sites was an added bonus. They were in direct contact with the membership and were not at all aloof.

Cartwright and Smith challenged William Armstrong and Matt Whelan – and won.

Mike Yorke, who joined the Local in 1981, says that drastic changes began to take place when Smith and Cartwright took an active role in the Local. Michael Connolly never took an active part in Local 27 again, but by 1988, Ucal Powell was back in the Union and was elected to attend the Ontario Provincial Council Convention.

Today, Smith, Cartwright, Powell, Yorke and O'Reilly express a tremendous respect for Matt Whelan. Having spent a number of years in leadership positions within the Union, they recognize the enormous contribution Whelan made to the Local and to the Union, and that the challenges he faced were immense.

Struggling to maintain gains already won

Contract settlements were promising in the early part of the 1980s but as the decade unfolded, attacks on the labour movement increased. They came in many forms: demands for concessions and the merit shop were just two of numerous challenges the Brotherhood faced.

Beginning in 1983, the Union's fortunes began to change. In February, Brian Foote, Director of Labour Relations, General Contractors' Section of the Toronto Construction Association, noted that 1982 wage settlements averaged 11 to 14 per cent, depending on the trade and the area of the province. There were nine separate strikes, the longest of which was the plumbers' strike that lasted for 13 weeks. In preparing for the 1984 negotiations, Foote said that the Construction Employers Co-ordinating Council of Ontario had formed a committee to "fine-tune existing provincial bargaining legislation."

The Canadian Construction Association issued a 15-page report on the competitive position of the unionized construction industry, in which it estimated that the employee benefit features in collective agreements made unionized construction projects 25 to 35 per cent more expensive than non-union construction.

Of concern to the Canadian Construction Association were double-time after eight hours, expensive room and board and travel provisions, journeymen performing unskilled work, and jurisdictional rules. The report called for elimination of all those features.

Before the 1984 negotiations began, the Construction Owners' Council of Ontario also pressed for similar reforms in the ICI sector. The key Council recommendation was:

"The council recommends that labour legislation be amended to restrict strike and ratification voting rights to those tradesmen who are actually employed in the ICI sector of the construction industry on the date of the vote."

John Cartwright says that when this provision was implemented, contractors manipulated the process. The Brotherhood would submit cards

for certification but the employer would state they only had one carpenter on the job that day and the rest were labourers. If the Labourers' Union submitted the cards, the contractors would say the only men working that day were carpenters.

To counter this, Cartwright consulted with a representative from Labourers' Local 506, and issued two signed cards for everyone on the job so that if the contractors said only labourers were on the job, Labourers' cards were produced, and vice versa. Needless to say, this practice stopped after the contractors' ploy to avoid unionization was exposed.

Brotherhood purchases building at 64 Signet Drive

In an interview nearly 20 years after the fact, Matt Whelan still remembers vividly how difficult it was to convince the District Council to purchase a new building for the Brotherhood at 64 Signet Drive. As soon as they learned how much it was going to cost to renovate, the millwrights and Local 675 opted out and did not move into the building at that time.

Whelan says the purchase was justified "...we needed to upgrade the journeymen because of the increased technology, and that was forced upon us. The Executive was divided on the issue. In my view, change is constant and you must change with it."

The District Council dedicated the Signet Drive complex to U.B.C. General President Patrick J. Campbell. It was a 54,000 square foot building situated on 3.2 acres of property. Thirty-three thousand square feet of the space was designated to be a training centre and workshops where 95 per cent of the curriculum for apprentices and journeymen workers would be taught. The Training Centre was equipped with the latest machinery, and the single-storey building would also house the administrative staff.

As it turned out, the District Council did not have the financial resources to maintain the complex, so after extensive negotiations, Local 27 purchased the facility.



The official opening of the Patrick J. Campbell Centre, named for the then-U.B.C. General President – the Union's Toronto home until 2004

More reformers elected

As the final months of the 1980s ticked by, Ucal Powell's suspension from union activities expired and he was ready to once again become actively involved in the Union. In 1989, Ucal ran on a slate with Michael Yorke, John Cartwright, Jim Smith, Lorenzo Monaco and Tony Bucci, and all were elected.

Jim Smith was elected Business Manager in June 1991, and Business Representative and Executive members Powell and Yorke became paid representatives of the Union. Powell says that as new representatives, he and Yorke went well beyond the "call of duty. We participated in, and conducted education programs. I became an instructor. We developed Shop Steward courses and we took and encouraged new Members to take courses at Humber College under Joe Grogan, who oversaw the Labour Studies Program."

At the 1991 General Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, the new team took the opportunity to exert its influence on the International.

1991 General Convention

Frank O'Reilly describes the 1991 General Convention as something the likes of which he had never seen before in his life. Jim Smith

and John Cartwright hold similar views.

The Convention marked the beginning of a genuine turning point for the Union. For the first time since 1916, there would be an actual election for the presidency, and Local 27 would play a pivotal role. There was an underlying tension surrounding the election. General Secretary John 'Whitey' Rogers assembled a team of candidates who were determined to unseat General President Sigurd Lucassen and his supporters.

While Local 27 delegates were solidly behind Lucassen, he was not the unanimous choice of Canadian delegates. Local 18 in Hamilton, for example, was strongly behind Rogers.

In the end, Lucassen won the election for President by a vote of 1378 to 878. The Lucassen team swept all the General Executive positions, including Ted Ryan of the Ninth District in Canada and Patrick Mattei from the Tenth District.

Current President Douglas McCarron, in a telephone interview with the author in January 2006, agreed that there was a huge split in the General Executive Board before and during the 1991 Convention. He confirmed that the Convention ushered in the beginnings of a significant and

pivotal turning point for the Union, and that the Canadian Brotherhood Members played an integral role in helping to bring about that change.

Ucal Powell supported Lucassen. He recalled that during the time he had been suspended from the Local, he experienced a problem on a job site. Because of his situation in the Local at the time, he was not confident he could get a satisfactory response from Local officers. He called Sig Lucassen and Lucassen returned his call. "It really impressed me; at the time I was just a Member, suspended from attending meetings and participating in the Local affairs, and the President phoned me back! When Jim Smith said (I should) support Lucassen, I had no hesitation in doing so because it seemed to me to be the right thing to do."

The Convention also endorsed a resolution calling for the Brotherhood to hold one of every four Conventions in Canada. Local 27's Jim Smith spoke to that resolution: "I agree fully with the committee's recommendation. I think it is important for the Americans to visit Canada at least once every four conventions and hear from us what our concerns are."

Meeting on the Boardwalk

One seminal day during the 1991 Convention, several of Local 27's delegates took a stroll on the

Atlantic City Boardwalk. There are no recorded minutes, nor other written records of the conversations from that day but the details are still strong in the minds of those delegates more than 15 years later. Among them were Ucal Powell, Jim Smith, Frank O'Reilly, Mike Yorke and John Cartwright. The delegates' 'stroll' lasted less than an hour but what was discussed was very important to every man there.



The "meeting on the boardwalk", from left: Jim Smith, John Cartwright, Cosmo Mannella, Ucal Powell, Frank O'Reilly (Mike Yorke was taking the picture)

This was the 'reform team' that had not only changed the direction of Local 27, but had now influenced change at the highest level of the Brotherhood – the General Convention. They backed the right team and all of them were very much aware of the significance of that achievement. They savoured the victory. No longer did they feel they were a 'rump' within the International. They knew a tremendous change had occurred in their Union and were pleased with the role they had played in bringing about that change.

Cartwright said, “our perceptions of the International began to change. These perceptions continued after the convention. These guys came up to Canada, listened to us, spoke to us, and there was suddenly an entirely new openness to the values of Local 27. They agreed to strengthen the Canada Conference.”

When the Boardwalk meeting took place, Cartwright had been a Local 27 Executive Member for about 10 years and his involvement with the Building Trades’ Council and his activism on several fronts had been noticed by many in the labour movement. As a result, there were many who were recruiting Cartwright to run for the position of Business Manager of the Building Trades’ Council.

Cartwright was open to the idea and this became the main topic of conversation at the Boardwalk meeting. Cartwright later said, “I had enough arrogance to think that one individual could make a difference, and I thought it was important to be part of the Building Trades’ Council.”

While he agreed he may have discussed his intention to run for the Business Manager’s position with Jim Smith before the Boardwalk meeting, the rest had no idea what his intentions were. It was the first time he had held “a long discussion with anyone on the

subject.” Cartwright says there were concerns about whether it was the correct thing to do, the biggest being, “Why break up the team? We were on the verge of winning a victory with the International, we had made peace with the International and the guys are saying, ‘you are going to leave now?’”

