

International Union of Operating Engineers

Local 965

AFL-CIO

75th Anniversary
1931 - 2006



by

Janice A. Petterchak

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International Union of Operating Engineers

Local 965

3520 East Cook Street

Springfield, Illinois 62703

Dedication to Freedom, Decency and Justice

This Book is dedicated to the hard-working men and women of Local 965 who have strived to better their working conditions and their ability to support their families through building this Local Union.

May we always remember what Robert F. Kennedy spoke of: "Every time we turn our heads the other way when we see the law flouted — when we tolerate what we know to be wrong — when we close our eyes and ears to the corrupt because we are too busy, or too frightened — when we fail to speak up and speak out — we strike a blow against freedom and decency and justice."

Anniversary Book Committee

Michael D. Zahn

Myrna G. Engelbrecht

SANGAMON COUNTY, ILLINOIS

OFFICE OF

COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF HIGHWAYS

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SUPERINTENDENT*

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Truman L. Flatt and Sons Co. Inc. would like to congratulate I.U.O.E. Local 965 on their 75th anniversary. We were one of the first companies in the area to sign a contract with the Local. Our long tradition of using union labor has helped us get from our beginnings in 1933 to where we are today. With the stringent demands of today's construction standards, it is very important to know that we can get experienced, hard working operators to run the machines we use everyday. Now in our third generation of family ownership, we would like to continue our relationship with the I.U.O.E for years to come.



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**CONGRATULATIONS - BROTHER MICHAEL ZAHN
AND THE MEMBERS OF IUOE LOCAL 965
ON YOUR 75TH ANNIVERSARY**

**International Union of Operating Engineers
Local 143 – 143b
The Chicago Public School Engineers**



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John K. Gibson

Vice President

Robert J. Hellberg

Recording Secretary

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Ralph Richmond



*Illinois State Capitol Building Remodel — circa 1970-71
R.D. Lawrence Construction Company — Robert Lee, operator and John Bartelow, oiler*



Biography

George Edward Good

George Edward Good was born on May 17, 1883, in Lima, Allen County, Ohio, where he lived with his parents and attended school until he was twelve years old. His father, a carpenter and cabinetmaker by trade, moved to Fort Wayne, Indiana, where young George completed his education.



In the spring of 1900 when George was hardly seventeen years of age he obtained a job with the Pennsylvania Railroad as a night watchman on a steam shovel. In the same year he was promoted to a fireman and later a craneman, a position he held until the Marion Steam Shovel Company recommended him to an eastern contractor. He worked for several construction contractors in eastern Ohio, Pennsylvania and Michigan, then in 1904 came to the state of Illinois.

In 1904 Mr. Good's employer promoted him to an operator and in that same year he made application for membership in the Steam Shovel and Dredgemen's Union and was accepted to membership by that organization in the spring of 1905.

Mr. Good's employer sent him on a job at Dennison, Oklahoma, in 1905; that section of the country was then known as "Indian Territory." In August, 1906, the Union sent him to Elgin, Illinois, to work for the Chicago Gravel Company. He worked for that company for twelve years, operating shovels, draglines and locomotive cranes.

In 1918 he went to work for the Northwestern Railroad Company in the capacity of locomotive crane operator. For the next several years he worked over the entire Northwestern Railroad system. He returned to Elgin in 1925, where he was employed by several contractors until 1929 when he came to Springfield, Illinois, at which time the Pillsbury Mills were being constructed. He obtained employment thereon through the efforts of Brother William J. Stuhr, who was assisting Local Union No. 7 to organize the job.

Upon going to work in Springfield, Mr. Good's union membership was transferred from Local Union No. 150 of Chicago to Local No. 7 of this city, where he remained a member until Local Union No. 965 was formed in April, 1931, becoming a Charter member.

On April 27, 1931, Mr. Good was elected to the position of President and Business Representative of Local Union No. 965. He held the position of Business Representative since his first election to that office until July 11, 1952.

On January 1, 1953, Brother Good was awarded a lifetime membership in Local 965. He resided with his wife, Florence, and son, Ford, at 2516 South Sixth Street, Springfield. George Good died on December 20, 1955.



Biography

William K. Honn

William K. Honn was born on a farm December 11, 1883, in Coles County, Illinois. He spent his early life helping his father run the farm and assisting with a threshing outfit which the elder Mr. Honn owned and operated during the harvest season.



Bill's first experience as an operating engineer occurred when he was about ten years old. One Saturday afternoon, while the rest of the family was gone to town to shop, he steamed his father's old thrasher engine up and started out for a pleasure ride. During the course of his tour around the place, he made several new openings in the barnyard fence and demolished two cattle gates and several fruit trees. The boiler ran out of water just about the time the elder Mr. Honn arrived home and saved young Bill from blowing hi self and the engine up. From that date on, Bill was very much interested in engines and power equipment.

Mr. Honn came to Springfield, Illinois, in 1912 and obtained employment with the General James Culver Construction Company, as a hoisting engineer, during the reconstruction of the Leland Hotel after it was destroyed by fire. He became a member of Local Union No. 7 of the International Union of Steam and Operating Engineers on October 12, 1912.

Mr. Honn became a member of the Engineers Union back in the days when picture shows charged 5 cents admission and street car fare was only 5 cents. He said if you didn't have a horse you were just a-foot, and if you said you had a union card people thought you were funny. In those days the Business Representative was known as the "Walking Delegate."

A charter member of Local 965, Mr. Honn was elected the organization's first Treasurer, an office he would hold for nearly twenty-five years. He helped to build many large buildings in Springfield, including the Myers and Broadwell buildings, Illinois Dairy, McCoy Laundry, the Y.W.C.A., the new City Power Plant and Lake Springfield, the remodeling of Lincoln's Tomb, the first group of buildings at St. John's Sanatorium near Riverton, Blessed Sacrament Church and many others.

Honn, who resided with his wife, Muriel, at 1725 Lowell Avenue, died on August 1, 1955, while working on repairs to the Lincoln Tomb.



Biography

Ross Loughmiller

Ross Loughmiller was born in the small town of Pekin, Indiana on September 23, 1902. He migrated to Springfield, Illinois in 1924 and worked as a hoisting engineer on construction of the Abraham Lincoln Hotel. He became a member of IUOE Local 7 in Springfield, Local 41 in Alton, Local 649 in Peoria, and Local 429 in Louisville, Kentucky, transferring membership as required by his employment. He worked as a crane operator on large buildings that included Ursuline Academy in Alton; Standard



Office Building in Peoria; and St. John's Hospital, the federal post office, and the Illinois Building in Springfield.

While working on construction of Lake Springfield in the late 1920s, Mr. Loughmiller and fellow hoisting engineer George Good began to plan for a new hoisting and portable Local for the Springfield area. When the charter was granted in 1931, Loughmiller was elected as a delegate to the Springfield Building Trades Council and later became an officer of the Council. In 1933 the Local 965 members elected him Financial Secretary and Assistant Business Representative.

During the 1930s Mr. Loughmiller worked on construction of the State Armory and the Allis Chalmers plant and ran the overhead crane that set in the first generator at the Lakeside power house. In 1937 he and Good helped draw up an agreement with fourteen highway contractors that provided a stabilized wage rate and set working conditions for union members. The agreement, covering twenty-four counties in Illinois, was later recommended as a model for IUOE Locals throughout the nation.

During World War II, Mr. Loughmiller handled employment for operating engineers on various central Illinois defense projects, including the Lincoln Ordnance Plant in Springfield, Sangamon Ordnance Plant in Illiopolis, and the Victory Ordnance Plant in Decatur.

In 1952 he succeeded Good as Business Representative, a position he held until 1962. Then, following his lengthy career with Local 965, Mr. Loughmiller became a conciliator for the Illinois Department of Labor, retiring from that position in 1973.

In 1969 the officers and members of Local 965 honored his diligent work "to advance the interest" of the Local during its formative years by awarding him the title of "Number One" member. He was also granted a lifetime membership in the organization.

Loughmiller and his wife, Katherine, resided with their two children, Edward and Linda, at 1924 South First, Springfield. Ross Loughmiller died on February 23, 1988.



International Union of Operating Engineers Local 965

Charter Members

April 22, 1931

G. E. Good
J. D. McCulley
William K. Honn
Frank Henry
Willis Humphrey
Jesse Henson
Elmer McMillan
J. D. Munyon
J. Harry Johnson
Harvey Stone
George Sallade
J. F. Spears
F. M. Tomlinson
Evermont Eddy
S. P. Brown
Charley Donaldson
A. O. DeLonais
John M. Auld
E. J. Ishmael
Dan Walls
Frank Kennedy
Ross Loughmiller
Noble Mesnard

Listed in the order that the names appear on Local 965's first ledger.



International Union of Operating Engineers
Local 965

Business Agents/Managers

1933-1952

George E. Good

1952-1962

Ross Loughmiller

1962-1965

Elmer K. Renshaw

1965-1968

James Mayes

1968-1974

Fred E. Altman

1974

Hugo C. Zahn

1974-1983

Lyman Ginder

1983-1994

Hugo C. Zahn

1995-2003

John B. Hudson

2003-present

Michael D. Zahn



International Union of Operating Engineers

Local 965

Officers

1931

G. E. Good	President and Business Representative
John M. Auld	Vice President
J. D. McCulley	Fin. Rec.-Cor. Secretary
William K. Honn	Treasurer
Evermont Eddy	Trustee
Charley Donaldson	Trustee
George Sallade	Trustee

2006

Michael D. Zahn	Business Manager
Walter Fox	President
Larry W. "Bullet" Leach	Vice President
Roger E. Smith	Financial Secretary
John Lornitis	Treasurer
Myrna G. Engelbrecht	Rec.-Cor. Secretary
Larry Renoud	Conductor
Dennis R. Minick	Guard
Bill Bozarth	Trustee
Michael R. Reynolds	Trustee
Olin McGuire	Trustee
Thomas A. Grover	Auditor
Mike Garvin Jr.	Auditor
Craig D. Richardson	Auditor



International Union of Operating Engineers

Local 965

Presidents

1931-1936 George E. Good	1968 Robert Mathon
1936-1937 Ross Loughmiller	1968-1971 Lyman Ginder
1937—1942 Frank C. Leopard	1971-1974 Hugo C. Zahn
1942-1943 George E. Good	1974-1977 Thomas A. Payne
1943-1948 Nicholas Carriger	1977-1980 Kenneth Tipsword
1948-1952 Frank C. Leopard	1980-1983 Thomas A. Payne
1952-1954 Ross Loughmiller	1983-1992 Robert Mathon
1954-1957 Glenn E. Albers	1992-1995 Kenneth Shehorn
1957-1961 Elmer K. Renshaw	1995-1997 Charles Bridgewater
1961-1962 Fred E. Altman	1998-2004 Joseph Klein
1962-1965 Glenn E. Albers	2004-present Walter Fox
1965-1968 Fred E. Altman	



1931 Construction Agreement

1931 AGREEMENT

**International Union of Steam and Operating Engineers
Local No. Union 965**

Section 1. There shall be no cessation of work for any cause, except where non-union men are employed, when agreements are signed. Should any dispute or misunderstanding arise, the same shall be referred to a Joint Arbitration Committee consisting of three (3) members from the Building Construction Employers' Association of Springfield and three (3) members from Local No. 965 of the International Union of Steam and Operating Engineers. In case they cannot agree, this Joint Arbitration Committee shall select an umpire, whose decision shall be final and binding on all parties.

Section 2. In case of a jurisdictional dispute, it is mutually understood and agreed that, that part of the work in dispute shall be continued, pending the decision of the Joint Arbitration Committee.

ARTICLE I
Jurisdictional Claims

The operating of all hoisting and portable engines used in the construction work, alteration or repair of buildings and excavating work, also for the loading and unloading of building material on the job or in the yards where operated by steam, electricity, gas, gasoline, hydraulic or compressed air, pumps, syphons, pulsometers, concrete mixers and all concrete mixers with skip, derrick car, locomotive cranes, elevators, automatic hoists, and all other machines, irrespective of its motive power where used for hoisting building material.

The operation of steam rollers, steam shovels, dinkey locomotives, conveyors, cableways, clam shells, pile drivers, and boilers where used for heating purposes on building construction work, all steam and compressed air tripped drills, tractors and power finishing machines.

ARTICLE II
Hours of Work

Eight hours shall constitute a working day between the hours of eight (8:00) o'clock a.m. and five (5:00) o'clock p.m., except on Saturday, when the regular working hours shall be from eight (8:00) o'clock a.m., until twelve (12:00) o'clock noon. Double time shall be paid for all overtime.

ARTICLE III

On steam shovels, boom derricks, pile drivers, clam shells, concrete buckers, orange peels, cable ways and locomotive cranes, and all engines where more than one drum is in operation, the wage scale shall be paid \$1.25 per hour.

All single drum engines, concrete mixers, two bags or more, air compressors, pumps, syphons, dinky locomotives, automatic hoists, in fact, all other machines and elevators where used for hoisting material on all construction work, also steam rollers, the wage scale shall be \$1.12 ½ per hour. Operators on conveyors shall receive \$1.12 ½ per hour.

The firing of all boilers for heating purposes on all buildings under construction, the wage scale shall be \$1.12 ½ per hour. Where necessary to be operated for 24 hours, the shifts shall be divided into three 8 hour shifts.

The operator of all gasoline engines or electric driven machines regardless of horsepower, with or without skip attached, the wage scale shall be \$1.12 ½ per hour.

Gasoline carpenter saw will not be claimed in this agreement.

ARTICLE IV

When engineers are required to furnish steam for the operation of any other machines, they shall receive time and one-half for same; this rule will not apply for steam furnished for sand heating and operating syphon.

ARTICLE V

Double time shall be paid from 12:00 o'clock non Saturday until 8:00 a.m. Monday. Double time shall also be paid for legal holidays as follows:

New Year's Day, Decoration Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas. There shall be no work on Labor Day except in case of extreme necessity.

ARTICLE VI
Master Mechanics and Apprentices

The master mechanics and engineers, cranemen and oilers, on any job, where our members are employed, must be members of this Local Union in good standing.

Shifts

Where three shifts are employed, seven and one-half (7 ½) hours shall constitute a day's work for each shift for which a regular day of eight (8) hours shall be paid. Where two shifts are employed, eight hours shall constitute a day's work for each shift; night shift shall not start later than 6:00 p.m.

If, after forty-eight (48) hours' notice, the party of the second part fails to or is unable to furnish all members, the party of the first part shall be entitled to procure and employ the men required and employ them until Local No. 965 can furnish competent men to take their places.

In case of any person other than the regular engineer operating engine, the regular engineer shall receive time for same unless the regular engineer has failed to report for the worker after being duly notified.

Engineers shall have all setting up and taking down of engines and boilers. Master mechanics will be allowed to operate engine in the absence of one of his own men.

No repairing of machine on the job shall be done by any person other than a member of Local No. 965. Business representatives shall have access to jobs at all times.

ARTICLE VII

Engineers will receive orders only from Superintendent and Contractor on the job.

Engineers shall be allowed one (1) hour for raising steam on boilers, eight (8) hours shall constitute a day's work. All other time shall be heretofore specified.

Engineers shall not be called upon to do any other work than such as is recognized as properly belonging to an engineer.

An engineer shall be required on all automatic hoists, hoisting over a height of forty-five (45) feet. Where two (2) or more automatic hoists are used on the same work under forty-five (45) feet an engineer shall have care of same.

ARTICLE VIII

Section A. Engineers must have suitable shelter over and around them to protect their lives and health. Engine rooms shall be heated where gas, electric or skeleton engines are being operated during cold weather. The above must be complied with immediately after engine is set ready for operation.

All engineers when ordered to report for work must in the event of their not being put to work on reporting on the job ready for same, receive an amount equal to two (2) hours pay. And if starting to work the engineer must receive one-half (1/2) day's pay.

Engineers shall be allowed time for necessary repair work and washing of boilers, and must be allowed to use his own judgment as to when the boiler and engine must be washed and repaired. Provided, however, engineers notify the employer at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of starting the operating.


No engineer shall start engine with man or men on any material hoist unless authorized by Superintendent or contractor, or will be subject to a fine of \$25.00 per violation of this rule.

Apprentice Engineer

Section B. The duty of apprentice engineer shall be firing, oiling and operating one bag mixers with skip attached and power finishing machine. The wage scale for apprentice engineer shall be 75¢ per hour.

Approved September 4, 1931

John Possehl, General President IU & OE
G.E. Good, President and Business Agent
J.D. McCulley, Secretary



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Business Manager

CLARENCE DOHRMAN
President

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Treasurer

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Financial Secretary

DICKIE PEOPLES
Recording Secretary

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OPERATING ENGINEERS LOCAL 520

WISHES TO CONGRATULATE

LOCAL 965

ON ITS 75 YEARS

AS A CHARTERED LOCAL

OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION

OF OPERATING ENGINEERS!!!

