

# Women in Labor Unions

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With the dawn of the Industrial Age, women began to fight for their right to control their part in American society. As the Labor Movement in the US picked up speed, women were at the forefront of the fight for equal pay and hours. Women of all backgrounds contributed towards the fight for gender equality.



In the 1830s, before the mass movements for worker's rights in the United States, the women of Lowell Mill organized, went on strike, and mobilized in politics before women had the right to vote—and created the first union of working women in American history. (Pictured Top Right)

At the start of the 20th century, Chinese women were one of the largest non-unionized workforces in the US. Many worked on the west coast in Garment Industry sweatshops. During the 1930's, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union was formed. (Pictured Bottom Left)



# Lowell Mill Women

- Lowell Mill Women Created the First Union of Working Women, AFL-CIO America's Union
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- Women were mistreated in the workplace and experienced severe gender inequality in the forms of reduced pay and extended hours



# Collar Laundry Union

- The primary all-female labor union in the United States. It was begun in Troy, New York by Kate Mullany in 1864.
- laundresses worked 12 to 14 hours per day for extremely low compensation in exceptionally hot structures which prompted the beginning of the expression "sweatshop". Working conditions were frequently dangerous, as laundresses utilized bubbling water, solid synthetic compounds, and hot irons. In the event that harm happened to a piece of clothing during the washing procedure, the expense of fix or substitution would be taken from the specialist's compensation.
- On February 23, 1864, 300 individuals from the association took to the streets. Following six days, the clothing proprietors yielded to their requests and raised wages 25 percent.



# Chinese Garment Workers

- In the late 1930s, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union staged an intervention to facilitate the formation of unions for Chinese women in Los Angeles and later San Francisco
- The result was overwhelming support from the workers themselves and local newspapers who gave the issue a public platform
- In 1938, a 100-day strike from Chinese garment workers ended in the dropping of a \$500,000 case against the union as well as a 5% raise for the workers involved



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