O’Reilly recalls the stroll on the Boardwalk: “We were really contemplating the first decision to expand beyond the Local, and some thought that it would be good for someone from the Local to have that position.”

Ucal Powell remembers that “We weighed it and the general sense was that if he wanted to go, we should not stand in his way.”

Cartwright did run for the Business Manager’s position and won the election handily.

One disturbing aspect of the 1991 Convention was the Membership Report, which showed that, as of December 1990, the Brotherhood had 575,696 members representing a net decrease of 51,679 members since its 1986 Convention in Toronto. All indications pointed to that downward trend continuing. It was a problem that the new officers would address by bringing both shinglers and aluminum siders into the Brotherhood.

Education and Apprenticeship Training

Apprenticeship – Right From The Beginning

From its founding convention in 1881, the Brotherhood recognized that the craft was in danger of being downgraded “as a result of work turned out by men ignorant of the full range of skills required by the competent carpenter.”

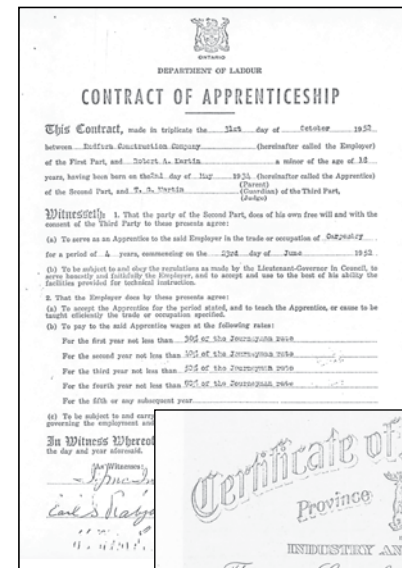
An apprenticeship program was seen as the solution – and the Brotherhood had an effective one in place by 1886.

To the Brotherhood, passing the skill from one generation to the next has always been important. Today’s apprentices not only benefit from the knowledge of their predecessors but also enjoy the guaranteed rights earned through past struggles and enshrined in the collective agreement and law.

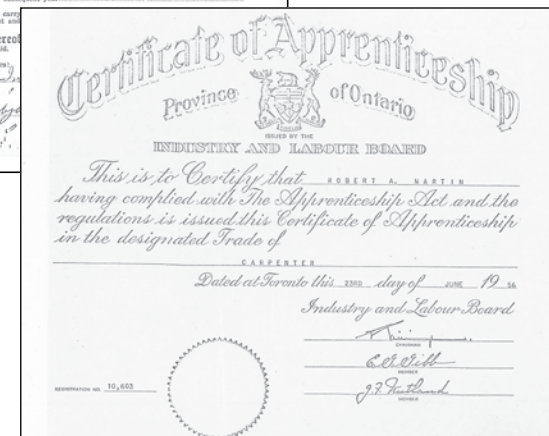


Participants in the Carpenters' Course at the Provincial Institute of Trades in Toronto in 1954

The 1964 Apprenticeship and Tradesmen’s Qualification Act was the first major overhaul of apprenticeship legislation in Ontario since 1928. The new Act required carpenters to serve 1,800 hours before being promoted to the next level and hourly rate increase. The academic requirement was set at Grade 10 or equivalent. Union officials soon expanded the program to include safety courses.



*Starting the journey –
Contract of Apprenticeship
for Member Robert Martin
dated October 31st, 1952*



*Completing the journey –
Certificate of Apprenticeship
for Member Robert Martin
dated June 23rd, 1956*

The Brotherhood has sought to obtain compulsory certification status for the trade of General Carpenter since 1971. It was and remains in the Members' self-interest to obtain their Certificates of Qualification because many employers insist on it before hiring a tradesperson.

General Carpenter Certificate of Qualification for William Dragan issued in 1973 – at the time of Local 27's 125th Anniversary in 2007, Mr. Dragan was the longest-serving Member of Local 27



During the mid 1980s, Local 27 and the District Council placed increased emphasis on education. Much of the credit for that goes to Matt Whelan who lobbied the District Council to purchase the Local's headquarters at 64 Signet Drive, and to include space for a training centre.

The Training Centre was set up in 1986 with Charlie Brown at the helm as its first Training

Coordinator. Gary Crawford served as Chief Instructor from 1986 to 1992 and Alec McGill was one of the Centre's first instructors. Even after his retirement, Alec continued to put in a full day's voluntary work, helping the training staff and passing on his knowledge to apprentices.

Gary Crawford promoted the concept of having apprentices work on full-scale projects instead of models. Crawford says full scale reproduction is important "because apprentices should get used to job site work conditions: If you can work at eight to ten feet, you can get used to anything, and you raise it eight to ten feet at a time."

Janet Trim of the General Contractors' Section of the Toronto Construction Association has served as a Director and President of the Local 27 Training Trust Fund since its inception:

"The contractors are very appreciative of the value of Local 27-trained apprentices and journeypersons," she says with pride. "I have had contractors tell me that the Local 27 Training Centre produces apprentices and carpenters that are the best in North America. The Carpenters Local 27 Training Centre administrative staff and instructors are dedicated to ensuring that the Local develops the best possible apprentices and journeypersons."



Eddie Thornton, Cristina Selva and others meet with then-Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities Diane Cunningham to discuss opportunities for partnerships with school boards

In 1991, the International inaugurated an annual week-long conference to help apprenticeship training instructors hone their skills and become better teachers. By 1993, enrolment in the conference increased by a third to more than a hundred instructors. They taught not only traditional courses, but new courses as well.

The Brotherhood's apprenticeship programs offer hands-on training for people who want to work in a skilled trade and who enjoy learning by doing. About 90 per cent of apprenticeship training is provided in the workplace by employers. The remainder involves in-school theoretical and practical instruction. The in-school portion of apprenticeship training is delivered at either a local community college or

at one of the Brotherhood's Training Centres that have been designated as Apprenticeship Training Delivery Agencies by the provincial government.

Both employers and apprentices benefit from apprenticeship training. Employers help create a pool of skilled workers who can help keep businesses competitive. Apprentices receive training that will start their careers as skilled workers.

Apprentices are workers, so they earn as they learn.

Apprenticeship Training Today

Today, apprenticeship training in Carpentry and Drywall owes a great deal to Eddie Thornton and Hugh Laird. Thornton is the Executive Director of the Carpenters' Local Union 27 Joint Apprenticeship and Training Trust Fund



Instruction taking place at the training centre

Incorporated. Laird is the Executive Director of the Interior Systems Contractors' Association of Ontario (I.S.C.A.) and the Training Coordinator of the Interior Finishing Systems Training Centre (I.F.S.T.C.)

The I.F.S.T.C., under Laird's direction, provides training for Local 675 Drywall Acoustic, Lathing and Insulation and Local 1891 International Union of Painters & Allied Trades. This Training Centre is the only one in the province serving two unions.



The Interior Finishing Systems Training Centre in Vaughan, Ontario – the largest interior finishing systems training centre in North America



The economic collapse in the early-to-mid 1990s had a devastating impact on apprenticeships in Ontario. Even today, Brian Foote, Director of Labour Relations for General Contractors' Section of the Toronto Construction Association, laments the loss of apprentices during that period. Hundreds of apprentices left the industry due to work shortages and never returned. This, argues Foote, cannot be permitted to occur again.

Today, each carpenter apprentice in the province must complete 7,200 hours of combined work experience and in-school training hours in order to obtain journeyworker status. A first-year apprentice receives 50 per cent of a journeyworker's wages, which amounts

to more than twice the minimum wage in Ontario. A second-term apprentice receives 60 per cent of a journeyworker's wages, a third-term apprentice receives 70 per cent, and a fourth-term apprentice receives 85 per cent. Once they have completed their apprenticeships, they are eligible to take their Certificate of Qualification examination through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

In promoting the need for a Certificate of Qualification for the Drywall trade, Laird explained to Diane Cunningham, then-Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities that: "You have hairdressers who require a Certificate of Qualification and you have people putting up ceilings which, if not done properly, can fall on your head, and they don't need a Certificate to prove their qualifications?" Shortly after, the government introduced a Certificate of Qualification for the drywall sector.

From the start of training, the Union instills in every apprentice and journeyworker's mind that the employer competes in an environment with non-union contractors, many of whom work cheaply. Against this competition, the unionized employer must make a profit. To do so, his unionized employees have to be better and more

productive than their non-union counterparts.

Training For The Future: The Council's State-of-the-Art Headquarters and Training Centres

The Brotherhood's commitment to training is clearly evident within the Carpenters' Union, Central Ontario Regional Council which has made significant investments over the past several years to construct four brand new state-of-the-art training centres.