Lessons From The Past

by Business Manager Mike Zahn, IUOE Local 965

Over the course of the last several weeks as we have prepared this publication, I have learned much about the history of this Local. I have always been a student of history and a believer that our society underestimates the value of history.

History not only holds the secrets of the past but the key to the future. When you examine history you will find that mankind continues to make the same mistakes.

As you read of our history, you will find that our forefathers faced many of the same struggles that we face today. This Local's story is really quite amazing when you stop and consider the odds against the 23 charter members who first formed this Local. This Local was chartered during depths of the Great Depression, when jobs were scarce and money even scarcer. On several occasions the fledgling organization almost folded, but the members of this Local closed the ranks, pulled together and persevered. This not only was the case in the beginning but on several occasions throughout our history.

Today working families are being challenged as never before. Corporate America profits are at record levels while working families find their paychecks not lasting to the end of the week. Our elected officials in both parties have forgotten why the citizens who elected them put them in office. Prices at the grocery store and the gas pumps are skyrocketing while wages are stagnant. The jobs that supported the middle class are being shipped overseas leaving only service industry jobs for Americans to support their families. 48 million Americans have no health insurance at a time when health care costs are soaring. Our State officials are diverting road funds to pay for General Fund expenses, causing massive unemployment in our construction branches, because all forms of government in the United States are broke.

While these statistics are daunting, I believe the answers are simple when you examine our history. This Local has faced many challenges throughout our 75 year history, and each time the Local solved them by getting back to the basic union philosophy, and in my opinion this is what we need to do today.

Union members must once again realize that an injustice to one is an injustice to all and that united we stand and divided we fall. Today, many Union members are more interested in looking out for their self interest and often times turn their heads to an injustice to a fellow worker. Our forefathers knew that each individual's best interests

are served when we stick together for mutual aid and benefit, and collectively stand against injustice to anyone.

This Local must also strive to become more politically active and must no longer look for the initial behind their name when determining for whom to cast our vote. The Labor movement has for a long time aligned ourselves with the Democratic party. I ask you what has this loyalty brought working families. Now I am not promoting the Republican party because I believe they are no more concerned about working families' struggles than the Democrats. I believe both parties are more concerned with promoting their party than representing working families. What I do believe is that working families need to look at the candidate's position before casting their vote, and cast their vote for the candidate which supports our ability to support our families. Then hold the elected official responsible for their actions.

This Local also needs to continue to bring the union way to the unorganized through our Organizing Program. Our forefathers knew the value of Organizing although they had to be jump started in the beginning. Organizing is what catapulted this Local from 23 members to 1600 today. In 1998 when Local 965 started its Organizing Program, we had 1125 members and were withering on the vine with our market share in the upper 60 percentile. Just a few short years later, our market share is in the 90 percentile range. Even though we have made major gains in recovering our market share, we must continue to emphasis organizing because history has shown us if we do not it is easy to slide backwards.

The last couple of years this Local has placed a renewed emphasis on our Training Program. We must continue to strive to provide training that assures our members are the best skilled and productive work force in the nation. We must give our employers 8 hours work for 8 hours pay, and we must police our own members that either lack the skill or motivation to attain this goal. My father told me the first day I went to work out of this Local that a "good union man is a company man until there is a union problem." What he meant by that was that when we are on the jobsite we must do our job to assure our employer makes a profit in order that the contractor can afford to pay us a living wage.

This is my philosophy on how we assure 75 more years of existence for this Local. It is simple and basic, but history has proven it works. I would like to thank Myrna Engelbrecht, Janice Petterchak, Cindy Marcy of TomCin Graphics Company and Lynn Serena of Frye-Williamson Press for all their efforts which made this possible. I hope you enjoy the history of this Local, and encourage you to share it with your children, friends and family members.

Introduction

Of the many union Locals in the United States, very few of their histories have been preserved in any format. Labor history is an important segment of our national heritage, and the actions of organized labor today will influence the lives and careers of future generations. On these pages you will read about the foresight and dedication of the first members of IUOE Local 965, perseverance that continued over the decades, through good times and bad, to become the strong organization that in 2006 celebrates its 75th year.

Business Manager Mike Zahn and Organizer Myrna Engelbrecht provided direction and assistance for my research on this story about the operating engineers of central Illinois. The primary sources were Local 965's Minutes, correspondence files, *The Operator* quarterly newsletter, and publications by and about the International Union of Operating Engineers.

Longtime Local 965 members John B. Hudson, Charles Murphy, Raymond Smith, Charles Whited, and Hugo C. Zahn shared personal experiences, particularly for the 1970s and 1980s. In addition, Murphy loaned me his daily work journals, and Zahn provided information pertaining to contract negotiations and membership benefits.

Most of the sources listed at the end of the story are in files at the Local 965 Union Hall. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield holds microfilm of the *Illinois Tradesman* newspaper, and several of the cited books are available there, as well.

May other Locals follow the 965 example, sharing the stories of their members through similar commemorative publications.

Janice A. Petterchak

Formative Years

1931-1941

The labor movement in America is a movement of wage earners, for wage earners, conducted by wage earners. It is a movement primarily for the protection and advancement of the rights and interests of the wage earners through trade union organization.

President Samuel Gompers, American Federation of Labor

In early April, 1931, twenty-three central Illinois hoisting engineers, members of Local 7 of the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE), petitioned the International Union for a separate charter covering the hoisting and portable work on building and construction projects. On April 22, the hoisting engineers received the charter for IUOE Local 965, while the stationary engineers, working primarily in industrial and building operations and maintenance, remained in Local 7.

Formed during the depths of the Great Depression, Local 965 over seventy-five years has grown into a strong 1,600-member organization, headquartered in Springfield and covering the counties of Adams, Brown, Cass, Christian, Dewitt, Logan, Macon, Menard, Morgan, Piatt, Pike, Sangamon, Schuyler, Scott, and Shelby.

Members within the fifteen-county jurisdiction are the operators and mechanics of cranes, bulldozers, power shovels, and other heavy earth-moving equipment. They work on public and private projects that include excavation, demolition, and repair of highways, streets, buildings, bridges, subways, sewers, levees; water, gas, and oil pipelines; railroads, airports, dams, and reservoirs; land development, underground cables, and drilling operations; as well as in sand and gravel

pits, rock quarries and material yards. Other members include workers at equipment rental shops and employees in the public sector.

The International Union of Operating Engineers had been formed by eleven Locals of steam boiler and engine workers in Chicago in 1896, chartered by the American Federation of Labor. Initially named the National Union of Steam Engineers of America, by early in the twentieth century, with members including Canadians and construction workers, along with building-maintenance and heating engineers, the organization was known as the International Union of Steam and Operating Engineers. Then in 1927, as steam equipment was being replaced with internal combustion engines, electric motors, hydraulic machinery, and refrigerating systems, the word “steam” was removed and the organization became the International Union of Operating Engineers. The steam gauge remains in the IUOE logo as a tribute to the union’s founders.¹

In Springfield, the twenty-three Local 965 members met a few days after obtaining their charter to elect temporary officers. For President they chose thirty-eight-year-old George Edward “G. E.” Good. John M. Auld was elected Vice President, William K. Honn the Treasurer, and J. D. McCulley the Financial and Recording-Corresponding Secretary.

On May 11, the members held their first meeting, and the following month elected the temporary officers to one-year terms, as set forth in the International's Constitution. Members Evermont Eddy, Charley Donaldson, and George Sallade became Trustees. Good, Eddy, and McCulley also served as delegates to the Springfield Building Trades Council, with Donaldson and Ross Loughmiller as delegates to the Springfield Federation of Labor.²

The Officers and Trustees adopted Bylaws and working rules, with a wage scale of 60 cents per hour for tractor operators and \$1.25 per hour for crane operators. Charter memberships were offered at \$25 with \$1 monthly dues until July 1; thereafter the membership was set at \$75 and monthly dues at \$2.³

The Officers, Trustees, and members held business and membership meetings at the Labor Temple, 531 East Washington, on the northwest corner of Sixth Street, performing other union duties from their homes, after work and on weekends. "If they didn't have a job,"

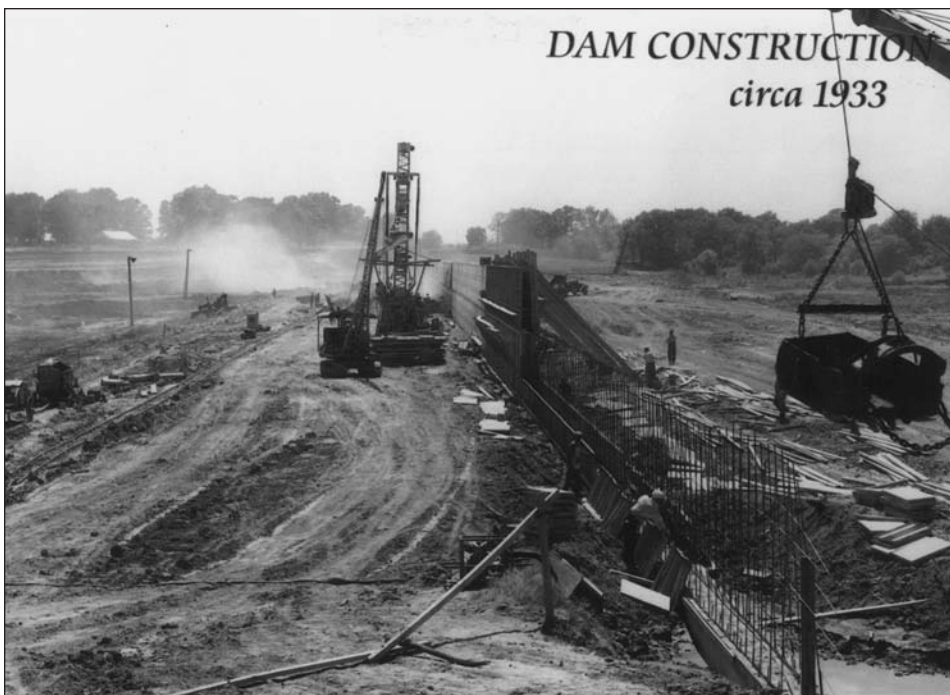


Road Contractors Steam Roller — circa 1930s

one member explained, "they had no money to travel around on, which of course confined their activities almost entirely within the City" of Springfield.⁴

As the nation struggled through the Great Depression, building trades employment plummeted nearly 80 percent by 1931. Several of the Local 965 members, including Loughmiller, worked on construction of Lake Springfield, but for others job prospects remained elusive. "There was very little work going on," recalled one member, and some were suspended for non-payment of dues. By December, "it looked very much like the Local would go on the rocks."⁵

Of the many obstacles confronting the new Local, the most daunting were organizing potential members and securing agreements with the few contractors having work in the jurisdiction. The situation began to improve after the federal government implemented the Davis-Bacon Act, passed by the United States Congress in 1931 to guarantee prevailing wage



Spaulding Dam — Lake Springfield

*SPAULDING DAM
circa 1933*



Spaulding Dam — Lake Springfield

rates on all federally financed construction. Operating engineers were needed for several Public Works Administration (PWA) building projects as well as U.S. highways. In addition, the State of Illinois started a road grading and paving program within the Local 965 jurisdiction, and the Pillsbury milling company began a \$1 million expansion of its recently constructed Springfield plant.

Still, President Good reported resistance from several contractors and difficulties with the City of Springfield regarding the hiring of union workers at Lake Springfield. Consequently, as Loughmiller recalled a few years later, Local 965 members “were forced, in some cases, to work for wages lower than our Union Scale and under non-union working conditions. Our Local Union being confronted with these facts something had to be done to protect the union man against the non-union condition which was overtaking him. It seemed to be quite a problem for our little organization to solve, as the

Local was financially embarrassed, being barely able to pay per-capita tax to the International Union on the few members that we had.”⁶

Loughmiller, who succeeded McCulley as Secretary, wrote to International General President John Possehl, asking for “assistance and advice as to how to proceed to eliminate the non-union condition.” In response, Possehl sent two experienced International organizers to a special May, 1933 meeting in Springfield. Charles E. Haury, former supervisor of the Pittsburgh and Washington, D. C. Locals, was a close Possehl advisor. William J. “Whitey” Stuhr, former business

manager of the East St. Louis Local, had been recently promoted by Possehl to District Representative for Illinois and Indiana.⁷

During the lengthy meeting with Local 965 members, Haury spoke about improving their organizing efforts. “He gave a very good talk which lasted for over an



A Marion Model G Steam Shovel

G.E. Good (standing on boom), operator for Patton Gibson Company — 1930s

hour,” Secretary Loughmiller recorded. “He talked on organizing and unionism. Told us of our weak points as a Local union and criticized the Local quite a bit because the dues were only \$2.00 per month & called us a bunch of hicks.”⁸

Loughmiller credited those criticisms for quickly improving the Local’s situation. “I will never forget that meeting,” he recalled in 1936, “and neither will I forget Brother Haury. I have never seen him from that day to this, but I hope I will have the honor of thanking him, sometime, for the bawling out we got that night; for, from that day until this, our Local Union has been progressing as no other engineers’ organization, to my knowledge, has, and I sincerely hope that it continues to do so.”

At the Board meeting following Haury’s lecture, the men agreed, “to better the financial standing of the Local,” to raise dues to \$4 for members working at least thirty hours per month.⁹

Along with more than twenty other Locals, 965 members in the summer of 1933 began holding their Board

and membership meetings at the Union Labor Temple on South Fourth Street. Springfield’s labor newspaper, the *Illinois Tradesman*, reported that the new location offered the advantage of “only one flight of stairs to climb and away from the noisy street car traffic, which disturbed the meetings very seriously in the old [East Washington Street] Labor Temple.”¹⁰

In October, members agreed on needing “an active Business Representative out in the field under salary; it was cited that the treasury was in a position to afford to pay a Business Agent providing said Business Agent was active enough, in the future, to build up the organization’s membership to where it should be in this jurisdiction.” President Good, who had been working as a fireman and locomotive crane operator, was unanimously elected to the full-time position of Business Agent and Local Organizer. The Board approved a monthly salary of \$150 (equivalent to \$2,290 in 2006), plus “necessary” expenses. As Business Agent, he became a member of the Local’s Executive Board.¹¹

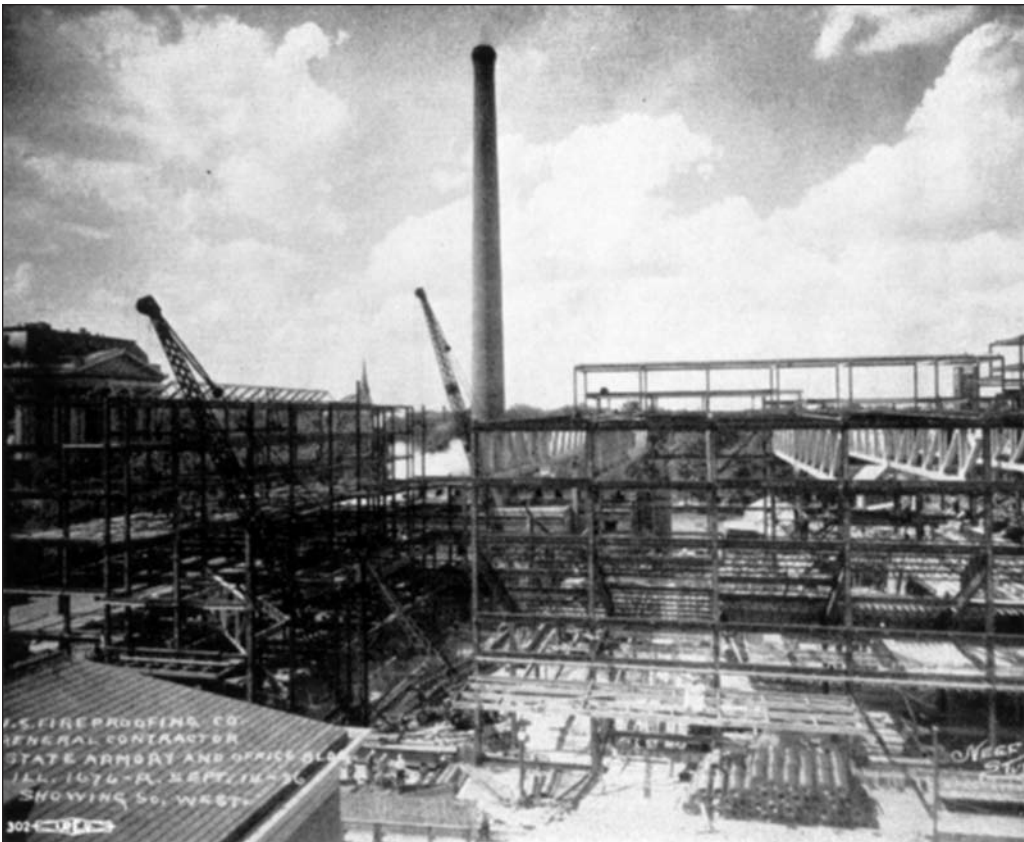
Good began calling on contractors and their employees “with the intention of organizing them and establishing a uniform scale of wages and more desirable working conditions.” Loughmiller was named Assistant Business Representative, responsible for maintaining the union records and transacting its business, after day-time work as an operating engineer. In addition to construction of Lake Springfield, major building projects included the State Armory at Second and Monroe streets—where the State Arsenal had been recently destroyed by fire, and a plant on the city’s south side for the Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Company.¹²

In December Loughmiller reported to the officers and trustees that Good was “proving himself to be a very active representative of the



Breaking Ground for the Armory

The above picture shows the breaking ground operation for the giant armory building in Springfield, IL, May 13, 1936. Many of the Chartered members and officers of Local 965 took part in the building of the project.



