Documenting Transgression and Social Justice:

The SeaTac Seattle Minimum Wage History Project

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Special Collections
Labor Archives of Washington
About the Labor Archives of Washington

- Founding
- Mission
- Collections
- Location
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The Labor Archives of Washington (LAW) was founded to preserve the records of working people and their unions and to serve as a center for historical research, ensuring that new generations have access to the rich labor history of the region. For more information about LAW visit the website.

The Labor Archives contains more than 200 separate collections of labor related materials from individuals and organizations documenting the local, national and international dimensions of the labor movement in the Pacific Northwest.

- **Union Collections** - Many unions have made the Labor Archives the official repository for their historical records — minutes, office correspondence, membership files, publications and contracts.
- **Personal Papers** - Labor leaders, attorneys, arbitrators, and rank-and-file workers, and labor rights supporters have donated their personal papers.
- **Organization Records** - Records from organizations that supported organized labor, worker's rights, and civil rights and also records from labor critics and opponents. Also included are records of employers, some of which were the collective bargaining partners—and sometimes opponents—of unions.
- **Primary Reference Tools** - Selected resources and research tips for labor history researchers and those interested in ethnic, social, local, political, and women's history.

Welcome to the portal for digital resources associated with the Labor Archives of Washington State. The archival collections of the Labor Archives are physically housed in the Special Collections Division of the University of Washington Libraries. The archive is a collaborative project between the Division and the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies. A selection of materials from these collections has been digitized and added to the University of Washington's Digital Collections, to which this portal provides access. This project has made hundreds of primary textual and visual resources relating to Pacific Northwest labor history more accessible to the public. Those wishing to view materials that have not yet been digitized are encouraged to contact the Special Collections Division for further information and assistance.

Researchers interested in learning more about Pacific Northwest labor history are invited to explore this website and the related online resources to which links are provided. Use the topics below to begin to explore our Digital Collections, and discover more about the history of workers and labor unions. Related digital collections from UW Special Collections of organizations and individuals that opposed unions are included in the portal for the convenience of researchers.

**The I.W.W. in the Pacific Northwest**

The Industrial Workers of the World is an international union that was created in 1905, and rapidly found success recruiting members in the Pacific Northwest. In the 1910s and 1920s, I.W.W. members (often called “Wobblies”) were identified with the movement of workers into the industrial centers of the Northwest to gain higher wages and better working conditions.

• **www.laborarchives.org**
SeaTac/Seattle Campaigns

- The Key Players
  - Labor unions, faith groups, nonprofits
  - Immigrant, low wage, temporary
  - The Port of Seattle, airport vendors and businesses, SeaTac businesses, citizens of SeaTac
SeaTac/Seattle Campaigns

• The Process
  • Ballot Initiative, 2013- *
  • Unions, Community Groups
  • Airport Employers, SeaTac Employers
  • City councilmembers
SeaTac/Seattle Campaigns

• The Outcomes
  • Immediate higher minimum wage*
  • Provisions for sick leave
  • Provisions for distribution of hours
  • Seen as a “win” at the time
SeaTac/Seattle Campaigns

- The Key Players
  - Candidate/Mayor Murray
  - Candidate/Councilmember Sawant
  - Labor, business, nonprofits

*Working Washington Photograph Collection, University of Washington Libraries Special Collections, Labor Archives of Washington*
SeaTac/Seattle Campaigns

- The Process
  - Committee, then legislation
  - Income Inequality Advisory Committee (IIAC)
  - Internal with external pressure
SeaTac/Seattle Campaigns

- The Outcomes
  - Distinction for big and small business
  - Phase-in with different timetables depending on size
  - Tip counting
  - Seattle Office of Labor Standards
  - Somewhat contentious for activists/labor
  - Socialist city councilperson Sawant
SeaTac/Seattle Minimum Wage History Project

- Project Scope and Need
  - Archival documentation project and faculty research project
  - Team of graduate and undergraduate students
  - 2015-Ongoing
SeaTac/Seattle
Minimum Wage History Project

• Preservation and Best Practices
  – “Baked in” best practices
  – Digital, print, and oral history interviews
  – Metadata, recording quality, file formats, rights/permissions, administration
SeaTac/Seattle Minimum Wage History Project

• Preservation and Best Practices
SeaTac/Seattle Minimum Wage History Project

I think the greatest success...was the fact that so many organizations with diverse interests could come together and work together for a common cause.

Tracey Thompson - Teamsters Local 117

Key Outcomes
SeaTac/Seattle
Minimum Wage History Project

• Key Findings
  – Coalition building
  – Intelligent organizing
  – Issue based instead of direct organizational gain
SeaTac/Seattle
Minimum Wage History Project

- Key Findings
  - “Inside” and “outside” game
  - Carrot and stick
  - Legislative/committee vs. initiative processes
SeaTac/Seattle
Minimum Wage History Project

• Key Findings
  – Who transgressed here is interesting
SeaTac/Seattle Minimum Wage History Project

- Project Website
  http://tinyurl.com/sea15minwage
- Launch Event March 3

Sea-Tac / Seattle Minimum Wage Project

The SeaTac/Seattle Minimum Wage Campaign History

In November, 2013, the small suburban city of SeaTac passed Proposition 1, authorizing a $15 minimum wage policy phased in over several years, after surviving a lawsuit filed by business groups, the policy went into effect in January, 2014. Six months later, the Seattle City Council expanded a similar $15 minimum wage policy. These policy innovations arose from struggles by a broad coalition of labor unions, community partners, and elected officials around a host of issues concerning low wage workers' rights in the years following the Occupy movement. Building on similar struggles for and by low wage workers around the nation, the victories in the Puget Sound catalyzed a proliferating array of campaigns to raise the minimum wage in many cities and states.

This digital web archive documents the stories of those involved, as supporters and opponents, in or affected by the struggles over a $15 minimum wage at SeaTac and in Seattle as well as the broader, ongoing efforts and effects at a national level.

The Sea-Tac Campaign

In 2003, Alaska Airlines fired nearly five hundred union baggage handlers and replaced them with workers employed by contractors. Whereas the unionized workforce had earned around thirteen dollars an hour, the new employees working for a host of private contractors lacked union representation and earned only about nine dollars an hour.

Seattle: $15 Now

The passage of Proposition 1 in SeaTac in late 2013 proved to be a catalyst of enormous dimensions. Just six months later, in June 2014, the Seattle City Council unanimously approved a $15 minimum wage policy recommended by Mayor Ed Murray's appointed Income Inequality Advisory Committee; the $15 minimum wage increase was scheduled to be phased in over seven years.

The Nation

As SeaTac and Seattle passed new minimum wage policies, workers organized for protest over wages and working conditions around the Puget Sound – at WallMart and fast food restaurants like McDonald's, and among hotel and farm workers in many cities. Around the nation, states of states and scores of cities and counties experienced similar campaigns to raise the minimum wage.
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I can help with:
- Research Consultations
- How to Use Collections
- Volunteer at LAW for Hands-On Experience in Labor History
- Assist with Citation Tracking
- Help with Format Preservation and Permission Best Practices for Research
Thank you.

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