The Carpenters' Local 27 Training Centre in Vaughan opened its doors in the spring of 2004, boasting 62,000 square feet of the most technologically advanced shop and classroom facilities including eight electronic classrooms, a computer lab, welding shop, woodworking machine shop, and site simulated carpentry shop. To Eddie Thornton it was "a most important and needed addition to satisfy the Union's training needs for the future."



Local 27 Joint Apprenticeship Training Centre Executive Director Eddie Thornton and U.B.C. Vice President Jim Smith with various guests at training centre

An enthusiastic Thornton points out that “the new training facility doubled the previous floor space from Signet Dr. and added to the roof height. We now have the opportunity to engage in training programs we could not offer before. Indoor two storey residential projects and the construction and moving by overhead crane of ‘flying forms’ are examples of some of the projects taking place at the new facility.”



Learning the trade – a Carpenter-in-training

Since opening in 2004, there has been incredible demand for the programs offered by Thornton and the rest of the staff at the Training Centre. So much so that, in only four short years, plans are being undertaken to expand the Training Centre to meet that demand.

The Training Centre occupies one third of the Council’s 180,000 square foot building that also houses union administrative offices and a conference and event venue.



Training Centre Executive Director Eddie Thornton and Training Director Cristina Selva receiving a Canadian Urban Institute Leadership Award in 2005.

“We would not have been able to build this unique facility” Ucal Powell claims, “were it not for the Council structure. There would be no way that you could convince all the Locals to accept an undertaking of this size.” The Council structure, with the combined strength of its resources, made a project like this possible.

The Building Planning Committee – with equal representation from Local 27 and Local 675 – consisted of Frank O’Reilly, Mike Yorke, Ucal Powell, Luigi Caringi, Joe Sleva, John DeLuca, and Julie Palombo.

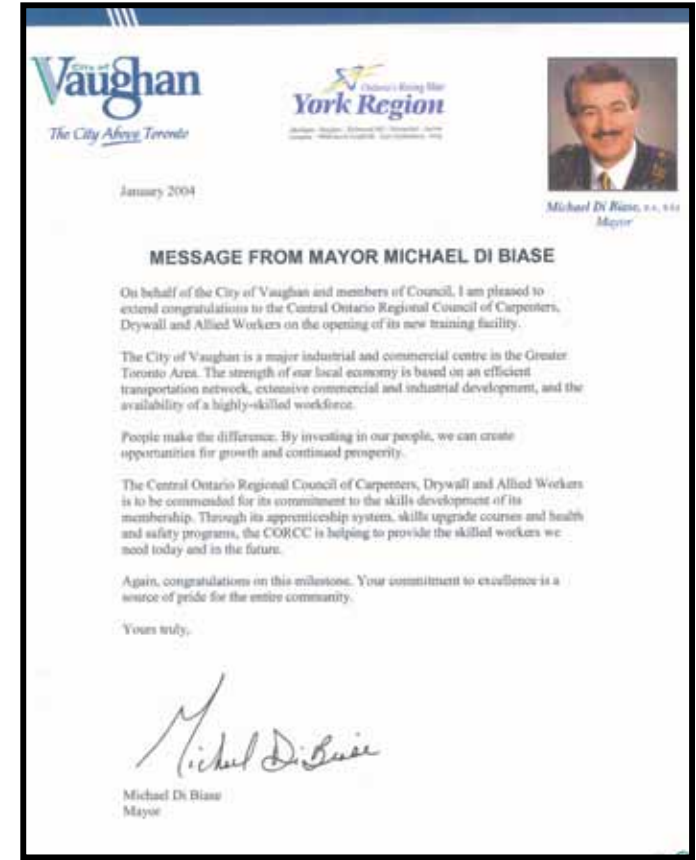


*Carpenters' Union, Central Ontario Regional Council Building Committee
(Standing, left to right): Luigi Caringi, Frank O'Reilly,
Ucal Powell, Joe Sleva, Julie Palombo
(Sitting, from left to right): Mike Yorke, John DeLuca*



January 1985 cover page of the first edition of the Quarter Round -- Local 27's newsletter, courtesy of 95-year old retired Member John Solomon, who introduced the original motion to create the newsletter.

The ground-breaking and sod-turning ceremony was held in September 2003, and the official opening took place on June 2, 2004.





Ribbon-cutting ceremony at grand opening of the Carpenters' Union, Central Ontario Regional Council's new home on June 2, 2004, (Standing from left to right): Tony Carella, Councillor, City of Vaughan, Andris Silins, General Secretary-Treasurer, U.B.C., Douglas McCarron, General President, U.B.C., Hon. Chris Bentley, MPP (then Minister of Labour), Michael DiBiase, Mayor, City of Vaughan, Ucal Powell, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, C.O.R.C., Jim Smith, Vice President, U.B.C., Hon. Joe Volpe, MP (then Minister of Human Resources), Hon. Greg Sorbara, MPP (then Minister of Finance), Janet Trim, Chair, Carpenters' Local 27 Joint Apprenticeship Training Trust Inc., Tony Iannuzzi, President, C.O.R.C.



U.B.C. General President Douglas McCarron speaks at grand opening of the Carpenters' Union, Central Ontario Regional Council's headquarters on June 2, 2004



The home of the Carpenters' Union, Central Ontario Regional Council in Vaughan – this 180,000 square foot complex houses administrative offices, a training centre and a banquet hall and entertainment venue.



U.B.C. Vice President Jim Smith speaks at grand opening of the Carpenters' Union, Central Ontario Regional Council's headquarters on June 2, 2004



Groundbreaking at site of the Carpenters' Union, Central Ontario Regional Council's headquarters in September 20, 2002 (From left to right): Gabe Grossi, Belrock Construction, John Ciampa, Belrock Construction, Ucal Powell, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, C.O.R.C., Michael DiBiase, Mayor, City of Vaughan, Gino Rosati, Regional Councillor, City of Vaughan, Greg Sorbara, MPP, Peter Eliopoulos, Peter and Pauls



Unveiling of commemorative plaque at grand opening of the Carpenters' Union, Central Ontario Regional Council's new home on June 2, 2004, (Standing from left to right): Douglas McCarron, General President, U.B.C., Retired Members Norm LeBlanc, Matt Whelan and Robert Reid, Jim Smith, Vice President U.B.C.

General President Douglas McCarron attended the ceremonial opening and has since commented, “It is an absolutely beautiful facility, a showplace centre.”

Anyone looking for an example of the modern-day skill, knowledge and competence of a craftsperson need look no further than this amazing facility. It is truly a monument to the skills of the men and women of the unionized trades.

Carpenters’ Local 397 Training Centre

In the fall of 2005, Carpenters’ Local 397 celebrated the grand opening of its impressive new 9,000 square foot building in Port Hope. Port Hope is central to the jurisdictional area covered by the Local.

Joel Neville, Local 397’s Senior Business Representative, was ecstatic about the new facility that includes office space, a small banquet hall, and a 3,000 square foot training centre. Neville knows the new complex would not have been possible without the support of the Central Ontario Regional Council. He very much appreciates the \$200,000 contribution from the Regional Council, and the \$50,000 from the Carpenters’ District Council of Ontario towards the construction costs. “I am really happy; it makes a believer out of you,” said Neville.



Joel Neville displays plans for the building of Local 397’s new home in Port Hope which opened in 2004



Local 397 headquarters in Port Hope, Ontario

Carpenters’ Local 785 Training Centre

The most recent addition to the Council’s growing list of unparalleled training facilities is that belonging to the Carpenters’ Local 785 in Cambridge. Phase I of the Local 785 Training Centre consists of 8,000 square feet of hands-on training and formal classroom space that has been outfitted with the most advanced equipment. The

shop area boasts a 28 foot high ceiling, state-of-the-art woodworking shop, and a 6,000lb monorail crane that will enhance the delivery of all courses especially those involving concrete forming.



Local 785 headquarters in Cambridge, Ontario

In Their Own Words ...

“It is better to be an employed carpenter than an unemployed university graduate.”

Nelson Hilborn, 80, who apprenticed when he was 13 years old for 13 cents an hour in a Cambridge furniture factory

“Contractors must recognize (that) apprentices are not journeymen; they have much to learn, and if you want them to be working for you in the future as competent, qualified tradespeople, you better show them respect today.”

Galdino Corazza, Local 27 retiree

“The apprentice is far better educated today; they know mathematics and they are eager to learn. Their transition to the trade is very easy; apprentices are 100 per cent better today. I am very pleased with what I see.”

Matt Whelan, former President Local 27

“General carpenters, should know everything about the trade. You command respect through knowledge.”

Gary Crawford, former Chief Instructor

“Young people in the trade today are absolutely brilliant -- very smart in theory and in their use of computers.”