Erecting the Steel for the Armory

A southwest view showing two stiffleg derricks in operation erecting steel for the superstructure of the Armory. It is interesting to note that Ross Loughmiller operated one of the derricks and Frank C. Leopard the other.

Local and much good is being accomplished.” That month a Laborers International Union representative addressed the group on programs of the Public Works Administration. “He explained the necessity of getting out and organizing all work coming under the PWA,” Loughmiller noted, “for this work is specified to be union work by the Government.”¹³

By spring of 1934 Good expanded organizing operations from Decatur to the Mississippi River. With the enlarged territory came new members, including nearly forty-five men in the Quincy area. Still, many mem-

bers of the Local remained unemployed, causing complaints that they were “hanging around a job when there is no work for them to do.” The situation prompted a Board member to urge “that when a man is laid off, he is to go home and stay there a while at least, until he is called to work again. There is no doubt that the standard of the engineering profession is lowered, in the eyes of a contractor or their men in charge of work, when men classed as operating engineers act in this manner.”¹⁴

Employment gradually improved over the next several months, although the Board heard complaints of contractors in the Quincy area refusing to abide by the PWA pay-scale



Meredosia Bridge Under Construction

The International Union of Operating Engineers Local 965 can be proud of the part they played in erecting this monumental structure across the Illinois River at Meredosia, IL. Brothers Tom Tavernor and Al DeLonais were the derrick operators.

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requirements. For several months Good held regular meetings in Quincy, initiating new members as well as reading Minutes of meetings in Springfield and reporting on wage scales and work status in the area.¹⁵

With increasing mechanization of the construction process, work for hoisting and portable engineers began to change from primarily building projects to more heavy and highway construction. After several months, Good succeeded in negotiating a two-year agreement with road contractors in Sangamon County to hire only union operators and to lay off workers who refused to join the union. The agreement covered members working for the Hurden, O'Connor, Sangamo, John E. Bretz, Alzina, J. O. Patterson, B. F. Nelch, and Asphalt Sales and Contracting companies.¹⁶

Within a year Local 965 business representatives had organized most of the state's road work. In addition, Good obtained agreements with Poston Brick Company and contractors for construction of Blessed Sacrament school and Reisch Brewery in Springfield, as well as buildings in Jacksonville, dredge boat operations near Pearl and Naples, and bridge work in Meredosia.¹⁷

In May, 1934 members approved a quarterly button system as a means to maintaining membership and dues payments. "The member wearing a button," Loughmiller explained, "will be entitled to the preference of employment over those members, or others, who are in arrears with the obligations and who do not have a button." Each issue of buttons was a different color, and the Local paid the quarterly 30 cent cost to the International.

That month Good reported the situation in and around Quincy was "shaping up very nicely," with some forty applicants signed for work in the area. Later in May, when International General President Possehl sent instructions that each Local elect an organizer, the 965 members unanimously again chose Good.¹⁸ By October, he reported on negotiations with a highway contractor at Pana for a hard road to Taylorville, and with Staley Manufacturing Company in Decatur for building construction.

IUOE District Representative Stuhr met again with

members in November, acknowledging that the Local "had made wonderful progress during the past year." He "hoped to see the time in the near future when every Contractor in his entire District would be 100 percent union." Stuhr urged keeping Good in the field, "for that alone was the solution of our problem in getting the hard road industry lined up."¹⁹

Good and Loughmiller recommended establishing a fund to assist members "during depressed times when work is scarce or members are sick." Rather than approve a formal fund, members began contributing for the individual needs of brothers and their families. At some meetings, contributions were collected as a "Jack Pot" and given to the needy member or his family.²⁰

When the officers agreed in 1934 to increase Good's monthly salary from \$150 to \$200, the decision caused dissatisfaction among some members. One complained that the treasury was "going down rapidly" with quite a few men out of work, but others argued that Good "was working some 16 hours per day for Local 965, trying to better wages and working conditions and get more of our men to work." One member noted that the Business Agent in Joliet was being paid twice Good's salary.

After Good responded that he would resign if his salary or expense allowance were reduced, the officers agreed to retain his services at \$200 per month plus expenses, but if "at any time the treasury went down, there would be an assessment put on all members" to cover the cost of his position.²¹

And since a labor shortage could quickly turn into a labor surplus, the officers decided to temporarily discontinue accepting new members, in order "to give the present membership better working conditions and more employment." The International discouraged and eventually overruled such Local decisions, citing the role of Local organizers in recruiting members.²²

On Good's recommendation, the Board in April 1935 decided to rent an office in the Common Laborers Hall, 108½ South Fourth Street, for \$5 per month, soon increased to \$10. As a money-saving measure, Local 965 and Common Laborers Local 477 shared a phone line. That summer, nine members represented Local 965

in the dedication parade and ceremonies at the newly completed Lake Springfield.²³

During the summer of 1935, the U.S. Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act, known as the Wagner Act. Named for Democratic Senator Robert F. Wagner and supported by the American Federation of Labor, the legislation guaranteed the rights of workers to organize, form unions, and bargain collectively with their employers. The Wagner Act, which also established the National Labor Relations Board to arbitrate deadlocked labor-management disputes, resulted in massive organizing campaigns that led to greatly increased union membership.

The IUOE, anticipating the influx of lesser-skilled and unskilled applicants into the union, instituted a branch system that would not only control entry but also protect the wages and jobs of the higher-paid operators. "A" branches were designated for traditional oiler apprentices and junior engineers, and "B" branch membership would include partially skilled and unskilled laborers.

According to the IUOE directive, members would remain in the branches only until they obtained suffi-

cient training to be hired as full-fledged engineers.²⁴ "An oiler was not someone who ran around sticking a 3-in-1 oil can into holes in various machines," recalled one IUOE member of the 1930s. "When I was an oiler, the engineer who sat up in the cab was God. He even wore a suit and tie to work. We not only lubricated and cleaned the machines under his direction, we learned everything there was to learn about how those machines worked and how to repair them. We didn't get up into the cab until we knew every inch of the machine we were working on and how to operate it."²⁵

In early 1936, Local 965 officers applied to the International for a junior-engineering A charter, and on June 1, Local 965-A was chartered as the Apprentice Branch.²⁶

That summer, members decided to enter a float in the Labor Day parade in Springfield, approving a committee to spend whatever they deemed necessary "to make this celebration a big success." Members were asked to "parade with clean pair overalls, clean blue shirt, clean engineer cap and new pair gloves." "Hoisting Engineers Make Fine Showing in Parade," headlined the page-one *Illinois Tradesman* article. "One of the best showings in

the Labor Day parade was made by Hoisting Engineers Union No. 965. The boys turned out 100%, many jurisdiction members driving more than 100 miles to get in the parade."²⁷

In November, the members, noting that "the Local Union has prospered in a very modest manner financially," approved a Resolution, "in keeping with the spirit of the Season," to reward themselves with a one-month dues exemption. "That which we should look forward to in the future," Loughmiller noted, "is higher wage scales, better working conditions, shorter working hours at the



same rate of daily pay which we now receive, more signed agreements with our employers, and a stronger and better organization”:

The coming year, as I see it, promises to be the best year for the employment of labor since the start of the recent depression, out of which we are swiftly emerging. Private building is starting to come back, the Government, State and Counties are planning to expend millions of

dollars on public projects, factories are already working overtime in many cases and all business in general is growing by leaps and bounds. In order that we may reap the fullest benefits out of the coming prosperity, it is going to be necessary for us to bind ourselves together in a concrete organization (ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL) whereby our officers may perform their duties without fear and our Business



Labor Day Parade — Springfield 1936

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Frank C. Lepard</i> | <i>Forest Tish</i> | <i>John Triplett</i> | <i>S. H. Baehr</i> | <i>James V. Tree</i> |
| <i>Tom Tavernor</i> | <i>Glenn Stone</i> | <i>Carl E. Jesberg</i> | <i>U. L. Reeker</i> | <i>Jim G. Trees</i> |
| <i>G. E. Good</i> | <i>Pete Peuokas</i> | <i>Harry Attermson</i> | <i>Roscoe L. Scott</i> | <i>Carl Eckler</i> |
| <i>H. Kreitz</i> | <i>Richard Willner</i> | <i>Harland Ritchie</i> | <i>Ross Loughmiller</i> | <i>R. V. Boudreau</i> |
| <i>Al Sommers</i> | <i>Darrin Morrison</i> | <i>Murrel Burnett</i> | <i>Fred Altman</i> | <i>C. Flanders</i> |
| <i>Ray Hurt</i> | <i>Ben Kilgore</i> | <i>Maurice Drown</i> | <i>Rex M. Phares</i> | <i>Joe Spitz</i> |
| <i>H. E. Brunk</i> | <i>H. M. Barnhouse</i> | <i>Andy Mathias</i> | <i>Byran O. Phares</i> | <i>“Fingers” Martin</i> |
| <i>Charles F. Ross</i> | <i>R. E. Launer</i> | <i>Floyd Crum</i> | <i>Claude Read</i> | <i>W. M. Scott</i> |
| <i>F. B. Morris</i> | <i>C. Shanner</i> | <i>Clarence Leach</i> | <i>Lonnie M. Stewart</i> | <i>Paul Hood</i> |
| <i>A. O. Thode</i> | <i>E. K. Renshaw</i> | <i>Don Gallagher</i> | <i>Ernie Poore</i> | <i>J. P. Coates</i> |
| <i>D. Morrison</i> | <i>Nicolas Carriger</i> | <i>W. A. Middleton</i> | <i>George Rokerman</i> | <i>Carl C. Booker</i> |
| <i>S. DuRall</i> | <i>Gilbert O’Leary</i> | <i>William Brulite</i> | <i>John Ackerman</i> | <i>Lloyd Tendick</i> |
| <i>Ed E. Lutz</i> | <i>Donald Bowles</i> | <i>John Rauoch</i> | <i>Charles Murphy</i> | <i>Alma Jones</i> |
| <i>Clement Pieper</i> | <i>Edward Hicks</i> | <i>John Anpel</i> | <i>Lloyd Murphy</i> | <i>A. W. Brunk</i> |
| <i>M. Boudreau</i> | <i>Ralph Grossman</i> | <i>M. F. Baehr</i> | <i>Carl Deros</i> | <i>Jesse Henson</i> |
| <i>W. L. Wyle</i> | <i>Stanley Walker</i> | <i>P. A. Relker</i> | <i>A. C. Waggner</i> | |
| <i>Lloyd Imel</i> | <i>James Ryan Jr.</i> | <i>George Berendes</i> | <i>Milford Bess</i> | |
| <i>T. Royal</i> | <i>Barnard J. Peters</i> | <i>W. K. Honn</i> | <i>Carl Cary</i> | |
| <i>George C. Murphy</i> | <i>Joshua L. Nettles</i> | <i>H. Christensen</i> | <i>Allen Constant</i> | |

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Representative, in the field, may meet the employer with a feeling of confidence and assuredness that a 100% Union Organization is back of him.

Your part and duty as a member of your Local Union, in helping to attain the things which we all want (employment, good wages and working conditions), is to attend your Local Union meetings as regularly as possible, keep your Dues and Assessments paid up to date, abide by the Constitution and By-laws, help your brother member whenever possible and to speak a kindly word about the organization to which you belong to your neighbor, friends and fellow members.²⁸

Under the direction of District Representative Stuhr, Local 965 and four other area Operating Engineers Locals (592-Champaign, 649-Peoria, 792-Bloomington, and 841-Terre Haute, Indiana) achieved a milestone in February, 1937. Following provisions of the National Labor Relations Act, their representatives signed a Memorandum of Agreement with fourteen contractors who formed the new Central Illinois Contractors Association.

The Agreement provided a stabilized wage rate and set working conditions for the union members, while also helping eliminate unfair competition among the contractors. The Locals achieved jurisdiction over all hoisting and portable machinery on building and construction work, an eight-hour work day and 48-hour work week, with six holidays and all Sunday work eligible for double-time pay. In addition, the workers and contractors agreed, "There will be no work of any kind performed on Labor Day except to save life or property." The Memorandum of Agreement was later recommended as a model for hoisting and portable locals throughout the nation.²⁹

By then, Local 965 was in financial condition to hire President Loughmiller as a full-time employee to assist Good in the organizing and negotiating efforts. Loughmiller resigned his position as President and was replaced by Frank C. Lepard, who was also serving as Recording Secretary for the Springfield Federation of Labor.³⁰

Loughmiller became Recording Secretary of the newly chartered Springfield Building & Construction Trades Council, representing fourteen local building trades affiliated with the Building Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor. Then in July President Lepard was approved as a part-time Assistant Business Representative. In the fall, the Local held its first family picnic, at the Golden Gate Club on North Eighth Street Road.³¹ Over the years, the Local would sponsor or host a variety of social activities, including dinner dances, smokers, Christmas parties, summer picnics, bowling teams, and golf outings.

In the summer of 1937, Evermont Eddy, one of the original members of Local 965, was killed while working on construction of the State Armory. Following the International's tradition, the Board of Officers draped their Charter for thirty days and passed a Resolution honoring his service as a "staunch supporter of the principles of Unionism." As other members passed away, the Board would approve similar resolutions and Charter drapings.³²

In September the Officers applied for a B Charter to cover partially skilled laborers within the Local's jurisdiction. The International approved the 965-B application on April 1, 1938, for semi-skilled engineers, firemen, oilers and helpers employed in permanent sand and gravel pits, rock quarries, ready-mixed concrete plants, and material yards.

Business Agent Good and Assistant Loughmiller then began efforts to organize the workers at sand and gravel, quarry, and concrete companies throughout the district. The owners of Buckhart Sand & Gravel, located southeast of Springfield, and Lincoln Sand & Gravel in Lincoln were the first businesses to agree to contracts. Their employees were initiated under the new B Charter. Members of both A and B branches could attend regular meetings "and voice their opinion," but were not eligible to vote or to hold office in the Local.³³

As Good continued organizing workers in Local 965, in 1938 he was elected to the executive board of the Springfield Federation of Labor, a position he would hold for nearly fifteen years. Also that year, American Federation of Labor President William Green appointed Good a General Organizer for the AFL.³⁴

And, after months of discussion, in September, 1938, the Board approved Good's recommendation to open an office at 216 East Monroe, on the third floor with the Building & Construction Trades Council and several other Locals, and began holding the Board and membership meetings at that location.³⁵ In May, 1939 Lepard was promoted from part-time to full-time Assistant Business Representative, managing the Local office.³⁶

A large ongoing Springfield construction project at the time was the John Hay Homes, a large federally subsidized residential complex on the near east side. An officer of one contracting firm sent a letter to Good regarding the hiring of minority workers. "Under the terms of our contract," the contractor wrote, "we are to use a certain percentage of negro labor both skilled and unskilled." He asked for the total number of Local

members, the number of blacks, and the number of blacks available for the Hay Homes project. Good responded that records of the Local showed 322 members. "We have no record of a colored man working at this trade," he reported, "or making application for membership in this Local Union."³⁷

In 1939 General President Posschl negotiated an agreement with the Associated General Contractors that became important as recovery from the Depression increased. Since construction projects, particularly highways and pipelines, often required that contractors work in more than one Local jurisdiction, the Agreement's set wages and working conditions benefited the contractors as well as the operating engineers. "It has always been the policy," Local 965 Officers reported several years later, "to live up to the letter of these agreements and in



Jacksonville Family Picnic — September 4, 1939

(sitting very front-left to right): Charlie Ross, Sam Baehr; (standing very front on right): Jim Trees, John Auld, Fat Baehr; (sitting front half): Dean Durall, Harland Richey, Ed Hicks, unknown, Red Reed, Charles Newbern, Al Constant, Ernie Poor, unknown, Lonnie Gallagher, Jim Trees Jr., John Ackerman, Ralph Grossman, Bill Honn Sr., unknown, unknown, Ed Good, George Ackerman; (sitting back half): Carl DeRose, unknown, Eddie Luitz, Glen Stone, unknown, unknown, Henry Atchison, unknown, Lloyd Imel, Francis Royal, Charles Murphy, unknown, Red Christensen, Lloyd Murphy, unknown, Omar Warner; (standing): Ben Kilgore, Gilbert O'Leary, Clem Pieper, unknown, unknown, unknown, Barney Phares, unknown, unknown, unknown, Fingers Martin, Roy Tanner, unknown, Louie Stewart, unknown, unknown, unknown, unknown, Barney Barnhouse, unknown, Roy Hanks, Tiny Flanders, John "Dutch" Raugh, Joe Spitz, Rex Phares, Josh Nettles, Ross Loughmiller, Allen Brunk, Russ Smith

so doing a very agreeable relationship has been brought about between the Contractors, the Local Union, and its membership.”³⁸

By that time the International also adopted a permit system to handle fluctuations in construction activity among jurisdictions. Applicants and traveling members of other Locals could obtain permits to work on highways and pipelines, as well as other large projects, that required more operating engineers and helpers than were available through the Local’s own membership. The initial permit fee was \$2 per week.³⁹

By the close of the decade, Local 965, from its twenty-three original members, had become a stable, growing organization.⁴⁰ In October 1940, the officers approved two-week paid vacations for the President, the Business Agent, and the Business Representatives. The following month Good reported “how much he enjoyed his two weeks’ vacation spent out west.”⁴¹

In July 1941, Good was indicted in Macon County, on charges related to the bombing of an oil pipeline.

