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Labor Unions- Part 1: Introduction [1]

Labor Unions

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See also: Child Labor [2]; Flying Squadrons [3]; Gastonia Strike [4]; Harriet-Henderson Cotton Mills Strike [5]; Right-to-Work Law [6].

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Part 1: Introduction

The first labor organizations in North Carolina were formed by skilled workers in the larger towns. One of the earliest was the Raleigh Typographical Union [11], organized in 1854. By the mid-1880s printers inWilmington [12] and Charlotte [13] also were working under trade union agreements with their employers. A second and broader labor movement came to the state in 1884, when the first North Carolina assembly of the Knights of Labor [14] (originally organized by Philadelphia garment workers in 1869) met in Raleigh [15]. Three years later the Knights claimed assemblies in most counties and a membership that included whites, blacks, men, and women from diverse skilled occupations (no employees of furniture, textile, or tobacco factories participated). Although by 1887 the Knights of Labor began to decline in importance, it had acquainted blue-collar workers with the advantages that might be gained through organization.

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From:
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1 January 2006 | Glass, Brent D.; Williams, Wiley J.

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