Sidney Kerr, Local 675 member

“The good ones come in with their parents, who say, ‘this is my son / daughter and this is what they want to do, and we are supportive of those ambitions. I don’t know how many talented people will come in to take the place of those who are leaving. My hope is that when future generations enter the trade, they will keep the Union moving forward.”

Joel Neville, Local 397 Senior Business Representative

As the trade evolves to keep up with new technologies, so too does the need for new and forward-looking apprenticeship programs. For example, in 2001, new regulations under the Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act created two new trade designations – Floor Covering Installer and Drywall Acoustic and Lathing applicator.

A 2004 Toronto Star column predicted what everyone in the construction industry already knows. There will be a shortage of skilled building trades in the GTA as the workforce increases and retirements occur. Sixty-nine per cent of builders surveyed said they were already encountering difficulty hiring skilled cement finishers, concrete form workers, window installers, carpenters and good labourers.

The Central Ontario Regional Council, with its commitment to education and training, is already working hard to meet that challenge. As Ucal Powell notes, “we must continuously train new workers to keep the Carpenters’ Union strong. It is important for the journeymen in all aspects of our trade, to keep their skills current and to train apprentices. Our training courses allow journeymen to expand their knowledge of different types of work – as well as taking courses to teach apprentices the skills needed to earn a living.”

ALWAYS A TRUE BROTHERHOOD

Brothers and Sisters Together

From its inception, the Brotherhood has sought to be all-inclusive – a true Brotherhood of tradespeople regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or religion.

This, too, is a proud part of the Brotherhood's history because, just as the Union has always fought the good fight for better wages, working conditions and benefits, it has also fought long and hard for the essential rights of its Members as fully-franchised citizens, often leading the way in the face of powerful countervailing forces.

That fight has not always been easy – nor is the Brotherhood's record of inclusiveness without blemish – but the Union has always tried to do what is right, and it is much better and stronger for having done so.

Racial segregation has no place in the Brotherhood

The Brotherhood has always stood against racial segregation and discrimination in Canada and the United States. Its first test came during the 1884 convention in Cincinnati, Ohio when

delegate Frederick E. Rames, an African-American, was refused service at a local restaurant

When they found out about the incident, convention delegates unanimously endorsed this resolution:

Whereas – several of our delegates in company with Brother Rames of Charleston, South Carolina, last evening entered a coffee house in this city ... and were told by the head waiter he could not serve Brother Rames on account of color,

Therefore be it resolved – that in this indignity offered to Brother Rames, one of our delegates, we recognize a gross and ignorant insult to our body worthy of the severest rebuke at our hands, and we call upon the citizens and working people of this city to do all in their power to withdraw all patronage from the People's Restaurant, and hold it up to public execration.

The Brotherhood subsequently elected Rames to the General Executive Board, a position he held for many years.

It is true that in the context of the times, the Brotherhood was not entirely free of discrimination, but its record was admirable.

By 1905, the Brotherhood had grown to 1,793 Locals and 161,205 Members. The Union reported on its success in bringing people of colour into the Union: “In the southern States, the colored men working at the trade have taken hold of the organization willingly, resulting in the formation of many locals of colored carpenters. It is by no means an unusual thing to see colored delegates in attendance at conventions of the Brotherhood.”

The emergence of the civil rights’ movement in the 1960s, led by the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. presented challenges for the Brotherhood. Apprentices became an important focus for the civil rights’ movement, and even though the Brotherhood had organized black carpenters from its earliest days, some discrimination existed.



Famous American civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr.

Even at this time, there were many unions that absolutely refused to organize blacks but the Brotherhood led the way in directing racially-separated local unions to merge, adopting the A.F.L.-C.I.O. Building and Construction Trades Department policy on membership equality, and actively recruiting non-white members.

In his address to the 1961 A.F.L.-C.I.O. Convention, King said, “Negroes are almost entirely a working people. There are pitifully few Negro millionaires and few employers. Our needs are identical with labor’s needs – decent wages, fair working conditions, livable housing, old age security, health and welfare measures, conditions in which families can grow, have education for their children and respect in the community. The two most dynamic and cohesive liberal forces in the country are the labor movement and the Negro freedom movement.”

In their own words ...

“*The Brotherhood can claim one of the best anti-discrimination records of any of the older American unions. Black and other minority workers were admitted to membership from the very start of the union, and the Brotherhood may have been the first union to elect a black vice-president, in 1884. It did permit separate*

black and white locals to be organized in the South when the alternative would have been no organization at all, but the national officers continually urged upon their local unions equal opportunity for all members. There was often local resistance, particularly in the South, and it certainly would not be accurate to say that the pattern of segregated locals that prevailed in that part of the country resulted in equal opportunity. However, the general office eventually ordered desegregation of all locals before the federal government mandated such action by executive order. ”

Walter Galenson

A True Sisterhood



*First U.B.C. General President
Gabriel Edmonston*

In 1882, at a mass rally in Washington D.C., the Brotherhood's first president, Gabriel Edmonston, clearly signaled that his Union included women too: "We desire also to encourage female toilers who are struggling for an honest living to accomplish their purposes without the loss of dignity or self-respect."

But it took quite a few years for Edmonston's rallying cry to become reality. In fact, in those early days the union label was denied to any shop or mill employing female labour in the manufacture of wood products. The rationale was that mill work was not suitable for women and if they were so employed, the union scale would be undermined by their presence.

World War II brought about a dramatic increase in the number of women in the general work force and the Brotherhood received numerous enquiries about accepting women into the Union as members. In 1943, the Union responded positively.

Shortly after, Local 2759 in Mattawa, Ontario elected the first female Recording Secretary of a Brotherhood local union in Ontario. Her name was Isobel Regimbal. Whether or not Regimbal was the first ever woman to hold a Brotherhood office is unclear, but her appointment was sufficiently newsworthy for The Carpenter magazine to feature her photograph.

Nancy Bayly was not the first female apprentice in Local 27, but she was the Local's first female journeyworker. Bayly took a 16-week Manpower Training course in Kingston, Ontario in 1976 and 1977. Some of her fellow students were on day parole from Kingston Penitentiary and she recalls being physically threatened by one of the inmates.

Bayly came to Toronto, and fought to be enrolled in a Manpower Cabinet Makers' course. Told she was 'overeducated', Bayly demanded to see the eligibility requirements and determined they did not apply to her. As a result of her perseverance, she was finally accepted.

Bayly worked in a non-union cabinet shop, where she quickly found that it was "really crappy not to belong to a Union." Her initial attempts to join Local 27 were rebuffed and she was informed that she had to find her own job before she could get a union card. But when she went to job sites, she was told she could not get a job unless she had a union card. Eventually she met John Cartwright who, along with others, vouched for her. But even then, the Union gave her four or five places to apply and told her she had to get a job before she would be accepted.

One of the Local's Business Representatives took her from job site to job site. After repeatedly being rebuffed, he finally exclaimed in total exasperation, "Oh come on, give her a chance!" Bayly was given the job.

"People would say to me, 'male journeymen, apprentices, people in general, they pay you less.' I would say 'No, I get the same rate as everyone else.'

Bayly says that being in the Union was beneficial but it was still very difficult because "I was still the only woman. Your friends thought you were different, family members thought you were different; it was novel to them, but you were alone. It was so lonely."

Nancy Bayly had started her apprenticeship in 1980, but it was not until 1986 that the first class of female apprentices was held at Local 27. Gary Crawford taught that first class: "Most were absolutely fantastic, and some are real success stories," he said.



Nancy Bayly – Local 27's first female journeyworker and a copy of her Journeyman's Certificate, dated August 31, 1984

“We learned how to build from the ground up to the roof; we did foundations; floor joists; pony wall and roofing. I always messed up the dovetail. When (instructor) Alec McGill wasn't looking, we tried to cover up our mistakes with sawdust and glue, but no matter how much you sanded and polished it, Alec could always tell. There were no shortcuts, he had the 'EYE,' he could spot a bad job from across the room. “Alex was always respectful, playing no favourites, and once we were at the Training Centre we were a united group, male or female. “Shortly after my apprenticeship, I was the only woman and the only Local 27 member sent to a renovation job at a K-Mart store in Barrie. The guys were absolutely super. They belonged to the Barrie Local, and upon my arrival on the job they made me aware I was the only woman they ever worked with. Nevertheless, they took me under their wing. They were terrific, but so too were the shoppers at the store we were renovating. I was on the hoist hanging promotional displays when elderly shoppers, mostly women, noticed me and said, “Way to go girl,’ giving me the thumbs up as they passed. The male shoppers just looked. ”

Phyllis Gallimore, Local 27 training centre graduate, licensed carpenter and former staff representative (Phyllis passed away in May 2008)



Former Local 27 President
Matt Whelan and former Local
27 business representative
Phyllis Gallimore

In their own words ...