The officers authorized the Executive Board “to make any and all expenditures they deem advisable in regard to the case.” In November, however, the *Illinois Tradesman* reported that the “genial” Good had been exonerated of any involvement in the bombing. “Opinion was that labor haters attempted to besmirch the good name of George Good by including him in a list of defendants in the case. The Circuit Judge, after hearing the trumped evidence against Mr. Good, very promptly directed a verdict of acquittal. George Good is business agent for the Hoisting Engineers throughout this territory and has done some good and effective work for his union and holds the respect of not only the trade unionists but also the employers and public generally.”⁴²

That autumn, Local 965 members voted to increase their influence by affiliating with both the Jacksonville and Quincy Buildings and Construction Trades Council, and elected delegates to each of the organizations. In later years, members would represent the Local on Trades Councils throughout the jurisdiction.⁴³

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Wartime Work and Postwar Issues

1941-1950

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U.S. President Harry S. Truman

With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December, 1941 and European allies at war with the Axis powers, the United States prepared for inevitable involvement in both conflicts. International Union of Operating Engineers General President William E. Maloney addressed the IUOE Locals, declaring that “in the great emergency, it was only right and proper” for members to do the “utmost within their power to help in bringing the war to a victorious conclusion.”¹

The American Federation of Labor accepted President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Stabilization Agreement, relinquishing the right to strike in exchange for an escalator clause that provided for a 5 percent wage increase for every 5 percent rise in the cost of living. Roosevelt would follow that Agreement with an Executive Order limiting overtime and holiday pay to time and one-half wage compensation.

IUOE General President Maloney, a former IUOE supervisor in Chicago, instructed each Local to hold a special meeting “so that all members might be informed of a resolution which the Building Trades has adopted” in support of Roosevelt’s actions. The Locals were instructed to comply with that resolution, which permitted “no strikes on defense work and deferred customary working rules and regulations when necessary to carry on the defense program.” Failing direct negotiations with employers, Locals were also required to accept federal Department of Labor mediation. “After this emergency is over,” Maloney told Union members, “I want it said that the International Union of Operating Engineers

did their part in helping to defend the United States and its possessions.”²

Local 965 adopted its own Resolution in support of the Agreement and Executive Order, “with the distinct understanding” that the terms and conditions of their agreements “shall again be in full force and effect immediately upon termination of the present conflict known as World War II.” Members also agreed to honor the AFL no-strike pledge, and they participated in a January, 1942 Defense Parade in downtown Springfield.³

The following month Business Representative George Good reported on proposed defense projects near Illiopolis and in Springfield and Decatur. “Sangamon County Promised Big Defense Plant,” headlined the *Illinois Tradesman*. During 1942 and 1943, more than three thousand Local 965 operating engineers and permit workers would be employed on construction of several federal defense facilities.⁴

The Illiopolis area became the site of the Oak and Sangamon ordnance plants, for the manufacture of medium caliber shells and bomb fuses. A supply depot was constructed south of Springfield, and in Decatur were located the Victory Ordnance and Garfield plants. The Secretary of War also selected Decatur as one of ten Manhattan Project sites for developing an atomic bomb. There the Houdaille-Hershey Company built a plant to manufacture parts for the process of uranium separation. Members in the Quincy area began plant construction for Quincy Barge Builders to assemble military landing

barges.⁵

With the large amount of defense construction in central Illinois, Good requested authority from the Local to set up field offices. The members approved a motion that Good “use his own judgment on any arrangement necessary and to make any expenditures needed to take care of any defense project.”

Assistant Business Representative Ross Loughmiller assumed responsibility for providing Local operators to nearly twenty contractors working on the construction projects, in more than thirty classifications of work or machinery. He traveled from three hundred to a thousand miles each week, assigning members to the construction of plants, administration buildings, dormitories, cafeterias, as well as warehouses and bunkers for storing the manufactured shells and fuses.⁶

In March, President Frank Lepard, also serving as Financial Secretary as well as an Assistant Business Representative, sent a lengthy letter to the membership in which he described the increased work and wages for Local operating engineers, then asked for higher pay for the Business Representatives as well as permission to hire temporary office help. “Although we have not come face to face with the enemy of our country,” Lepard wrote,

the war is raging and our soldiers are being killed every day. For the next year our job will be to make the factory in which the tools of death will be manufactured. After that is done our jobs will be to use those tools. Flag waving will not win this war. We are required to buy defense stamps and bonds, also to make whatever provisions we are able to for the care of our families before we

are called. All of this must be done in the next ten or twelve months.

A majority of the members agreed with Lepard’s statements, passing a resolution to increase his weekly salary as well as those of Good and Loughmiller. In addition, they approved hiring a temporary assistant to help with the heavy amount of office work.⁷

Then in September, 1942, President Lepard resigned from the Local to accept a U.S. War Department appointment to work in the Panama Canal. To fill the remainder of his term, the Executive Board unanimously elected Good, who held the office of Vice President in addition to Business Representative. Also elected were William Honn as Vice President, while continuing as Treasurer, and Loughmiller as Financial Secretary.

Local 965 joined with other Springfield Building and Construction Trades’ affiliated Locals in agreeing that for the duration of the war 10 percent of their wages would be deducted to purchase War Savings stamps and



***Outstanding Labor Day Presentation by Members of Local 965, I.U.O.E.
Labor Day Parade — 1942***

As usual the Operating Engineers of Local 965 took first prize in the Labor Day Parade in Springfield, IL, displaying their construction equipment and practical knowledge along the parade route. Brother Johnnie Hudson was the operator on the crew.

bonds. And in celebration of the Springfield Federation of Labor's fiftieth anniversary, members approved purchasing a \$1,000 war bond. They also contributed to the American Red Cross War Fund Drive and unanimously responded to an AFL drive "to keep our boys at the front in cigarettes." The Local purchased 1,000 cartons of union-made Raleigh cigarettes, "half of which to be sent to the European Front and the other half to the South Pacific Front."⁸

In late 1942 Local 965 and other workers at the Quincy Barge Builders plant were honored with the Army-Navy "E" Award, presented for "not only high standards of efficiency in production, but good relations between labor and management and full compliance with many stringent wartime regulations." The tank-carrying landing barges were fabricated in Midwestern steel plants and shipped in sections to Quincy for assembly and launch.

The "E" for excellence award included individual lapel pins that Navy Secretary James Forrestal described as "symbolic of your great contribution to victory in this war for human liberty." Good sent congratulations to the contractors for the award as well as their "wonderful cooperation" with Local 965.⁹

As construction neared completion on all of the area defense plants, Good became concerned about rising unemployment within the membership. In January, 1943 he contacted the State of Illinois Chief Highway Engineer: "We have, as of this date, eighty operating engineers out of work and we expect to have at least 250 skilled operators available by the time highway construction work starts in the spring. . . . These men are dependent on road construction for their livelihood."¹⁰

That month the federal War Production Board issued stop orders on several central Illinois road construction projects, citing wartime shortages of manpower and essential materials. The orders affected the rebuilding of some damaged sections of U.S. highway 66 between Lincoln and Springfield that were already under contract.

Good immediately wrote to both U.S. Senators from Illinois, Scott Lucas and C. Wayland Brooks, as well as 21st District Illinois Congressman Evan Howell, ques-

tioning the Board's "reported man power shortage in this section of the State." Good stated that Local 965 could provide "no less than 250 skilled operators, if need be, by the time road construction work is generally started in the spring. Most of these men are too old for the Armed forces and are depending on this road construction for employment next summer."

In a telegram to Lucas, Good added, "We have many mechanics skilled at their trade who refrain from leaving this vicinity to seek employment due to the gasoline and tire rationing. We are interested in keeping these idle mechanics employed at their trade, therefore any assistance you may be able to give in prevailing on the Government to locate essential construction in this area will be greatly appreciated."

Governor Dwight Green also sought the assistance of Illinois Senators and Representatives in persuading the Board to resume highway work in the state. Citing Route 66 as a vital wartime artery, Green stated that if certain sections were not rebuilt the damaged roadway could be closed to traffic. After a series of conferences with War Production Board officials, state highway department representatives, and Illinois Congressmen whose districts were affected, the government agreed to resume the Route 66 project, again providing needed employment for Local members.¹¹

Other construction plans were being drawn for new airports in Quincy, Springfield, and Decatur. At the request of the federal Civil Aeronautics Administration, Good provided per-hour defense project wage rates for Local 965 members and requested a decision on wage scales for the three airport construction jobs.

In response, the Secretary of Labor determined "that rates of \$1.50 for tractors, regardless of size, \$1.25 for single air compressors, \$1.50 for two to four air compressors combined, and \$1.75 for paving mixers are applicable to construction of airports in the localities under discussion, in conformity with the collective bargain agreement of Local Union 965 of Springfield and contractors of the area."¹²

With improvement in the work situation, in February, 1944 the Officers decided to submit reports on the

Local's activities for publication in the weekly Springfield labor newspaper, *Illinois Tradesman*. They also agreed to purchase *Tradesman* subscriptions for all members in the service, at home or overseas. Loughmiller and occasionally Good provided the reports, which were published as page-one articles. At the twice-monthly membership meetings, letters from member servicemen "were always given first consideration."¹³

With construction on the Quincy airport scheduled to begin in spring of 1944, Good opened an office at 416 Main in the city. He estimated that at least two hundred operators, oilers and mechanics would be needed at the airport to excavate more than 1,300,000 cubic yards, pour 350,000 square yards of concrete pavement, and lay nearly fifteen miles of underground drains. "Contractor intends to work 24 hours per day, 2 or 3 shifts of men," Loughmiller reported in the *Illinois Tradesman*.

Construction on the Decatur airport began later in the year, a project he described as "about the same size, but less grading" than in Quincy. Other area construction included Federal Public Housing Authority facilities in Macon County, levee repair along the Illinois River, a power plant at Meredosia, a waterworks plant in Decatur, another factory building for Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Company in Springfield, and several road projects. "It is increasingly difficult," Loughmiller complained, "to man this work with competent help."¹⁴

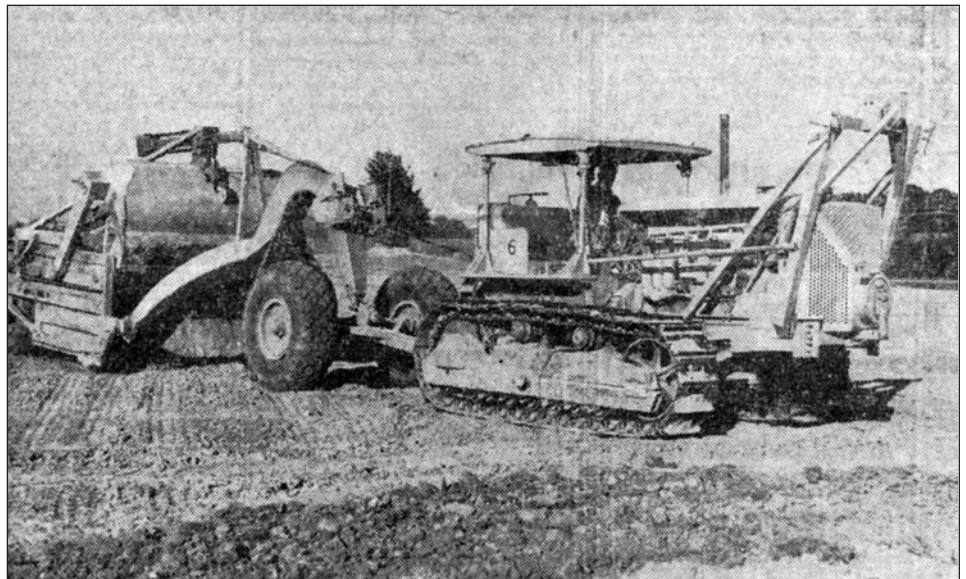
That fall members attended the Labor Day celebrations in Decatur and Quincy, "because of the great number of men employed in the vicinity of each of these cities who would be unable to obtain gasoline to travel any distance to some central point." The Springfield Federation of Labor did not hold a parade or celebration that year. At Christmas, Local 965 members purchased a carton of Raleigh cigarettes for each fellow member in service and adopted a poli-

cy to invest "all surplus money in the treasury in war bonds, at present, \$43,200."¹⁵

By January, 1945, with employment in central Illinois again waning, Good traveled to Camden, Arkansas, where construction was about to begin on a \$60 million Naval Ordnance Plant. After he reported on available jobs, thirteen men from the Local went to Camden, working on permit. One member reported their living conditions as "not so good"; with 220 men of all nationalities in the barracks, one mess hall for 9,000 workers, "and a detachment of Marines coming to patrol the place." Other 965 members found jobs at war facilities in Louisville, Kentucky, and Charleston, Indiana.¹⁶

When President Roosevelt died in spring of 1945, the Local adopted a Resolution to drape the Charter for sixty days, "in memory of him who so cheerfully assisted and advised the working men of this nation to such a degree that they will never have to return to sweat shop conditions of days gone by." Further, they resolved to "carry on the work at hand with a determination mightier than ever to bring our enemies to their just reward, and, to protect the cause of labor and the working man whom President Roosevelt so dearly loved." His successor, and President when World War II ended later in the year, was Harry S. Truman.

During the war, ninety-one 965 members served in the military, with two killed in action. Thirty-year-old



Joe Cunduff operating a cat & scoop at the Capital Airport — 1947

Souvenir Program
Fifteen Year Anniversary
and
Testimonial Banquet

LOCAL UNION NO. 965



SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

May 18, 1946

Commemorating the Organization of
Local Union No. 965, which was First
Chartered on Date of April 22, 1931

and in Honor of

G. E. GOOD, Business Representative

and

WM. K. HONN, Treasurer

Who have served the Local in their
respective offices without interruption
since April 27, 1931.

Fifteenth Anniversary Program Cover

Program
Addresses and Testimonials

Invocation—Rev. Donald J. Finley
Pastor Stewart Street Christian Church

- JOHN W. KAPP Jr.....Mayor City of Springfield
- ROBERT L. GORDON.....Director of Labor, State of Illinois
- V. Y. DALLMAN.....Collector of Internal Revenue
- R. G. SODERSTROM.....President Illinois State Federation of Labor
- VICTOR A. OLANDER.....Sec.-Treasurer Illinois State Federation of Labor
- REV. JOHN S. BROCKMEIER.....Chaplain Springfield Federation of Labor
Editor The Western Catholic
- SAM BONANSINGA.....President Springfield Federation of Labor
- LOUIS RODIER.....President Springfield Building Trades Council
- MILO P. FLICKINGER.....Secretary Illinois Contractors Assn.
- ANTON J. IMHAM.....Bus. Mgr. Stationary Local 399, Chicago
- WILLIAM J. STUHR.....International Representative I. U. of O. E.
- FRANK A. FITZGERALD.....General Secretary-Treasurer I. U. of O. E.
- WILLIAM E. MALONEY.....General President I. U. of O. E.

Music by August Rusch Orchestra

Dancing follows immediately after speaking program

While the Banquet floor is being cleared you may dance to the tunes of
Charles Rogers and his orchestra on the second floor

CONGRATULATIONS
OPERATING ENGINEERS
LOCAL #965

**LABORERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION
OF NORTH AMERICA
LOCAL #477
CHARTERED SEPTEMBER 21, 1926**



Bradley J. Schaive
Business Manager

James L. Kellus
Secretary-Treasurer

Garland Akers
Field Rep

Harry Best Jr.
Field Rep





Testimonial Dinner — 1946

Honoring Brothers G. E. Good and William K. Honn

From left to right: William A. O'Connell, O.B. Soucie, Frank Foster, Mayor Kapp, Representative of Department of Labor, Walter Granbois, G.E. Good, J.M. Patterson, C.C. Keckritz, William E. Maloney, General President; Frank A. Fitzgerald, General Secretary-Treasurer; Member Local 649, William K. Honn, William J. Stuhr, International Vice President; Member Local 649, Member Local 234, Reuben Soderstrom, President Illinois State Federation of Labor.