“My Certificate of Qualification as a Journeyworker Carpenter is a life-time warranty. I can look forward to the different things I want to do. I know now I can do anything I want. I can even build my own home. ”

Shannon Walters,
OYAP apprentice



Women in trades class at the training centre.

TODAY AND TOMORROW

Politics and Political Action

By their very nature, unions are political entities – yet for many years, the Building Trades' Unions, including the Brotherhood, followed a strategy of attempting to stay above the political fray by not endorsing politicians or political parties.

The Carpenters' District Council and Local 27 minutes from the 1930s note several requests by the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (C.C.F.) Candidates and Communist Party members to address meetings.

The Brotherhood's Constitution explicitly excluded party politics from meetings but it could not prevent carpenters from being drawn into political life in their respective countries. In Canada, with its multiparty system, carpenters became more directly involved in politics through the C.C.F., the New Democratic Party (N.D.P.), and even the Communist Party of Canada.

In November 1938, the Local's Municipal Committee noted the efforts of the Labour members on City Council over the previous year, and the support they were 'giving to Labour questions' and a motion was passed to invite the Labour candidates to speak at the Local's next general meeting.

Also in 1938, Toronto Alderman Joe Salsberg (a Communist) gave a 'most interesting address' to the Local's membership. Salsberg would be elected to the Ontario Provincial Legislature in 1943.

The Ontario section of the C.C.F. held a conference to discuss trade union co-operation in February 1938 at which it was agreed to have a committee in Toronto develop a plan that would allow trade unions to be organized as C.C.F. Clubs. Representing the C.C.F. at the Conference were David Lewis, J.S. Woodsworth, Angus MacInnis, H. Orliffe, John Mitchell, E.B. Jolliffe and Bert Leavens.

Representing labour were John Bruce and J.W. Buckley of the Toronto and District Trades and Labor Council, Alb Sheelty of the Oshawa United Automobile Workers of America (U.A.W.A.) and H.E. Langer of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (I.L.G.W.U.)

Throughout the 1930s several C.C.F. candidates were granted time to speak at Brotherhood membership meetings and Local 27 endorsed a number of C.C.F. candidates during that time. In 1939, it also supported a C.C.F.-sponsored initiative aimed at legislating the right to organize and the right to picket.

Neither Local 27 nor the Trades and Labour Council actually affiliated with the C.C.F. but the Local did continue to send delegates to participate on the C.C.F. committee. By the beginning of the 1950s, as the C.C.F. declined as a political force so, too, did the Union's support.

Developing an effective 'political voice'

In 1960, the Ontario Provincial Council of Carpenters unanimously supported the C.L.C.'s endorsement for funding a new political party, which ultimately resulted in the 1961 founding convention of the N.D.P.



Tommy Douglas – first leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada

The C.L.C. also adopted a resolution submitted by a Carpenter Local seeking an amendment to international union constitutions that would grant the Canadian sections of their respective unions greater opportunities to become politically involved.

The question of political involvement was thoroughly debated at the Brotherhood Convention in 1960, and the Union maintained its long-standing position that 'party politics must not enter in local union practices and meetings, although Members, as citizens, were free to participate in the party of their choice.'



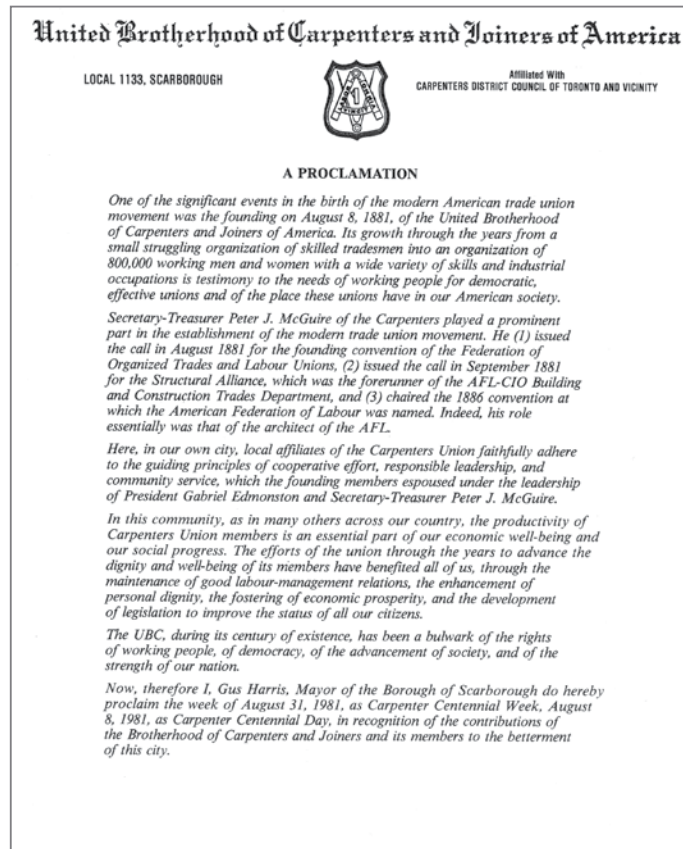
Article announcing that the Ontario Council of Carpenters support the formation of a "new, liberal political party" in 1960 which was in keeping with the Canadian Labour Congress' political policy of the day. This support, along with that of many labour unions, helped pave the way for the creation of the New Democratic Party in 1961

In August 1966, just one of the Brotherhood's 230 Canadian Locals chose to be affiliated with the N.D.P., representing 71 Members out of a total Union membership of 63,960. But by 1990, the Brotherhood in Ontario – including Local 27 – threw their support behind the N.D.P. and the party was elected for the first time in the province.

Prophetically, Jim Smith, then-Local 27 President, warned that "not everything the new government does will be to the liking of union carpenters. But the N.D.P.'s up-from-under victory shows

that, when the chips are down, labour muscle can elect a labour government. Many of the N.D.P. MPPs elected were union members.”

Proclamation by Gus Harris (then-Mayor of the Borough of Scarborough) declaring the week of August 31, 1981 Carpenter Centennial Week “in recognition of the contributions of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and its members to the betterment of this city.”



Following the election, Local 27 voted to join the N.D.P. as an organization, thus getting delegate status at the conferences and conventions that helped to shape party policy. In support of the affiliation, Smith said that “participating in the

new government at this level puts union carpenters on the cutting edge of new legislation.”

The Brotherhood’s and Local 27’s “honeymoon” with the N.D.P. was short-lived because the N.D.P. Government had to contend with the worst recession since the 1930s. It served only one term in office and was defeated in 1995.

Meeting the challenge of the ‘new right’

The N.D.P. Government of Bob Rae was replaced by the Mike Harris Conservatives, who remained in power until the fall of 2003. This government caused great havoc in Ontario and was immensely unpopular in progressive circles because it imposed drastic cutbacks in provincial social services. This new trend created a shift in priorities for the Brotherhood regarding the Union’s political involvement.

The Conservatives’ abandonment of long-held social principles caused Ontario unions to change their strategic approach to politics.

In their own words ...

“*The Brotherhood has the distinction of having one of its Members in the House of Commons. Pat Martin, a Local 343 member from Winnipeg, Manitoba. “My riding of Winnipeg Centre is the third poorest in the country and it has all the social problems that come*

with that. The majority is working class. They've sent trade unionists and union leaders to represent them at all levels of government for most of the last century.

"To be a candidate, you first have to win a nomination race. For me, that's where the Carpenters' Union really came into play. Virtually every member of Local 343 in my riding joined the N.D.P., came out, and voted. They were instrumental in having me elected as the candidate.

"For the last 15-20 years, we have seen an unprecedented assault on labour. That's all the more reason we need more trade unionists elected – to defend the position that labor has a role in shaping the society we want to live in, to meet that assault with an equally vigorous assault defending the interests of working people.

"We need to mobilize to take our struggle off the streets and into the legislatures, to meet the anti-union arguments head on. We can win that debate if we are there. We won't win it if we're standing outside with picket signs. ”

Pat Martin, MP



EST Ucal Powell and Prime Minister Jean Chretien at 64 Signet Drive during the 2000 federal election campaign.

Since 1996 the Brotherhood has encouraged its Members to vote for candidates who support Union issues. In the November 2000 federal election and in the municipal elections held the same month, the Brotherhood

made a difference in several key ridings federally and in several municipal campaigns.



Local 27 Labour Day Parade float – taking the opportunity to send a political message: “Mulroney’s Scrooging Canadian Workers”



More examples of Labour Day Parade floats: “Jobs and Justice – we can have both”



CORC's Labour Day Parade float...always fighting for justice...past, present and future

In the Toronto municipal elections, the Members of the Central Ontario Regional Council endorsed and helped to elect 24 candidates for the municipal council and 18 candidates for school boards throughout the city. The Brotherhood's effective political strategy was crucial in stopping the Mike

Harris Conservative agenda that was tearing down the social fabric of Ontario's urban areas.

"When he pushed amalgamation through, Harris thought the more conservative sections of the metro area would swamp the progressives representing Toronto Centre," explains Mike Yorke and U.B.C. Central Ontario Regional Council vice president and chairman of its political action committee. "But he was wrong."

Ucal Powell, Council Executive Secretary-Treasurer, adds that the Brotherhood's election strategy was carefully targeted and effectively carried out: "The first thing we did was to determine which candidates would stand and fight not just for our union but for all working-class people. They did not have to support us on every issue, but they had to be reasonable."

"The theme of the campaign was 'Vote Constructively,' explains Mike Yorke. "We took the work very seriously and fully mobilized our membership."

As the 1999 Ontario provincial election approached, the Council hardened in their view that another four years of Conservative government under Mike Harris would be a disaster for the province.

Ucal Powell arranged for a meeting between representatives from all the construction trades unions and Greg Sorbara, then-President of the Ontario Liberal Party. "At that meeting, we made a commitment to help defeat the Conservatives," says Powell. "It took considerable effort to convince some of our Members to vote for the Liberals. We were unsuccessful in that election and the Conservatives won another term in office."

"But we did not abandon our ultimate goal – and with a firm foundation for action in place, we simply kept building toward the next election. In 2003, the Conservatives were defeated and Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals were elected, and we believe the Brotherhood played an important and pivotal role in that defeat."

Some examples of the Union's political activity – Quarterly Trade Talk newsletter covers encouraging Members to get involved in various elections and causes





Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty with the Union Members on Toronto's Waterfront in 2008.

Since the 2003 election, the McGuinty government has moved to restore balance to Ontario's labour legislation with the reinstatement of card-based certification. They have invested billions of dollars in crucial public infrastructure which has led to thousands of jobs for the Union's Members and are the first provincial government in Ontario history to provide capital and equipment funding for union-employer training centres. Finally, in late 2008, it appeared that the government, under the direction of Training, Colleges and Universities

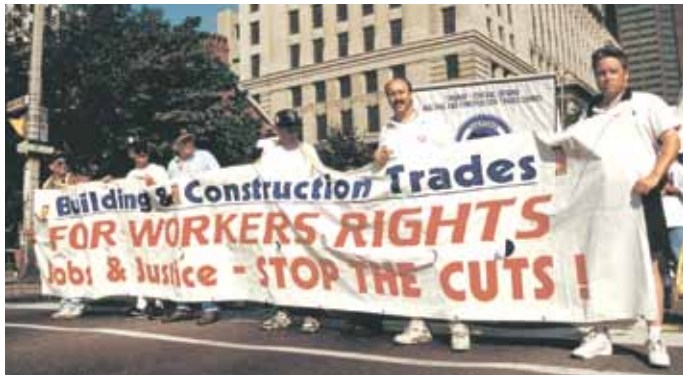
Minister John Milloy, would at long last provide interested skilled trades with the opportunity to formally apply for compulsory certification status.

"We continue to be actively involved in politics at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. We learned our lesson and will not repeat the 'non-involvement' mistakes of the past. We are ever vigilant about what is occurring at all levels of government. Our Members now stand ready to respond whenever our rights and the rights of all workers are threatened."

The Brotherhood throughout Canada can claim credit for having influenced the outcome of their municipal, provincial and federal elections. Already we are seeing significant signs that the path the Union has taken through its active political involvement and participation is the right one. All of this bodes well for the future, not just for the Brotherhood, but for our city, our province, and our country.

Kickstarting the Economy

The early 1990s were not kind to the construction industry. A lingering recession was depressing all areas of the economy and the carpenters could not escape its financially-draining pull.



Members marching in Labour Day Parade and fighting for workers' rights

That is why in December 1991 there was reason for optimism when the six municipal governments that made up Metropolitan Toronto at that time, and the construction trades and associations came together to form the Metro Job Start Coalition. The Coalition had a threefold mandate: (1) job creation at a time when unemployment in the recession-ravaged construction industry was 35 to 50 per cent; (2) elimination of delays in approvals processes that can cause years of foot-dragging on major capital projects; (3) cooperation with all levels of government and approval

bodies, such as the Ontario Municipal Board, to bring capital projects on stream as quickly as possible.

In commenting on the coalition, Local 27 Member and Business Manager for the Toronto-Central Ontario Building Trades Council John Cartwright, said "For the first time, we are all able to sit down in one room and discuss major construction projects. And everyone has available the expertise of everyone else, including municipal and government staff."

The provincial government of the day responded by committing billions of dollars of work, including subway projects in Toronto, a transit project in Mississauga, the new 407 highway, and a major sewer expansion program. The government also promised to speed up the additions to the Metro Toronto Convention Centre and the National Trade Centre. In all, it was anticipated that 14,000 jobs would be created by 1996.

Unfortunately many of these projects were either seriously scaled down or abruptly halted when the N.D.P. government was defeated in 1995 and replaced by the Mike Harris Conservatives. Harris, who campaigned on a platform entitled 'The Common Sense Revolution' proved rather quickly that there was not much in the way of

common sense in his proposed 'revolution' at all. However, as mentioned in the previous section, since 2003, the Ontario Liberal government of Dalton McGuinty has moved aggressively with hundreds of infrastructure projects across the province.

Local 27 and Local 675 staff defect to the Labourers

While struggling to overcome the challenges of a slow economy, the Brotherhood still had to worry about challenges from the Labourers.

The raiding tactics of the Labourers International Union of North America (L.I.U.N.A.) had made that union a pariah among the other trade unions in the construction industry.

In 1991, L.I.U.N.A. and the Brotherhood signed a ten year no-raiding pact. But in the first week of April 1995, Joe Mancinelli, then-Supervisor of Local 183 and Regional Manager of L.I.U.N.A. wrote to the Apartment Builders to announce that Local 183 would soon represent all trades. This was a definite raid even though L.I.U.N.A. General President Arthur Coia had previously met with the General Presidents of the Carpenters and the Painters, as well as the Canadian representatives of all three unions and committed to ending all L.I.U.N.A. raids, including Local 183's against carpenters in Canada.

Condemning the Labourers for attacking the Brotherhood throughout North America, Ucal Powell, Secretary to the Toronto District Council, said, "In Ontario, the Labourers are not succeeding because Members are calling in and telling us, 'We have a history with this Brotherhood, and we're not going to leave and go to the Labourers.'"

The Brotherhood's 37th Convention in 1995 – held in Las Vegas – resolved that the Labourers raids in the U.B.C. in Ontario were attacks on the Brotherhood as a whole and would not go unanswered.

Local 183 did carry out its raids against Local 27 and Local 675 and other building trades unions. To counter these raids, Local 27 hired new staff representatives Walter Tracogna, Stuart Long, Frank Munno, Carlos Pimentel and Lister Tennant, all of whom had been Members of Local 27 for 10 to 30 years.

Their raids and 'nuisance' appearances during the open periods of agreements, while ultimately ineffective, required staff and resources to respond and combat them – all of this was work that took away from Local 27's and Local 675's efforts to organize those with no union representation at all.

Brotherhood organizes the Trim Carpenters

Ucal Powell and many others on the Council long recognized the potential for growth in the residential sector of the industry and were determined that it should be organized. “It was obvious that the trim carpenters were in need of unionization,” says Powell. “Their situation in the 1990’s was similar to that experienced by the drywallers in the early 1960’s. Some employers withheld thousands of dollars in wages and held their crews in virtual bondage.

“Our Local didn’t have the language skills to organize the sector. Most of the residential sector workers were Portuguese – so we hired additional Portuguese-speaking staff.”

At the time, trim carpenters’ wages were actually falling. With the country in the depths of a recession, a trim carpenter who once earned as much as twelve hundred dollars for each house was now earning between five and six hundred dollars for the same work.

Powell assigned Carlos Pimentel, an organizer with strong Portuguese language skills to the residential sector campaign. With the Council’s support, Pimentel launched a textbook organizing effort.

“I met with the men before they went to work, after hours and on weekends,” he says. “I met them individually and in small groups wherever they gathered – in coffee shops, at soccer games, and in clubs. It was slow work getting names, addresses and phone numbers and then going door-to-door.”

But after six months of slogging, Pimentel was confident he had enough names to call a meeting. He suggested to Ucal Powell that the Union should advertise the meeting on Portuguese and Italian radio stations during soccer broadcasts and Powell agreed.