Army Pvt. Robert W. Brown of Decatur died in Italy in 1944, and twenty-three-year-old Sgt. Robert I. Krohe of Beardstown died the same year in France.¹⁷

In fall of 1945 Loughmiller reported that by the following spring “there will be plenty of work . . . quite a bit of building work in the making and by late spring there ought to be several good sized building jobs started here and in Decatur also.” The Springfield projects would include Capital Airport and a hall and recreation center for St. Aloysius Parish. In addition, guide wall work was scheduled for U.S. Lock and Dam No. 21 near Quincy.¹⁸

In May, 1946, Local 965 celebrated its 15th anniversary with a Testimonial Banquet at the Knights of Columbus Club in downtown Springfield. International Union General President Maloney, General Secretary-Treasurer Frank Fitzgerald, and Illinois State Federation of Labor President Reuben G. Soderstrom were among the guests, along with representatives of fourteen Hoisting and Portable Locals from seven states. The

officials honored Good and Honn for their fifteen years of continuous service, Good as Business Representative and Honn as Treasurer.

“During the past 15 years,” Maloney stated in the main address, “an excellent contractual relationship has been brought about between the Local Union and the Contractors who do business in the district covered by the Local. This has resulted in the stabilization of wages and working conditions which are seldom equaled anywhere in the country.”¹⁹

In the printed program, Good acknowledged several building and highway contractors who over the fifteen years “negotiated and signed the key agreements” regarding wage rates and working conditions. The building construction firms included J. Clyde Evans, W. H. Franklin, R. B. Evans, John Felmley, Smirl & Gibson, and M. R. Howard, along with the

Associated Contractors in Decatur. The highway contractors Good noted were the Joyce, Sangamo, J. C. O'Connor, and I. D. Lain construction companies.

“These contractors,” Good wrote, “are representative of all those who have been fair to Local Union No. 965 and are worthy of honorable mention here because of their past cooperation. The confidence they have in the Hoisting Engineers is clearly expressed in the signed agreements between themselves and the Union.”

By September, a local labor-market analyst noted a significant upward trend in construction jobs. “Current employment levels,” he reported, “are estimated at 3400 building and construction workers, a net increase of 200 in the month of August.” Most were employed on industrial and commercial buildings, highway and street projects, State Fairgrounds improvements, and the power plant at Lake Springfield. Other large projects included demolition and salvage of the wartime ordnance plants.²⁰

As construction neared completion on the Decatur airport, Loughmiller responded to one of the contractors



Banquet

to honor the

WORLD WAR II VETERANS

of

Local Unions No. 965, 965 A, 965 B
International Union of Operating Engineers

Saturday, June Fourteenth

Seven-thirty p. m. Day-light time

Nineteen hundred Forty-seven

Second Floor « Leland Hotel

Springfield, Illinois

WWII Banquet Program Cover

Honor Roll

Albers, Glenn	965	Joiner, Robert	965-B
Alderson, Kenneth	965-B	Kasch, Harold	965
Anderson, Ernest	965-A	Kilgore, Ben	965
Armstrong, Glen	965-B	Kirby, James P.	965-A
Ashmore, Jesse	965-B	Lazzell, Frank H.	965
Ashmore, Roy A.	965	Lawless, Patrick	965-B
Baehr, Samuel E., Jr.	965-A	Lewis, Daniel D.	965-B
Bear, Fred W.	965-B	McCubbin, James R.	965-B
Beecraft, Albert	965-A	McElroy, James L.	965-B
Bergschneider, Fred	965-A	McElroy, Ray John	965-B
Bess, Milford L.	965	McKnight, Donald	965-B
Best, Mark	965-B	Manuel, Russel	965
Blockyou, Hubert	965-A	Marion, O. M.	965-B
Blue, John W.	965-B	Mohr, W. W.	965-B
Bowles, Harley C.	965-B	Moisson, Jean B.	965
Brown, Louis R.	965-B	Moore, Robert C.	965-B
Brown, M. R.	965-B	Morris, Clifford W.	965-B
Brown, Robert J.	965-B	Murphy, Charles W.	965
Brumm, William G.	965-A	Murphy, Lloyd	965-A
Brunk, Allen W.	965	Naylor, Dan	965-A
Cary, Walter W.	965	Phares, Rex	965
Cashin, Edward	965-B	Powell, Stanley	965-A
Chandler, Alex	965	Reeker, Urban	965
Claxton, Charles	965	Renner, Claud	965-B
Coats, J. P.	965	Riley, Ray	965
Colbert, Otis	965-B	Shawen, Wiley C.	965-B
Colclasure, Rolla	965	Shugars, Orval E.	965-A
Culberson, Robert	965	Simons, Raymond	965-B
Deutschman, George A.	965-B	Simpson, Harry R., Jr.	965-B
Doyle, Paul W.	965-A	Smith, Kenneth H.	965
Doyle, Richard L.	965-B	Smith, Russell	965-B
Elmore, Andrew P.	965	Spitz, Roy	965-A
Elmore, Tony E.	965	Stark, Basil H.	965-B
Evans, Kermit	965-A	Teagarden, Merrill	965-B
Fox, Lynn H.	965-B	Tendick, Lloyd I.	965-A
Hamson, John H.	965-B	Thompson, Charles	965-A
Hard, Clarence	965	Thompson, Paul	965-A
Haynes, Phill	965-B	Triplett, John	965
Helm, Russell	965-B	Tuetkin, Melvin R.	965-B
Helton, Carl	965	Turner, Clyde D.	965
Hollebeak, Donald	965-B	Vestal, Robert W.	965-A
Hollebeak, Perry	965-A	Walters, Jeff, Jr.	965-B
Howell, Wayne	965	Walters, Roy W.	965
Imel, Lloyd	965	Warner, Omer D.	965-B
Johnston, John E.	965-B	Williams, L. D.	965-B
		★ Brown, Robert	965-A
		Killed in Action—Italy	5-17-44
		★ Krohe, Robert I.	965-A
		Killed in Action—France	8-7-44



JIM WATSON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
97TH DISTRICT

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200-4N STRATTON BUILDING
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706
PHONE: 217/782-1840
FAX: 217/782-2289

E-mail: jimwatson@localnetco.com

CARYL McINTIRE
Owner



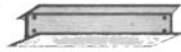
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A Strong, Proud History of Solidarity and Courage



The Illinois Workers' Memorial
at the State Capitol, Springfield

The Illinois AFL-CIO - Founded in 1937
One Million Members Strong

Margaret Blackshere, President • Michael T. Carrigan, Secretary-Treasurer

questioning why Local 965 members were working only six days per week. "I recall that you took the matter up with me stating that your time limit was short and that you were having difficulty in getting enough of the right kind of equipment to finish the job on time," Loughmiller wrote. "I informed you then that our Local Union did not require our members to work any specified number of days a week; furthermore, that since the war was over it was our policy to discourage too much overtime, in order that employment may be given to a greater number of men due to the returning of the members in the armed forces."

Shortly thereafter the contractor informed Loughmiller that the workers had completed construction at the Decatur airport. "I cannot forget the splendid cooperation given me by yourself and your organization," the contractor wrote. "I want you to know that I greatly appreciate it."²¹

Local 965 in June 1947 hosted a banquet at the Leland Hotel in Springfield honoring the returned war veterans and commemorating the memory of the two members who died in service. "Whenever Hoisting Engineers No. 965 attempt anything," reported the *Illinois Tradesman*, "they always go to the limit and the banquet and entertainment last Saturday night was up to the standard."²²

That year the U.S. Congress reacted to the growth and increasing strength of unions, as well as an outbreak of strikes and a strident Communist element, by passing the strongly restrictive Taft-Hartley Labor Act, sponsored by Republican Senators Robert Taft and Fred Hartley, Jr. President Truman vetoed the legislation, which extensively amended the pro-labor Wagner Act of 1935, but conservative Republicans and southern Democrats overrode Truman's veto in both houses.

Officially known as the Labor-Management Relations Act, Taft-Hartley retained the rights of employees to organize and bargain, but it prohibited closed shops, provided government injunction against "public interest" strikes, eliminated some union activities as unfair practices, and severely restricted organizing methods. In addition, the law required any union utilizing the National Labor Relations Board to file affidavits that members held no Communist affiliations. Despite legislative attempts over the years for repeal or modification, most of the Taft-Hartley restrictions continue in

effect today.

Minutes of the Local meetings in 1947 indicate some frustration in conforming with the Taft-Hartley restrictions. In September, State Federation of Labor President Soderstrom attacked the legislation in his Labor Day Message. "What a shameful record Congress made when it shattered all decent American traditions by classifying labor unions as trusts and enacted the restrictive Taft-Hartley law. . . . Breaking down the strength of labor unions means going back to a lower national income, a longer work day for less pay, lower productivity and widespread poverty."

Soon thereafter, Local 965 learned that the American Federation of Labor decided to defy one of the Taft-Hartley requirements by refusing to sign non-Communist affidavits. Local members unanimously agreed that "only by specific instructions of the International Union shall Local Union No. 965 submit non-Communist and other papers to the National Labor Relations Board."²³

Implementation of the Taft-Hartley restrictions and other anti-union bias often caused problems for the Business Representatives in dealing with contractors. "Not getting to see you on your job or at the hotel," Good wrote to a Quincy manager in 1947, "I am taking this opportunity to inform you that this kidding stuff has come to an end and I will give you just one week from this date to get your men straightened up with this union and when I say, get them straightened out, they must continue that way and I will give you no more lee way, to work on union work. Please give this your immediate attention."²⁴

Most of Local 965's postwar operating engineer work was seasonal road building and airport-runway construction, recalled retired member Charles "Chuck" Whited of Arenzville, along with a considerable amount of levee dredge work. "We had good conditions, though, and a brotherhood" within the Local.

By spring of 1948, Good reported the need for another Assistant Business Representative "to help look after the interests of the Local Union." He recommended that the new assistant cover either the east or west section of the jurisdiction. Decatur resident Clete T. "Tiny" Flanders agreed to serve as Assistant Business Representative, while Loughmiller continued in the Springfield area as the other assistant representative.



*The three pictures above are of the Decatur Airport project.
Summer of 1945*

Photos courtesy of Decatur Herald & Review

Frank Leopard, who had returned to Springfield after his war service, was again elected President in 1948.²⁵

When a wage dispute arose between Local 965 and the Associated General Contractors of Illinois, IUOE District Representative William Stuhr advised that the International office would not sanction a strike. Members initially vetoed arbitration to resolve the dispute, but eventually narrowly agreed, specifying that the three-member arbitration board comprise a Catholic priest, a Protestant minister, and a disinterested businessman chosen by the clergymen.²⁶

The Local also attracted IUOE attention when the Examining Committee rejected all of the fourteen applicants for membership in December, 1948. Stuhr traveled to Springfield to meet with the Executive Board, reminding them that the International had approved Good as an organizer as well as the Business Representative. He described previous efforts “to organize the non-union people in the district and stated that he expected the Local Unions, under his supervision, to continue to organize the un-organized engineers.” Stuhr recommended that the Local “reconsider those applicants.” On the revote, the Examining Committee accepted six of the applicants, but again rejected the eight others.²⁷

Until the late 1940s, most of the pipelines for transporting oil, coal, gas, and similar materials were constructed by non-union contractors, traveling the country with unorganized crews. As pipeline transportation expanded in the years after the war, however, IUOE General Vice-President Frank Converse headed a committee of labor organizations intent on organizing the work.

In 1949 the IUOE officers prepared an agreement with thirteen large contractors covering construction, installation and repair of the pipelines. At the request of General President Maloney, Local 965 members discussed the proposed agreement, and Business Representative Good summarized their recommendations: “So long as the Taft-Hartley Law remained on the Statute Books of the Federal Government there was little anyone could do to improve the conditions contained in the



President Truman — circa late 1940s

Fourth from left: G.E. Good; fifth from left: Ross Loughmiller

Pipeline Agreement.” Good did, however, recommend changes to the weekly hour and overtime rates:

Our Local and its officers have worked hard for many years to establish favorable working conditions and hourly wage scales and we do not want these things disturbed if there is any way to prevent it. Our Agreement covering building construction has been in force since January 1, 1942 without being changed except for wage scales, and our road Agreement has been in effect since March 11, 1946 except for wage scales. We feel that we have good sensible working Agreements and I am sure our Construction Contractors feel the same way, although we have dealings with some Employers who would stop at nothing to tear down what has been accomplished these last few years, if they had half a chance.

Good concluded his report with appreciation to the International for negotiating the pipeline agreement. “We can see by the number of contractors who have signed up,” he wrote, “it will be only a matter of a short time until 90% of this kind of work will be organized instead of the 10% or so which is the condition today.”²⁸

Responding on behalf of Maloney, Converse thanked Good for Local 965’s recommendations, then added:

It has been the custom and practice of this pipeline work, to work a lot of hours and to work Sundays and holidays and in order to get an agreement, we had to conform to these conditions but let us bear in mind that this is the first agreement that we have ever had with these people and I can recall when we made our first agreement with the building contractors and the first agreement with the high-way contractors, and the first ones were not much better than this one but from year to year we were able to improve these agreements and I

firmly believe that as we go along from year to year with the pipeline contractors, we will not find it too difficult to work out a better agreement.

Our main point as I see it is to get men that will follow this pipeline work to become and remain members of our respective Local Unions and in that way, getting control of the source of supply of these men.²⁹

One pipeline contractor urged his superintendents and foremen to “live up to this agreement. We are going to insist that the unions do so also. Therefore, greet your local business agents as partners in this thing but give them nothing and promise them nothing except what is in the contract.”³⁰

Within a few years more than two hundred contractors, performing more than 90 percent of the pipeline construction in the nation, were signatories to the agreement.³¹

In 1949, Local 965 members approved moving the office from the Building Trades Hall on East Monroe to the second floor of 641 West Monroe, above Bartlett’s Food Market.³²

Political Activism

1950-1960

***The challenge to labor is in the legislative halls.
Our answer is political education and activity.***

George Meany, AFL-CIO President

In early 1950 International Union of Operating Engineers General President William Maloney instructed all Locals to form legislative committees to work with the American Federation of Labor's national Labor's League for Political Education. The nonpartisan Labor's League had been formed in 1947 to 1) defeat undesirable labor legislation, including repeal of the "obnoxious" Taft-Hartley Act, as well as oppose anti-union political candidates, and 2) increase Social Security benefits, support legislation favorable to the working class, and elect candidates who favored abolishing Taft-Hartley. The AFL pledged a \$1 million campaign "to elect our friends and defeat our enemies."¹

From their office at 641½ West Monroe in Springfield, Local 965 formed the Engineers' Legislative Committee, with member G. L. "Jerry" Hudspeth, as Chairman. He also served as Secretary of the Central Illinois Labor's League. Ross Loughmiller became Secretary-Treasurer of the Engineers' Legislative Committee, with George Good, Nicholas Carriger, and C. T. Flanders as Trustees. All 965 members were asked to contribute \$2 annually, to help finance local and national educational campaigns. The Engineers' Legislative Committee and other Labor's League members organized precinct captains to inform voters about each candidate's record and position. "Every cent of the \$2 will be used for your benefit," Loughmiller wrote to 965

members. "This will be your contribution towards keeping a free Trade Union Movement in this country through which we derive our wage scales and standards of work."²

Many of the Illinois roads by the early 1950s needed repair or replacement. Loughmiller urged 965 members to support an increase in the motor fuel tax "in order that we may have good roads again, also plentiful employment on road and bridge construction, which we do not now have." Each member was urged to join the Illinois Good Roads Association, lobbying for increased state funding. In March, 1950, Loughmiller became secretary of the newly formed AFL-affiliated Union Road



Frank Lepard and Ross Loughmiller at 641 ½ West Monroe.

and Bridge Council of Downstate Illinois, comprised of various building trades unions involved in road and bridge construction.³

That November Business Representative Good negotiated a new wage scale agreement with companies affiliated with the Associated General Contractors for highway construction in central Illinois. The minimum hourly wage ranged from \$1.80 to \$2.55.⁴

By then, however, Local 965 was facing a “financial burden,” prompting President Frank Lepard and Business Representative Good and assistants Loughmiller and Flanders to accept what they hoped would be temporary salary reductions. They also reduced the secretarial position to part-time.⁵

Spring of 1951 brought slight improvement in employment, and Loughmiller expected “to be short of men the most of the summer now if the weather will stay good.” By then, the Business Representatives reported on work in and around Decatur and Shelbyville, and a bridge at Beardstown, as well as construction of a Sears Roebuck department store, addition-

al buildings at the Allis-Chalmers plant, and four-lane work on Route 66, all in Springfield.⁶

That summer Loughmiller reported the formerly part-time secretary was now working overtime, “and still we are not keeping ahead any.” He listed membership in the parent Local 965 at 183, with an additional 88 members in 965A, and 301 in 965B. “You can see why we are so busy all the time,” he wrote to one member; “we’ve went a long ways in the last 20 years.”⁷

Beginning in January, 1952, members of Local 965 became enrolled in a Benefit Plan, funded by application fees and a 50 cent increase in monthly dues. The plan at inception paid a death benefit of \$300 to \$500, depending on available funds, to the widow or other beneficiary. Administrators of the plan were designated as the President, Vice-President, Recording-Corresponding Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and Trustees of the Local. A few years later, the Local began offering \$1,000 group life insurance policies through the newly formed Engineers Mutual Benefit Association.⁸

At a March, 1952 meeting, two delegates from the Springfield Junior Chamber of Commerce spoke to members, describing their plans for a park and playground in the eastern section of Springfield. They asked for volunteers from the Local to level and clear the 12.5 acres, with equipment donated by four local contractors.