The hard work and publicity paid off with 50 to 60 trim carpenters attending the meeting. Some were critical of the Brotherhood’s previously unsuccessful efforts to organize the sector. Pimentel acknowledged that mistakes had been made and pledged that they would not be repeated.

So, organizing began in earnest with the first test coming during the “Days of Action” called by the Union to protest the policies of the Mike Harris Conservative government. Council Members were out in force and the trim carpenters also participated. Many drove from construction site to construction site, talking up the Union and calling on their colleagues to put down their tools and join the

caravan. Hundreds responded and the caravan grew to nearly 60 vehicles as it continued to worksite after worksite. The next day, the protest started all over again and the lumber yard owners panicked, calling on the trim organizers to get the carpenters back to work.

When the trim carpenters' employers finally recognized the degree of solidarity among residential sector workers, they agreed to meaningful negotiations that ultimately led to a collective agreement that changed everything for the trim carpenters just as everything had changed for the drywallers when they organized 40 years before.

As the trim carpenters moved forward with their new Union, some serious challenges threatened to undo all that had been done. A major threat was unleashed by the Labourers' Union which tried to create instability in the industry. But the trim carpenters stood firm and the Local continued to organize new contractors, sign new Members and hold regular membership meetings. These organizing efforts were so successful that 95 percent of the residential sector was soon organized.

Then, in 2000, as the Union prepared to negotiate a new agreement, a bombshell hit the sector.

In April 2000, the Ontario Labour Relations Board (O.L.R.B.) Chair Rick MacDowell struck down the trim workers' collective agreement on the basis of technical objections raised by the Labourers' Union. This endangered the trim workers' rates, benefits and pensions.

The trim workers were outraged. They mobilized immediately to take action to protect their rights. Hundreds of membership cards were signed and fresh certification applications were filed on those contractors that the Labourers' Union had attacked at the O.L.R.B.. The trim workers ratified a new collective agreement negotiated by Local 27 that provided for another substantial increase in rates, with substantial benefit and pension improvements.

Organized protests at the O.L.R.B. and the Ministry of Labour offices by the trim workers were a success. In a subsequent letter to the O.L.R.B., the Labourers' Union withdrew its challenges to the trim workers' collective agreement.

The display of solidarity by the trim carpenters emphasized the high regard they had for the Carpenters' Union.

Consolidating for strength

The 1990s began a process of change in the Brotherhood that continues to this day. It all began with new and energetic leadership at all levels of the Union.

Jim Smith, Local 27 president, was chosen to fill the seat vacated by the death of former Executive Board member, Ted Ryan, who had died of a heart attack in March 1992. Ryan was a millwright, and had been the Board Member representing the Ninth District since 1989, when he was appointed to fill the vacancy created by the death of John Carruthers.

Frank O'Reilly became Recording Secretary of Local 27 in 1992, and at the same time John Cartwright, the former Recording Secretary, successfully contested the Business Manager's position in the Building Trades Council.

There was also invigorated leadership at the International level. General President Lucassen had won the presidency in 1991 with the support of Local 27. Jim Smith was appointed the Ninth District International Vice President.

Things had changed substantially, according to Frank O'Reilly: "We looked at the past, looked

at the competition in the residential sector, and that competition was mainly Local 183 of the Labourers International Union of North America."

Before his appointment as International Vice President, Smith had been a member of a number of Union committees, mainly addressing matters of health and safety. After his appointment, Smith submitted his resignation for both the Local 27 Presidency and as Business Manager. The resignation was rejected by the Executive Board, who requested that Smith remain in both positions.

At the time, Smith held the view that he could not do justice to his Local 27 duties, but reflecting on the Executive's request a dozen years later, he understands why they wanted him to stay involved. Smith recognized that his own appointment to the International Executive was not something that anyone could foresee, and he appreciated that the Executive needed time to decide who should replace him, and to put a campaign in place to make that happen.

Ucal Powell agreed with Smith's original decision that retaining his Local offices was not a good idea and Powell openly stated his opinion at the time. Nevertheless, the majority view prevailed and Smith stayed. Powell was appointed Assistant

Business Manager but his appointment was not universally accepted and he experienced considerable animosity from some during the ensuing three years – a time Powell describes “as a living hell.”

In 1992, the leadership at the local, national and international levels embraced change and set about revamping the Union at all levels – a process that received a jump-start at a Special Constitutional Convention in 1993.

Breaking new ground – the Canada Council of Carpenters

With the theme, A Blueprint for Battle, the Brotherhood’s Special Constitutional Convention began in Las Vegas on August 30, 1993. The avowed purpose of the convention was “to consider and act upon a proposed review of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners Constitution and Laws, including constitutional provisions regarding financial governance and revenue.”

As part of its Blueprint, the Brotherhood also broadened its Constitution to welcome a wider variety of workers into the Union – and to create a new Canadian Council of Carpenters.



Representatives from Carpenters' Union Locals from across Canada

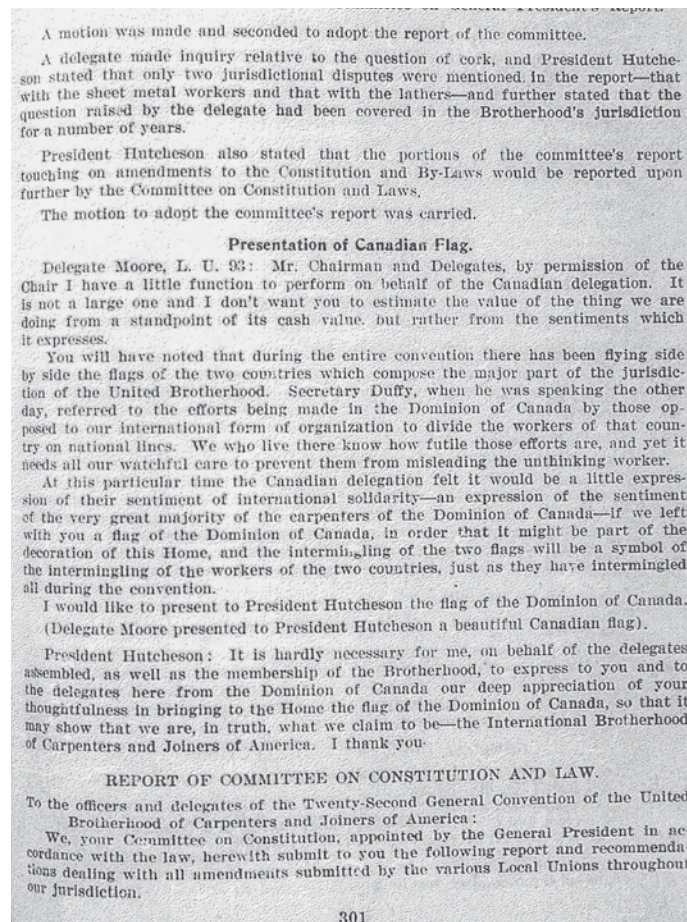
Today, Jim Smith is the Brotherhood’s Vice President for Canada. Back when he was Business Manager for Local 27, getting recognition for the Canada component of the Brotherhood was almost impossible. “I can remember when we had a Canada Conference and the General President would give a speech and refuse to answer questions afterwards; we just couldn’t be heard.”



Example of promotional materials demonstrating the involvement of the Canadian contingent within the U.B.C.

Delegates to 1993 convention, who are still Local 27 Members and Officers, took a keen interest in the formation of the Canada Council of Carpenters and added their voices to the debate. Jim Smith had been actively involved leading up to the convention and Local 27's John Cartwright spoke passionately about gaining greater recognition for Canada:

Report from U.B.C.'s 22nd General Convention in 1928 regarding the Canadian delegation's presentation of the Canadian flag to then-U.B.C. President Hutcheson



“From Canada for a number of years now we have been trying to get a message across to our brothers and sisters in the United States that in this Brotherhood we have a partnership, a partnership in two distinct countries. The labour movement in Canada for the last fifteen years has mandated that international unions that operate within Canada should establish within their constitution that the top officers of our country are elected by Canadians. We still do not have that within the Constitution of the Brotherhood, which has the de facto top officers in Canada, which are the Board members, at this point in time elected at large.”

Ucal Powell took a lead role in ensuring that constitutional amendments were structured in a way that would not intrude on a Local's ability to sign up Members. His concern was that in many instances, particularly in jurisdictional disputes, the Union's constitution was used to interpret whether one union or another was entitled to sign members in a particular workplace.

The Brotherhood continues to evolve

Although significant changes had already been made at both the 1991 General Convention, and the 1993 Special Convention, Jim Smith says that

it was at the 1995 General Convention where the 'real' changes to the Brotherhood occurred.

The convention's theme was Pathways to the 21st Century. At it, General President Lucassen retired, and Doug McCarron was elected to replace him. Jim Smith was solidly on McCarron's team and is convinced that the Union has changed for the better since McCarron's election.

Smith says that the 1995 convention looked carefully at all of the Union's programs and made hard decisions on both what was and what was not working. Following the convention, the Union became both more Member-friendly and contractor-friendly, head office staff was drastically reduced, and the Union introduced millions of dollars in organizational grants to assist with organizing. Local 27 was among those benefiting from the new infusion of funds.

McCarron met Union officials from across North America and, based on their input, conceived the idea for Regional Councils.

Smith sees the move to Regional Councils as a vital and important change. "It removed the barriers that had stymied contractors under the old local structure. The new approach also eliminated much of the petty politics that had existed between locals

and made it possible for the Union to allocate more resources to organizing, education and training."

The Regional Council concept brought new order to the Brotherhood's 2000 locals, along with a more businesslike approach, while nothing was lost in terms of democracy.

Tony Iannuzzi, President of the Central Ontario Regional Council, believes that the real change to the Carpenters' organization came after the election of General President Douglas McCarron and the restructuring of the Union into Regional Councils. He also believes that credit should be given to Jim Smith and Ucal Powell for promoting the idea of the restructuring and moving it forward in spite of considerable opposition from Local Unions.

The Winds of Change

The winds of change were bringing new life and vitality to the Brotherhood at every level – and Local 27 was no exception.

When election time rolled around in September of 1995, a new team was ready to seek office. They were: Ucal Powell, Frank O'Reilly, Walter Tracogna, Carlos Pimentel, Mike Yorke, Lister Tennant, Frank Munno, Stewart Long and John Cartwright.

The new team won handily and immediately embraced the changes occurring at both the International and national levels.

One of their first projects was to work toward the establishment of a Regional Council – a goal which was achieved on December 1, 1997, when the Central Ontario Regional Council



The U.B.C. Charter for the Central Ontario Regional Council of Carpenters and Allied Workers, granted on December 1st, 1997

of Carpenters, Drywall and Allied Workers received its Charter from General President Doug McCarron.

The Council's mandate echoed the policies set down at the 1993 and 1995 International Conventions, and the Canada Council Convention of 1995. Among its principal tenets: To organize unrepresented workers and to protect and enhance the work jurisdiction, the employment opportunities, wages and working conditions for all members of the Brotherhood.

The Council had its first skirmish and victory very soon after its formation. Ucal Powell reported to the membership that, with the support of the Building Trades Council, and a number of labour-friendly municipal councillors, the Regional Council had been successful in stopping City of Toronto bureaucrats from eliminating the fair-wage policy from the city's purchasing policies.

Through the first years of its existence, the Council implemented its plan to restructure the Union and improve service to the membership by co-ordinating organizing efforts in all sections and a jurisdiction that included approximately 10,000 members in an area extending from Belleville in the east, Lake Ontario to the south, Cambridge to the west and Huntsville in the North.

In reviewing the progress of the Council from its formation in 1997 to 2000, Ucal Powell stressed that “Locals are working together in a spirit of harmony and co-operation. All aspects of the Carpentry trade, concrete forming workers, trim carpenters, drywallers, insulators, caulkers, shinglers, kitchen cabinet installers, framers and resilient floor layers are supporting one another in organizing, and on picket lines when necessary.”

The introduction of regional councils resulted in substantial organizing gains with 5,000 new Members added to the Union. Between 1997 and 2001, membership increased in every area of the country, except British Columbia, where the concept of the regional council was not adopted. The same pattern of growth was evident in the five largest Canadian Locals including Local 27.

The changes continue

Brotherhood President Doug McCarron continues to be an advocate for constructive change including making a concerted effort to foster a positive relationship with the industry. As the guest speaker at the 2002 Canadian Construction Association Conference in Ottawa, McCarron said the Brotherhood had been mistaken during the

1970s recession when it assumed the recession was a contractors’ problem. He stressed that the Union would not make the same mistake when the current construction boom ended and promised that the Brotherhood would educate its membership on their need to do the best job possible for the customers.

Dennis Ryan, Director of Industry Human Resources for the Canadian Construction Association, said that McCarron’s speech was an important step forward in forging positive union/industry relations: “The main reason we wanted him was to speak on the direction the Carpenters Union was going in because they seemed to have put renewed emphasis on training issues and we wanted to learn more about that. I think also the fact that in other speeches McCarron has made, there was recognition that there was probably a greater opportunity within the Carpenters Union for the parties to work together to solve the problems the industry is facing.

Ucal Powell is a firm supporter of the direction the Union has taken under McCarron. He says it was McCarron’s ‘Vision for the Future’ that inspired him to recommend the construction of a new office and training complex to the Local 27 and Local 675 executives.

Powell believes that, long after the present generation of leadership within the Council is gone, the new building will serve as a monument to the Carpenters' Union, not only in the city of Toronto, but throughout Canada.

Looking toward that future, both Smith and Powell agree that the Building Trades' Unions must recognize that it is no longer possible to act as they have in the past. Jurisdictional squabbles between the trades must cease if the unions expect to survive the challenges presented by the globalization of the corporate sector.

While Smith and Powell both regard the merger with the drywallers, and the inclusion of the shinglers, the trim carpenters, the aluminum siding sector and the roofers as important achievements in consolidating the strength of the Brotherhood, they also believe that much more must be accomplished.

Between 1983 and 1996, Union membership fell from 850,000 to 484,423, and the overall share of the construction industry fell from 32 per cent to 18 per cent. Wages fell an average of 30 per cent. But the changes the Union has implemented have reversed these downward trends. In fact, membership is on the upswing, rising to approximately 520,000 in 2005.

In early 2006, General President McCarron said the membership gains were even more impressive because the growth occurred at a time when the membership in the industrial sector of the Union had been decimated by plant closures as manufacturers chose to set up shop in third-world countries.

Nevertheless, McCarron remains convinced that the regional council concept has been instrumental in achieving membership growth in the construction sector while at the same time creating more accountability by Union officers.

"Each Member has a much greater role in the Union," says McCarron. "There is a much greater focus on education and organizing. The Canadian membership has played an instrumental role in that growth. Canadian Vice President Jim Smith has unified the Canadian sector of the Union. Jim did a fantastic job and the Canadians are a solid group which works closely with the United States.

From 1970 to 1996 there were alternating periods of boom and bust yet membership was in constant decline. The Brotherhood's resolve to devote more attention to apprenticeship training was one important factor in reversing the downward spiral, as was the decision to devote half of its revenue to organizing.

Also significant was the hiring of 600 full-time organizers, and the millions of dollars in grants issued to Locals solely for organizing purposes. It is estimated that these initiatives led to 67,700 new Members. In more recent years, additional millions invested in organizing have begun to pay membership dividends.

Looking back on these impressive achievements, Jim Smith says that the best thing the Union ever did was to implement regional councils. He places great value on the work of these councils, three in Ontario and one in each of the other provinces.

Hugh Laird, Executive Director of the Interior Systems Contractors' Association says that since the institution of the regional councils, relations between the Union and the contractors have been excellent.

The commercial drywall sector in Toronto is 80 per cent unionized, and the residential sector is 95 per cent unionized. This is an achievement unmatched by any other construction Local in North America. Laird says that the construction experts he speaks to in the United States are astounded when he tells them of the level of unionization in the residential and commercial drywall industry in Toronto.

Certainly, the Union's demonstrated dedication to listening to its membership and critically addressing

deficiencies has led to the creation of a new and energetic organization fully equipped to deal with whatever problems the future might bring.

Without doubt, the past and present leadership and staff of the Central Ontario Regional Council and its constituent Locals deserve much of the credit for the positive change.

So, too, however, do the 14,000-plus Members of the Council. With change comes risk, and courage is required to deal with risk. The membership in this Council has that courage in abundance.



Former President of Local 27 Frank O'Reilly receives plaque honouring his years of dedication and service to the Union at the 125th anniversary dinner of Local 27 - from left: EST Ucal Powell, U.B.C. General President Douglas McCarron, then-President of Local 27 Frank O'Reilly and U.B.C. Vice President Jim Smith



*The cutting of the cake at the 125th anniversary dinner of Local 27 on May 24, 2007
from left: Chris Crompton, Frank Munno, Frank O'Reilly, Ucal Powell,
Julie Palombo, Mike Yorke, Carlos Pimentel and John Cartwright*

There have been many changes over the last 125 years – some monumental, some minor. And today's workforce and workplaces are much different than they were back when the Brotherhood began. But one underlying principle remains the same as it was when thirty-six carpenters met in Chicago in 1881: Organizing all the men and women who make their living at the carpentry trade to help ensure they have the best lives possible on and off the job.

As an organization, we can truly look back with pride ... as we look forward with vision.