Members agreed to help with the project, working one weekend to move 13,000 cubic yards of dirt for the new Jaycee War Memorial Park at 2300 East Monroe. “The residents in that area,” wrote Project Chairman Keith Nelch to the Local, “will long remember the combined effort put forth by the engineers, contractors, and the Jaycees in helping to make a park possible for their children.”⁹



Building Jaycee Park

East Monroe Street, Springfield, IL — 1952

Left to right: Arch Moulding, Harry Rimbey, W.W. Mohr, Keith Nelch, Hank Weichert, Paul Davidsmeyer.

(Last three men on right are unknown.)

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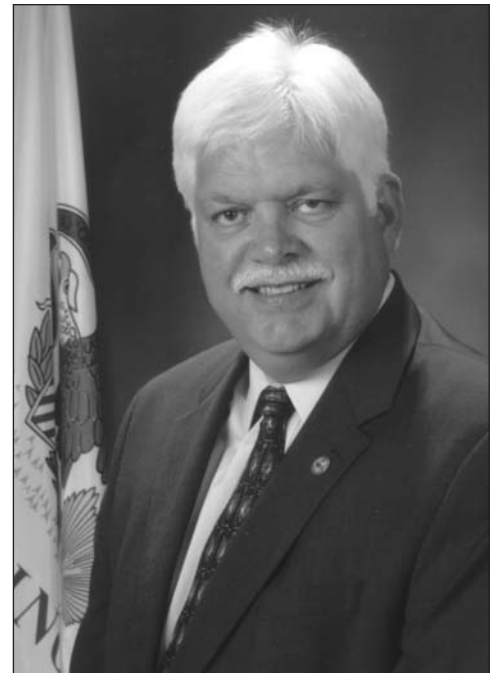
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In the summer of 1952 President Lepard resigned in order to become an Assistant Business Representative, and Financial Secretary Loughmiller was appointed to the presidency. Then after he defeated Good in the 1952 election for Business Representative, Good retired, concluding twenty-one years as the Local's first Business Agent/Representative. At the next meeting, "members stood and gave Brother Good a rising vote of appreciation for his years of service" to the Local. Later they would award lifetime memberships to both Good and William Honn, with no further dues payments.¹⁰

As the new Business Agent as well as President, Loughmiller spent considerable time traveling to western areas of the jurisdiction, operating from an office in the Quincy Labor Temple. Flanders continued his work in the Decatur area, and in Springfield, Lepard assumed responsibility for handling requests for workers throughout the jurisdiction.¹¹

At that time the members decided to print a Twenty-second Anniversary book. Funded by advertisements and illustrated with construction photographs, the 184-page hardcover publication included messages from labor leaders as well as articles on the Local and the labor movement. The Anniversary Committee, comprised of Loughmiller, Lepard and Flanders, dedicated the book to "the spirit, the integrity, the intelligence and the productive powers of men who form this great organization."¹²

In the early 1950s, the American Federation of Labor, with nearly eight million members, faced the entrenched communist faction within the labor movement. "Communism stands for autocracy," read one AFL statement, "whereas labor is for democracy. Communism preaches the overthrow of the existing order and the establishment of dictatorship. Communism urges violence, direct action, uprisings, all having for their ultimate purpose the overthrow of so-called capitalism."

AFL leaders called on every member of organized labor, "from our parent organization down through the International unions, state federations and each individual local union," to help drive out the radical element. In addition, the AFL began stipulating that members sign affidavits of non-communist philosophy or affiliation, which had been a federal requirement for union members with passage of the Taft-Hartley Labor Act in 1947.¹³

By summer of 1953, several large projects in Lincoln and Logan County were being built "with more and more non-union elements," according to an officer of the Lincoln Building and Construction Trades Council. He asked that Local 965 appoint a delegate to help the Council "protect the interests of its members and affiliates." The Executive Board responded by selecting member Fred E. "Copi" Altman of Lincoln.¹⁴

In July, 1953, the Board decided to look for larger office quarters, intending to eventually purchase a build-



*Lake Sangchris — 1955
Barrey Construction — Brother Robert Mathon operating a Paydozer*

NONCOMMUNIST AFFIDAVIT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

THIS IS TO CONFIRM, THAT:

1. I am not a member of the Communist Party or affiliated with such Party.
2. I do not believe in, and I am not a member of nor do I support any organization that believes in or teaches, the overthrow of the United States Government by force or by any illegal or unconstitutional methods.

SIGNATURE: Ross Loughmiller

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City and State.

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SIGNATURE Charles H. Johnson

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COPE Publication No. 4

ing. In early 1955 the search committee, comprised of President Glenn Albers, Secretary Lepard, Treasurer Honn, Business Agent Loughmiller, and Assistant Business Representative Flanders, reported finding no suitable space available for sale or rent.

The committee instead recommended building a facility that would suit the Local's needs for both office and meeting space. Reporting that initial Building Fund assets totaled approximately \$27,000, they suggested borrowing additional funds from the General Fund, with a \$1 monthly dues increase for the duration of the construction project. Lepard contacted area architects for proposals on a new building. After an extended membership discussion, however, they rejected the new-building proposal, deciding instead to rent additional office space at their 641½ West Monroe location.¹⁵

Ongoing construction in the mid-1950s included improvements to Capital Airport in Springfield. After completion, contractor Sam Barter of J. D. Barter Construction Company in Harrisburg, sent a letter to Loughmiller expressing satisfaction with the Local 965 workers. "To order out 30 operators," he wrote, "and not get a bad one is most unusual; but we will say that these men are as qualified as any men we have ever worked. They are exactly the type of operators you promised us." Eugene T. Simonds, whose Carbondale construction company employees also worked on the airport project, appreciated the efforts of the 965 operators, "along with their attitude, all of which minimized the hazards of such a job in such a short working season as we have just had."¹⁶

In 1954 Local operators began construction of the State Office Building (now the Stratton Building) in Springfield. Other major projects included the Caterpillar plant in Decatur and Pillsbury expansion in Springfield. After completing nearly fifty miles of Route 66 south of the city, J. F. Parker of O'Connor Construction Company of Springfield reported, "Labor conditions in this area are the finest we have experienced in the three states that we are now working."¹⁷

In 1955 longtime Treasurer William Honn died at the age of seventy-three, while working on repairs at the Lincoln

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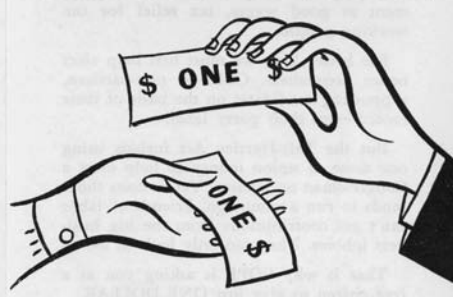
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- Why is it needed?
- Where does it go?



The new Committee on Political Education (COPE) continued the former AFL Labor's League emphasis on collective strength to obtain sound and fair labor relations through reports on issues, particularly efforts to repeal Taft-Hartley. COPE also reported the labor-related voting records of Congressional Representatives and Senators, sponsored radio, television and newspaper advertisements for endorsed candidates, and conducted voter registration drives.

Loughmiller represented Local 965 on the Springfield-area COPE Steering Committee, comprised of delegates from the Springfield Federation of Labor (former AFL affiliation) and the Springfield Industrial Union Council (former CIO). The group reviewed the labor records of all candidates for the 1956 election and invited State Representative candidates to attend a local

COPE meeting. In conjunction with COPE, Loughmiller continued as Secretary-Treasurer of the Engineers' Legislative Committee, with Lepard serving as Chairman, succeeded upon his retirement by Elmer K. Renshaw of Springfield, also from Local 965. Committee members represented each of the fifteen counties in the Local's jurisdiction.²⁰

Preparing for the 1956 elections, Loughmiller again appealed to members for voluntary \$2 contributions to support COPE through the Engineers' Legislative Committee. "It is very important," he stated, "that we, as Union members, make this small financial sacrifice at this time, and then to vote in each and every political election with the view in mind of electing the friends of Labor and defeating its enemies."²¹

In the Local district, Loughmiller received approval from IUOE General President Maloney to hire the first full-time Assistant Business Representative for the area west of the Illinois River. Loughmiller asked all 965 members in that jurisdiction to attend an introduction meeting with new Assistant Representative, Walter W. "Bill" Cary of Quincy. "This will be the most important meeting ever held up to this time in the Quincy area," Loughmiller stated, "affecting this local Union and its membership living and earning a livelihood in this area."²²

Tomb in Springfield. When retired Business Agent George Good died later that year, International Vice President John J. McDonald praised his service to the union. "I will always remember him fondly," McDonald wrote to Loughmiller, "for personally appearing before the various Boards at Washington during the War years promoting the interests of the Local Union No. 965, of whom he was so proud."¹⁸

In 1955, a time of growing labor concern over perceived anti-union policies by the administration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the American Federation of Labor merged with the Congress of Industrial Organizations, a former AFL faction representing workers in the steel, auto, and rubber industries. Officers of the combined entity, comprising 16 million members, joined the AFL's Labor's League for Political Action with the CIO's Political Action Committee.

"We are very, very seriously engaged in political action," stated President George Meany of the new AFL-CIO, "because the enemies of labor have proved to us that they can hamstring us; that they can deter labor from its objectives; that they can hold us back; and, of course, if they can do that, perhaps they can destroy us by the use of the legislative weapon. So in the very nature of things, we have to use that weapon and to use it we have to go into the political field more and more."¹⁹

Cary began covering the western jurisdiction from the Quincy office and served as the Local's representative to the Quincy Building and Construction Trades Council. In the Decatur area, Flanders reported on pipeline work, "laying a mile a day or more" between Monticello and Shelbyville. He also wrote occasional "Engineers' Survey" articles for the Decatur weekly labor newspaper. In Springfield, construction included Town and Country shopping center, "on the southern outskirts," and a \$500,000 addition to Pillsbury Mills.

In September, members agreed to change their meeting location from the Building Trades Hall to the new Teamsters and Chauffeurs Hall, 619 North Grand East. The business office remained at 641½ West Monroe.²³

The members also approved affiliating with the Springfield Association of Commerce and Industry (ACI), electing Loughmiller as the organization's delegate.²⁴ When the ACI sought recommendations for building "a greater" Springfield, he replied that current issues included the "sewer problem, area annexation, highways, streets, new industries, county jail, schools, park-

ing and traffic, and railroads."²⁵

The ACI endorsed a plan for "good health facilities, good schools, good recreational opportunities, good housing, fine churches, more and better jobs." ACI support helped voters approve a major sewer rehabilitation program and improvements to Chatham Road, both of which provided work for Local 965 members. Another large construction project was a \$2.5 million apartment building for Franklin Life Insurance Company.²⁶

In addition, the Local held memberships in the Springfield Trades & Labor Council, formed from the Springfield Federation of Labor and the Springfield Industrial Union Council after the AFL and CIO merger, as well as the Decatur and Lincoln Building Trades organizations.²⁷

In the mid-1950s, Raymond T. "Jolly" Smith of Baylis joined Local 965. "The main route to Springfield, where most of the work was, was old U.S. 36, and after working all day it was hard for the men to drive back to Springfield for the meetings, but most of us did."²⁸



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A major boost in area road construction occurred with implementation of the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act, also known as the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. The federal legislation authorized \$25 billion to construct more than 42,000 miles of interstate roadway in twelve years—the largest public works project in the nation’s history. Over the next decade and more, Local 965 members would help construct Interstates 55 and 72 in the Decatur, Springfield, Jacksonville, and Quincy areas.

In February, 1957 Frank Lepard, in declining health, resigned his position as Financial Secretary and Assistant Business Representative. Except for his service in World War II, Lepard had been associated with the Local for more than twenty years. In March, John S. Hudson of Springfield assumed Lepard’s position as Assistant Business Representative and his former duties as Financial Secretary. By then, the Local numbered 875 members in 965, 965A, and 965B.²⁹

The National Labor Relations Board in 1957 questioned Local 965’s hiring procedure in its collective bargaining agreements. In the resulting NLRB rulings, Local 965 lost its right as the only source of operating engineer workers for signatory employers. Although it could still refer applicants “on request” of employers, the Local could not require such hires. Since 965 was the major source of skilled operators, many employers continued requesting operators. Others, however, hired lower-skilled “off the street” workers, who eventually became members under the terms of labor relations laws then in effect.³⁰

The situation continued for several years, causing problems for 965 when those lesser-skilled workers reported “out of work” and expected the Local to find

them employment. Then in 1963, negotiations would produce a “legal” exclusive referral procedure that is still the basis for referrals in construction agreements. The agreement served as a pattern for other Locals across the country.

In 1958 Local 965 members decided to accept Loughmiller’s recommendation to give memorial bibles rather than flowers to the families of some deceased members. The initial purchase was for a dozen Protestant bibles at \$6.80 each and the same number of Catholic ones at \$8.65.³¹

Work continued strong throughout the summer and autumn of 1959, including levee construction in the Sny Island Drainage District, a railroad bridge over the Mississippi River at Quincy, a sewer project and water line in Quincy, roads in the Jacksonville area, and St. Mary’s Hospital in Decatur.

Organized labor suffered a setback in 1959 with Congressional passage of the restrictive Landrum-Griffin Act. Officially known as the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act, the legislation requires lengthy reporting of union finances and activities and gives the Secretary of Labor broad powers to conduct investigations into Local activities.

General President Delaney termed Landrum-Griffin “a vicious law aimed at the very existence of organizations such as ours.” The legislation required fifty-two changes in the IUOE Constitution regarding the conduct of internal union affairs. New regulations governed Local elections and, for the first time, permitted branch members to vote and become candidates for office.³² Local 965 officers began the process of revising their Bylaws and working rules in order to meet the legislative and organizational needs of the next decades.³³



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International Union of Operating Engineers

Local 649

6408 W. Plank Road, Peoria, IL 61604

Local 649 was granted its charter from the International Union of Operating Engineers on September 18, 1917. The geographical area of 649 includes Peoria, Fulton, Mason, Henderson, Knox, McLean, Woodford, Marshall, Tazewell, Bureau, Stark, East one-half Henry, Putnam, Hancock, Warren, and McDonough Counties. In 1974 Local 649 moved into a new office and meeting hall located at 6408 W. Plank Road, Peoria, Illinois moving from 404 N. State Street, Peoria, Illinois. Local 649 has 1540 members as of March 2006.

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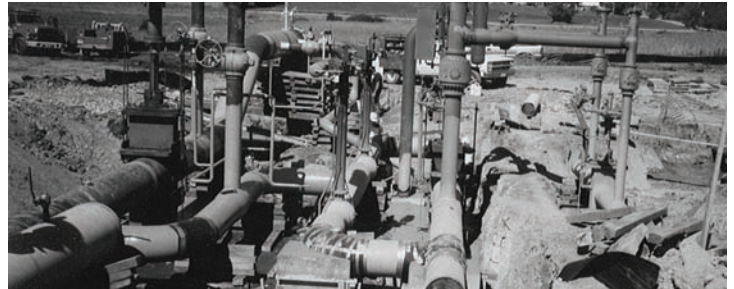
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Transitions

1960-1970

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IUOE General President Joseph J. Delaney, 1958-1962

By 1960, only one of the original twenty-three IUOE Local 965 members, Business Manager Ross Loughmiller, continued involvement in the organization's leadership. Although several were still actively employed, including Jesse Henson and Charley Donaldson, most were retired or deceased.¹

For Local 965, the decade of the 1960s would see increased political efforts on behalf of candidates who supported labor-union issues. "We are now in one of the most important and vital political years in our history," Loughmiller wrote to members in soliciting contributions to the AFL-CIO national Committee on Political



Delegation Meets with Massachusetts Senator John F. Kennedy — October 24, 1959

Left to right: President Springfield Trades & Labor, Sam Bonansinga; Ross Loughmiller; John F. Kennedy, Senator, Massachusetts, Presidential Candidate; Thomas Murphy, Painters Representative Local 90; Mike Marada, Business Representative Sheet Metal Local 84 (218); Charles Midden.

Education. "In 1960 we will elect our President of the United States, the Vice President, a United States Senator from Illinois, and all 435 members of the House of Representatives of the United States. It is very important that we do our part and make sure we are registered to vote and then go to the polls on election day and vote for the friends of Labor, the Farmer and Small Business Man."²

Local 965 supported the Democratic presidential nominee John F. Kennedy, greeting him at labor rallies in Springfield and Decatur. On behalf of union workers, Loughmiller wrote to Democratic gubernatorial candidate Otto Kerner, asking, if he were elected, whether road, bridge, and building construction would equal or surpass that of the current Republican William G. Stratton administration. Loughmiller explained that a Springfield contractor said he "had failed to find where you had made any commitments relative to your stand on highway construction."

Kerner promptly responded, "Should I become the next Governor of Illinois, my program for highway construction will be a progressive one and one which will serve all of the people of our State." Indeed, Kerner was elected, serving until 1968, and throughout the decade most Local 965 members would have nearly steady employment.

By 1960, Local 965 topped one thousand in membership. Loughmiller, busy renegotiating an agreement with the Associated General Contractors, appointed 965 President Elmer Renshaw to serve temporarily as his assistant. A few months later, the members approved Renshaw as Assistant Business Manager for the Springfield area, "to better service the membership."³

Loughmiller reported in January, 1961, "The prospects for more work this year than last is a lot better; we should have in the neighborhood of 10 million yards of earth excavation or moving this year, which is a lot more than we've had in the last few years all put

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together, about 4 million is already under contract with the prospects of another 4 to 6 million on the belt line here [Interstate 55] around the east side of Springfield.” He also noted that several small contractors had gone out of business in 1960: “We had more bouncing pay checks last year than all the last 20 years put together; I sure hope things get better this year.”⁴

New and ongoing construction projects for 965 members included St. Peter’s Church in Quincy, a water main from Salt Creek to Mount Pulaski, a sewage disposal plant in Petersburg, housing projects in Springfield and Athens, and continuing repairs to the Sny Island levee along the Mississippi River. In addition, the World War



*Christy-Foltz Crane — July 17, 1961
259 North Main Decatur, former Greider Building
Photo courtesy of Decatur Herald and Review*

II ordnance plant property at Illiopolis was being converted to industrial use by Borden Chemical, Inc.⁵

Two candidates sought the position of Financial Secretary in 1961, incumbent John S. Hudson of Springfield and Zahn, whose father, Hugo G. Zahn, had been a Local 965 member from 1936 until his death in 1953. Renshaw challenged Loughmiller for the position of Business Manager. After both incumbents won, Loughmiller thanked the members for his reelection and asked them to overcome the “hard feelings” generated by the contest. Hudson thanked Zahn “for a good clean campaign.”

Still, Minutes of the ensuing months indicate lingering antagonism among some of the members, and in September International General President Joseph Delaney sent three District Representatives to a membership meeting. Leo Bachinski, from the St. Louis office, reported that Delaney “had told him to come here and help Local 965 get back on their feet” and urged the Local “to close ranks and pull together.”⁶

Working to conform with the 1959 federal Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act, also known as the Landrum-Griffin Act, the Local established a Bylaws Committee, chaired by Donald D. Crain of Jacksonville. He met in Washington, D. C. with International officials regarding the changes that included revised election and membership application procedures.⁷

In 1961 Loughmiller announced the formation of the Illinois-Indiana Hoisting and Portable Engineers Conference. An Indianapolis member was elected President, and Loughmiller became Secretary of the new organization. Its purpose, he stated, was “more cooperation between the Locals in these two States and develop hiring hall provisions and health and welfare as well as Pension plans.”⁸

In January, 1962 Loughmiller reported to the Springfield Building and Construction Trades Council on excellent cooperation from the Springfield Housing Authority in awarding remodeling contracts during the lean winter months and promoting new housing projects for the needy and aged. He expressed confidence that

construction on those projects would begin soon.⁹

To study employment conditions in Illinois, Governor Kerner in 1962 appointed a statewide Committee, endorsed by the State AFL-CIO, which comprised representatives from business, labor, government, and education. “This is, I believe,” Kerner stated, “the first time that opinions of labor unions have been sought as to what is being done and what should be done in the field of training and retraining workers; it is a reflection of the Committee’s recognition of the role that labor leaders can play in bringing workers and jobs together.”

Loughmiller responded to a state survey on training, noting that approximately three hundred of the Local’s members were unskilled or semi-skilled, working as oilers, helpers and greasers to maintain minor equipment. “These men learn their trade,” he reported, “by coming in direct contact with equipment which requires skilled operators. This we call on-job training. Some learn to be skilled operators.”¹⁰

When Loughmiller did not seek reelection in 1962,

both Business Representatives Renshaw and C. T. Flanders sought the Business Manager position. The members, after much discussion and some objection, approved a motion to change the voting method. Until then, each member mailed his ballot to the Local’s post office box, and three tellers tallied the votes. But when teller Hugo C. Zahn of Springfield went to the post office for the ballots in an election in the late 1950s, he found that someone had already taken them. Thus, the members decided that future elections would be held on only one day, at the union hall, with a curtained booth for privacy.

Renshaw won the position of Business Manager by the vote of 243-221. The following month, after Business Representative Walter Cary resigned, Renshaw appointed Zahn to Quincy and chose James A. Mayes for the Springfield area. Ralph Coates replaced Flanders in Decatur.¹¹

Considering a job offer from the state of Illinois, Loughmiller resigned as delegate to the many organiza-

tions in which he represented the Local, including the Springfield Building and Construction Trades Council.¹² Then, after more than thirty years in leadership positions with Local 965, he became a conciliator for the Illinois Department of Labor. In that position he helped Renshaw and succeeding Business Managers resolve members’ disputes regarding wages and working conditions. Loughmiller also remained involved with the Local, attending membership meetings



*Evans Construction Company crane — circa 1960s
Pete Ruzic is operator.*

and representing the group at conventions and other programs.¹³

In the late 1950s, the IUOE as well as the Locals had begun studying both pension and health insurance as benefits for their members. "The only pension we had at the time," remembered one IUOE member, "was a hat we would pass around when retirees would come to the union hall to get something to do because they had no money. I hated to see a good and respectable aged man who did not have any income after he retired. In those days the equipment was different and the operator had to be strong to handle it. You had to have strong shoulders and knees, and after 30 years of work the machinery would wear you down."

Lane Kirkland, IUOE Research and Education Director who would later become president of the AFL-CIO, led the effort to develop retirement provisions that would be included in contract negotiations.¹⁴ The resulting IUOE Central Pension Fund, approved in 1960, is funded by contributing employers for members of their participating Locals. Although the son of Financial Secretary John S. Hudson recalled that "some of the old-timers didn't want money taken out of their checks," Hudson reported to the International in January, 1963 that Local 965 members, by a 2-1 margin, agreed to participate.¹⁵

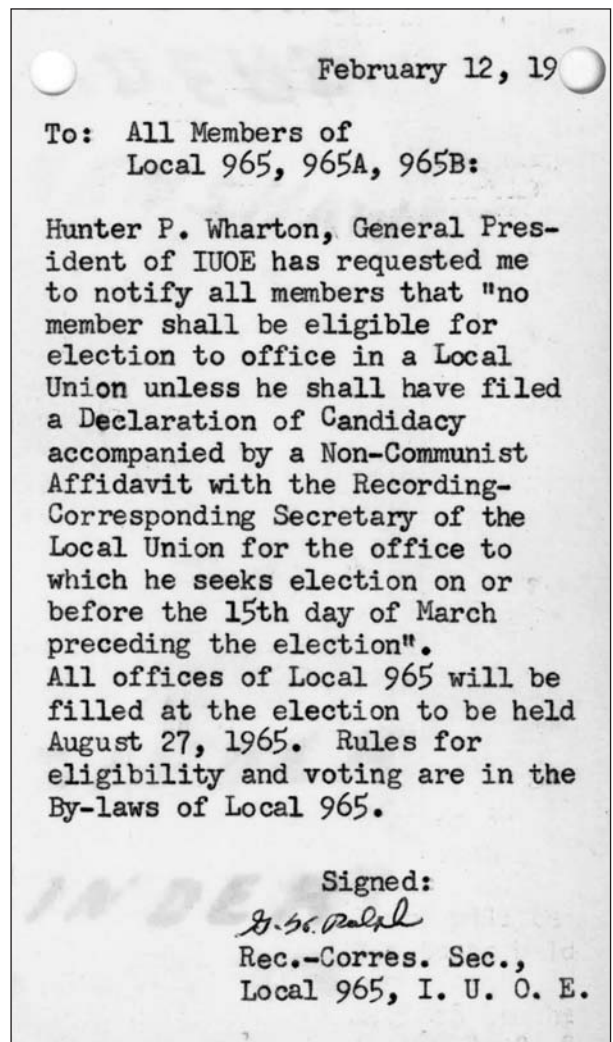
Business Manager Renshaw delegated Financial Secretary Hudson and Business Representative Zahn to negotiate the new construction contract with the AGC of Illinois and the Central Illinois Builders of the AGC. Obtaining a legal exclusive referral system was one of the major accomplishments of those negotiations, which also resulted in establishing the Pension Plan, the Health and Welfare Plan, and the Apprenticeship and Skill Improvement Program (which was not funded in the contract until 1969).

The Local joined the Central Pension Fund in May, 1963, primarily because it provided an immediate pension for retiring members of up to \$75 per month (\$1 for each year of membership back to age forty, for each 5 cents of contribution per hour in the first contract. Local 965 started with 15 cents per hour).

The Health and Welfare Plan was begun in May, 1964, with a contribution rate of 10 cents per hour, and the first benefits were provided in November. The plan has continued to be improved, and retirees' supplemental insurance was added in 1983.¹⁶

In early 1963, Renshaw reported that "the financial situation of the Local was very good and that the expense accounts were running about half of what they had been in the past." He noted five hundred more job assignments than at the same time in 1962. Members approved a Resolution naming the Financial Secretary, then John S. Hudson, as supervisor of the office staff, "in such positions as Bookkeeper, Typist, or Stenographer," with authority to hire or fire any employee with approval of the Executive Board.¹⁷

With stable membership and finances, the members decided to locate a permanent facility for their offices



Election Notice



Findley Bridge — Lake Shelbyville
Photo courtesy of Decatur Herald and Review

and meetings. They approved a Resolution establishing a seven-member Building Committee, including the three Trustees, to find “either a suitable building for purchase by the Local Union or suitable land to be purchased for and construction of a building to house this Local Union.” The Committee comprised Trustees Coates, Marion C. “Rocky” Davis and Nicholas Carriger of Springfield, and Bernard Thompson of Rushville, along with Mayes, Renshaw, and Zahn.¹⁸

The members approved a \$1 per month dues increase, beginning July 1, 1964, to be assessed until completion of the building. Earlier that year Zahn resigned as Business Representative for the Quincy area and was replaced by George Ackerman. In the 1964 election, Zahn unsuccessfully challenged Renshaw for the position of Business Manager.¹⁹ In October of 1964 Local 965 members approved extending the terms for officers from one to three years, and IUOE General President Hunter P. Wharton approved the change.

In 1965 the Local applied for and received a C Charter, for organizing operators of owned, leased, or rented equipment. Applicants for C memberships signed

agreements to contact the Local office “when extra operators are needed” and to “pay into the Health and Welfare and Pension Funds on all operators who are employed by us.”²⁰

That year Local 965 accepted its first black member. Donald E. Bunch of Springfield, a welder at Witt-Armstrong, was a member until his retirement in 2000. His brother, Charles Bunch, joined the Local in 1966, as an employee of S. J. Groves Construction Company.²¹

When Renshaw did not seek reelection as Business Manager in 1965, Mayes defeated Zahn for the position. As Business Representatives, Mayes chose Leo Stewart for the Quincy area, Fred Altman in Decatur, and Lyman Ginder in Springfield.²²

Work continued strong in the mid-1960s, including dismantling and reconstruction of the Old State Capitol in downtown Springfield, a new post office in Springfield, seventy-two miles of pipeline in the western part of the state, a dam at Lake Shelbyville (*see page 67 for additional photos*), a bridge at Findley, buildings at Caterpillar Tractor and Millikin University in Decatur, a power plant at Kincaid, and buildings for the state school in Lincoln, as well as continuing progress on the interstate highway system in central Illinois. By summer of 1966, Mayes reported only “fifteen to eighteen men” on the out-of-work-board.²³

In March, members had approved a Resolution regarding the proposed new facility for the Local. The Resolution permitted the Building Committee “to select and purchase land desired for the site and to proceed

with construction of a building and purchase of furniture and fixtures to be used for offices, meeting hall and other needs of this Local Union,” with the provision that the Executive Board approve all expenditures. In the meantime, after the Teamsters sold their Union Hall at 619 North Grand East, Local 965 leased meeting space at 2720 South Thirteenth Street, for six months at \$15 per month.²⁴

Then in May, Mayes reported to the Executive Board that the Building Committee “had inspected a one and one-half acre building site in the 3500 block of East Cook and found it very suitable for our new offices and meeting hall.” The Executive Board authorized the Committee to purchase the land for \$15,000, plus survey and legal fees.²⁵

In August the low bidder for the new building, Ray Sullivan of the Caturfield Construction Company of Decatur, described to the Executive Board his construction plans. After a lengthy discussion, the Board unanimously agreed to spend a maximum of \$58,360, agreeing to cash \$20,000 in bonds and finance the balance with a \$40,000 loan from Illinois National Bank. In September the Board approved an additional \$5,000 to cover the costs for heating and air-conditioning systems. And in December they voted to spend approximately \$4,000 for office and meeting room furniture.²⁶

Several changes in Business Representative staffing occurred in the mid-1960s. After

Altman resigned in late 1966 as the Decatur-area representative, Mayes appointed Milford Bess to the position. By summer, 1967, however, he, too, resigned, as did Stewart in Quincy. Most of the resignations resulted from the men deciding to return to operating work.

Then when Mayes resigned in March, 1968, officers at a special meeting elected President Fred Altman to fill the unexpired term. His temporary replacement as President was Vice President Robert Mathon, succeeded after the summer election by Lyman Ginder.²⁷

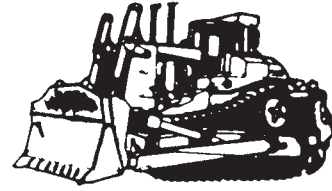
Walter Charles Cammire took over the Quincy territory, and Paul Sanders was briefly in Decatur, followed by Flanders, returning to the position he had held from 1948 to 1962. Then, when Ginder and Cammire both resigned in 1968, their replacements were Zahn in Springfield and Roy Dean DuRall in Quincy, followed by Glendel H. Ralph.²⁸

With construction of the Local 965 hall completed in January, 1967, the Executive Board joined the Building

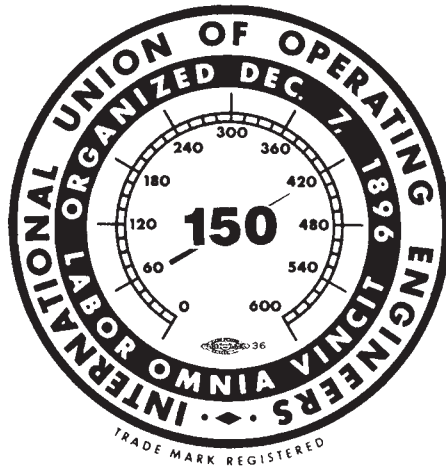


*Sangamo Construction, Lake Springfield Bridge — 1968
Brother Glenn Albers operating crane*

LOCAL 150



INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS



WILLIAM E. DUGAN
President-Business Manager

JAMES M. SWEENEY
Vice President

STEVEN M. CISCO
Recording/Corresponding Secretary

DAVID A. FAGAN
Financial Secretary

JOSEPH P. WARD
Treasurer

Committee for a final inspection. North American Van Lines moved the office furniture from 641½ West Monroe to the new facility at 3520 East Cook Street.²⁹

After a member asked to hold a wedding reception in the building, the Executive Board approved its use for various occasions, “but all expenses incurred, same must be paid by the person or persons who use same, and they must pay for damage that is done to building in any way. Presiding officers of Local be in charge to see that building is locked and closed properly.”³⁰

Acknowledging the lengthy service of many in the Local, the Executive Board approved purchasing and presenting commemorative pins to all twenty-five year members. The first pins were awarded at the 1967 Christmas party in the new building.³¹

Following passage of the 1964 federal Civil Rights Act, an officer of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission notified Local 965 in August, 1967 to send monthly reports specifying the number of employment applications received, according to race, color and creed, and whether they were employed through the Local’s work board. IUOE General President Hunter P. Wharton instructed the Locals to comply with the report requests.³²

Responding to the notification, Local 965 members approved a Resolution that when reviewing membership inquiries the Examining Committee would not exclude applicants for membership “on the basis of

- a) Race
- b) Color
- c) Religion
- d) Sex (although it is recognized that for the most part in the Operating Engineers local Unions male employment is preferred and necessary)
- e) National origin.”

In addition, the Examining Committee agreed not to limit or segregate applicants for membership, “except to demonstrate readiness for certain forms of employment as an operating engineer,” and not to discriminate in the operation of training or apprentice programs:

It is desired that the Examining Committee inquire generally and without limitation to these areas into the experience of any applicant for membership as an operating engineer or as an employee in the field and also into the total work experience of the applicant and his employment history. Inquiry may be made concerning the applicant’s present or past membership in the Communist party.

The Examining Committee is directed to inquire of applicants concerning their history in any labor organization including the International Union of Operating Engineers, particularly with respect to suspensions, withdrawals, work stoppages, picketing, prior applicants for membership to any local union, and membership within any other labor organization. It should be understood that the Examining Committee’s inquiries may be broader than the above listed categories with a general view toward securing the widest possible information concerning ability, experience, and background relative to the suitability of the applicant for membership in Local No. 965.³³

The U.S. Department of Labor, according to Zahn, had been monitoring the status of blacks and other minorities in the construction industry. “This Local and others were sued,” he said, “for not having any minority workers on the Old State Capitol reconstruction project”:

As the Springfield Business Representative, I became the go-between with the contractors and the government. One of the contractors hired a black worker, Henri Jackson, with only about a week left on the demolition project. After the job was completed, the contractor told me he had a check for Jackson but couldn’t locate him. I said, “Bring me the check, and we’ll use our best initiatives to find him.” I went to an all-black bar at the address I had for Jackson. After a brief unfriendly period, a woman said she would tell him to come down from upstairs, that someone wanted to speak with him.

Henri began working for us as an apprentice and was a member until he died in 1979.

In 1969 Janice Brooks of Auburn began an eighteen-year tenure as secretary of Local 965, hired by Financial Secretary Hudson. In addition to the secretarial duties for the officers and business representatives, Brooks helped members with health and welfare and pension issues and assisted during elections. "During the winters," she said, "members who were not working would volunteer to help sort and fold material" for the elections and other mailings.

Later that year Hudson resigned as Financial Secretary, after serving in the position for eleven years.

The constitutional officers appointed Zahn to complete the unexpired term, and his Business Representative position was filled by Marvin Phares of Taylorville.³⁴

At that time the members approved a Resolution honoring charter member Loughmiller's lengthy service to Local 965. He "worked diligently to promote the organization and progress of this Local Union during its early days," according to the Resolution, "and he has continuously worked to advance the interest of Local 965 and also of the International Union of Operating Engineers." The members bestowed Loughmiller with the title "Number One" in the seniority records.³⁵

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LOCAL UNION NO. 965

ON ITS

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— FIVE —

Expansion

1970-1980

Building-trades unions are willing to do our share in a cooperative venture to improve productivity.... We are well aware that the standard of living of our members rises and falls with the profits of our employers.

IUOE General President J.C. Turner, 1976-1985

The International Union's and Local 965's growth during the 1960s and into the 1970s resulted primarily from expansion in the construction industry for secondary highways, airports, site preparation for suburban housing, and industrial parks, as well as the final segments of the interstate highway system.

Following the International's aggressive promotion of formal skill development program, Local 965 in 1970

began the Operating Engineers Apprenticeship and Skill Improvement training program. The goal was "to promote the supply of skilled, adaptable Craftsmen of this trade and therefore improve the overall qualifications of the membership of this Local Union."¹

Former Financial Secretary John S. Hudson became the program coordinator, with an office behind the union quarters. Ralph R. Hart chaired the Apprenticeship and

Skill Improvement Committee, composed of three employer representatives and three Local 965 members to oversee the new program. The training site was located at Buckhart, about ten miles from the Local's headquarters, with loaned and donated machinery for the initial training of apprentices and skill improvement instruction for current members.

By January of the following year, Hudson reported that twenty-one apprentices were enrolled in the program. The pay during their six-month probationary period was 60 percent of the journeyman scale, and thereafter would equal the oiler scale. The apprentices worked for various contractors, receiving benefits and services provided through the Local's agreements and working rules.²



Operating Engineers Skill Improvement Program — 1971

Three AGC firms provided equipment for Springfield Local 965 Operating Engineers Skill Improvement Program at the Buckhart training site.

Left to right: Fred Altman, business manager, Springfield Local 965, Operating Engineers; Pete Bogumill, instructor; J.P. Coates, instructor; John S. Hudson, training program coordinator, Local 965.



Boy Scout Reservation Project

Pictured in front of the TD 15 tractor used on the Boy Scout Reservation project are: Robert Moore, training director, Local 841; John S. Hudson, coordinator of Local 965, Springfield Training Program; Fred Altman, business agent, Springfield Local 965; Joe Pirtle, business manager, Local 841; A.C. Huckaba, president, Huckaba & Sons Construction, (AGC of Illinois), Charleston, Illinois.

Once the program was in full operation, the Executive Board adopted Business Manager Fred Altman’s recommendation that “any member who is not qualified to operate equipment that we presently have at the training site, and is fired from a job for not being able to operate that piece of equipment for contractors signatory to our agreement, be required to operate that piece of equipment at the training site in a satisfactory manner or remove it from his qualification card.”³

In early 1971 Local 965 and Local 841 of Terre Haute Indiana, joined with two AGC of Illinois contractors on a volunteer project to develop 620 acres near Paris, Illinois for a Boy Scout reservation. Using equipment provided by Huckaba & Sons Construction of Charleston and A.J. Walker Construction of Mattoon, trainees in the Apprenticeship program built roads and five lakes for the new Lincoln Trails Council reservation.

That cooperative project began a long volunteer association between

contractors and participants in 965’s Apprenticeship and Skill Improvement program. Over the years, contractors and union members have worked together on such community projects as parks and baseball and soccer fields.

For the organization’s fortieth anniversary, the officers held a party at the Elks Club in April, 1971. That year Financial Secretary Hugo C. Zahn, Hudson, and Omar Daniels, a member from Local 150 in Chicago, attended the Tri-State Apprenticeship Conference in Springfield. One of the speakers, Jake Gaither, serving as civil rights director for the Federal Highway Administration, talked about the lack of minorities in construction unions. “Gaither explained,” Zahn said, “that eventually the federal government would withhold funds from jobs in

progress that didn’t have minority workers. After his speech, the three of us talked to him”:

We were concerned that the federal government was pointing at Illinois, and we discussed with him what could be done. Our apprentices qualified for the federal guidelines, but we didn’t have enough minorities to fill all the slots.

We began negotiating with Jake and wrote a proposal for all of Illinois. In spring of 1972, we were able to obtain contracts with the Illinois Department of Transportation to start a



Tractor Push loads one of two scrapers on project.



Buckhart Training Site — circa 1970's

Supportive Services program. We hired people in each area of the state as recruiters, including a black from Local 520 in East St. Louis.

But then the FHA cut off funding for two or three jobs in the East St. Louis area. We organized all of the information about the contacts we had made with the carpenters and other locals, etc. I called Jake and told him that we needed those funds. "If you have evidence of the people you have recruited can make it on the job," he said, "take it to the East St. Louis locals to get some of them hired."

The next day, starting with the Operating Engineers, we put one minority on each job that was shut down. I wasn't popular, but the funds were cut loose and the contractors went back to work.

Zahn became the Director of the new Illinois Operating Training Coordinators Committee Supportive Service program, to recruit minority

and economically disadvantaged workers. In August, 1971, he was elected to succeed Lyman Ginder as 965 President. IUOE General President Hunter Wharton ruled that Zahn could hold the elective office while also supervising the Supportive Service program. His role as program Director, according to the General President, "would be considered working at the trade." Marvin Phares won election to the position of Financial Secretary.⁴

At Altman's initiative, members in the summer of 1972 provided volunteer help to build Railsplitter State Park in Lincoln and the Boys Club

building in Springfield. And on the grounds of the Local hall, volunteers installed a large bell that was donated by member Paul Sanders.⁵

On the retirement of Business Representative C. T. Flanders in spring of 1973, officers of the Decatur Building Trades Council praised his years of service. "He truly was a devoted servant to Organized Labor and



Burning of Local 965 First Union Hall Mortgage — 1971
Leo Bachinski, regional director, Elmer Renshaw, treasurer, Hugo C. Zahn, financial secretary, Fred Altman, business manager, Lyman Ginder, business agent, John S. Hudson, past financial secretary and chairman of building committee.



3.33 Mile Stretch of I-55 — October 5, 1971

Pictured here is a section of I-55 constructed by Sangamo Construction Company, Springfield, IL. It was opened to traffic on November 8.

what it stands for,” they wrote to 965 members. During the following winter, Minutes of one meeting recorded that Flanders was “taking in the Florida sun with a new fishing pole and to tell everyone he missed seeing them but didn’t miss the work.”⁶

Apprenticeship and training coordinator Hudson reported that for the 1973 class, fifteen apprentices had been selected from 295 applicants. Then, following Hudson’s resignation that summer “to return to work at the trade,” Kenneth D. Shehorn of Mount Pulaski was selected as the coordinator, soon followed by Charles Bridgewater of Versailles.⁷

The Business Representative in the Quincy area was Glendel Ralph, followed by Raymond Smith. “The five counties in the western territory are the most difficult for a Business Rep. to cover,” according to Smith, “because there is only

one major city, and there isn’t the political clout working for us as there is in the Springfield and Decatur area”:

We did have several small contractors in the Quincy area that were signatory to our contract, and we also had a strong Building & Trades.

One of the hi-lites of being Business Rep. of the western territory was when Haliburton Co. from Texas, whose C.E.O. is now Vice President of the United States Dick Cheney, came to the Meredosia power house. I was told that they had never hired union labor. But we came to an agreement and had several operators working there.

In Decatur, Kenneth Tipsword succeeded Business Representative Flanders, and in Springfield, Dean DuRall was followed by Robert Farley. Charles Murphy of Springfield covered the fifteen county jurisdiction as



First Class of Apprentices

Front, left to right: David Robinson, Raymond Anderson, James Stickler, Charles Cantrell, James Faulkner, Ronald Decker, Terry Geary, Gregory Henry. Back, left to right: Michael Fowler, Edward Klein, Robert McMakin, John Brickey, Jay Aemaitis, Bill Lawson, Ronald Waldron, John Dietz, Darrell Lewis, Tom Mahoney, Danny McCabe.

Indenture date - June 1, 1970 — Graduation to Journeyman - November 28, 1973



Dinner Dance — 1974

Pictured above from left to right are: Vern Shehorn, wife Sharon, Hubert “Buck” Blockyou, wife Ruth, Kenny Shehorn, wife Nancy, unknown, unknown, Bill Hawk, Doug Boyum, wife Jennifer

Business Representative for sand and gravel plants and material yards.

In 1973 IUOE General President Wharton approved the formation of the Illinois State Council of Operating Engineers, a federation of the seven IUOE Hoisting and Portable Locals, which was later expanded to include the stationary locals within the state (the largest number of Locals in any state). Local 965’s Executive Board approved membership in the Council, and over the years 965 officers have been active participants.⁸

Although some construction projects were delayed by a widespread months-long fuel shortage, Altman reported in September, 1973 that “work was good,” but he sometimes had difficulty finding “qualified help for the jobs.” Representative Tipsword added that with the heavy work load in the Decatur area, he would appreciate cooperation from the members. “For instance,” he said, “if you are suspicious of someone operating equipment on your job, check with the person first,” instead of calling Tipsword “to drive 50 miles to find out everything was OK.” In November, Altman noted that eight hundred more jobs were filled to that time than the total number for 1972.⁹

Members were working on a variety of construction jobs: I-72 between Decatur and Monticello and west of Jacksonville, a sewage disposal plant in Quincy, sewer projects in Divernon, southwest Springfield and at the city’s Capital Airport, additions to Memorial and St. John’s hospitals in Springfield and to Archer Daniels Midland in Decatur, and a new high school in Chatham.¹⁰

In March of 1974, Altman reported serious problems in negotiations with the Associated General Contractors and Central Illinois Builders. The Board gave him and the negotiation committee, “at their discretion,” authority to strike. A few days later, however, while still in

negotiations, the sixty-five-year-old Altman suddenly died.

The tributes that followed came from fellow union members, contractors, and government officials, including former Illinois Governor Richard B. Ogilvie. “We had our differences,” wrote Keith Prunty of Freesen, Inc., of Bluffs, “and this was to be expected, but we also felt a very deep and sincere friendship towards Fred. He was a fighter for his cause, but he was also a gentleman and had our respect.” Quincy Business Representative Smith recalled that Altman “had nothing but the best interest for this Local and put his heart and soul into it. It was a pleasure working with him.”

Recognizing his lengthy service to Local 965, IUOE General President Wharton approved engraving the Union emblem on Altman’s gravestone.¹¹ At a special meeting in late March, the Constitutional officers selected Zahn to succeed Altman as Business Manager, with Thomas Payne of Buffalo replacing Zahn as President. Both positions were temporary, until the September election.¹²

Then, following the lifting of federal wage and price controls in early May, members at a special meeting

voted 277-36 to approve the Central Illinois Builders' wage-increase proposal. The officers granted Zahn and the Local negotiation committee authority to approve a contract with the Associated General Contractors of Illinois "if it is identical to the increase the members approved from the C.I.B." When the AGC offered a smaller increase, Zahn and the committee presented the proposal to the members, who rejected it 23-315.¹³

Thus followed a month-long strike against the AGC. Some four thousand Teamsters and other downstate union members struck as well, effectively halting highway construction in twenty-four central Illinois counties. After the Teamsters settled their dispute in June, the other Locals, including 965, agreed to similar terms with the contractors.¹⁴

The following month Zahn reported that during a ten-day period, "close to 1,000 jobs had been filled." Later in the year he "requested help from all members in the field, due to the large amount of work now going on." Current and planned projects included expansion of Camp Butler military cemetery near Springfield; sewer

work in Stonington, Dawson, Mechanicsburg, and Buffalo; civic centers in Springfield and Decatur; Caterpillar and ADM expansion in Decatur; four bridges, a pipeline, and sports complex in Quincy; and a \$150 million power plant at Rockport. With so many job openings, Representative Smith asked that members in the Quincy area "quit sending in unqualified people" to register to work.¹⁵

In 1974 Local 965 began participating in the federal Jobs Corps program, sponsored by the International, to place minority and disadvantaged operating engineers. As Business Manager, Zahn agreed to accept six minorities. "Be here on Saturday morning, for work on Monday morning," he told the six men. Five came to the hall on Saturday and were told they would begin working on an S. J. Groves road construction project near Decatur, as Zahn recalled:

On Sunday morning a black guy and girl showed up at my house, as my wife and I were getting ready for church. He said they got lost and stopped at a tavern in Illiopolis to ask if anyone knew me. The bartender gave them my address.

We had coffee, and I told him to be at the office at 6 on Monday morning and we would find him a job. His name was T. J. Turner, and he is still a member. For several years he worked for our Supportive Service program to recruit qualified minority and disadvantaged workers, then returned to the trade. Henri Jackson also worked for five or six years as a Supportive Service recruiter in the Springfield area.

The program was discontinued in about 2004, however, when the state cut the funding. Now, no one has the full time responsibility of looking for those minority or disadvantaged people who could become qualified workers.



*Clinton Nuclear Power Station — 1978
Brother Don Ator setting the containment walls with a
Manitowoc 4600 Series B&C*

In the 1974 election, Payne won the Presidency, but Ginder defeated Zahn to become the new Business Manager. Past President and retired Business Manager Ross Loughmiller installed the officers at a membership meeting in September.¹⁶

Later in the year, members began site preparation for the construction of a nuclear power station and 5,000-acre cooling reservoir near Clinton. When the multi-year construction began in early 1975, three shifts of operating engineers were needed.¹⁷ "It was a boom era," said John B. Hudson, son of longtime member and Financial Secretary John S. Hudson. "Lyman Ginder told our workers, 'If you don't like the job you're on, we'll find you another.' Everybody was making money. We had so much work, and we also had fun. One summer we worked 93-hour weeks."


In 1976, two years after Business Manager Altman's death, the Illinois Department of Conservation honored his volunteer work for the agency by installing a memorial flagpole and plaque at the entrance to Railsplitter State Park (now the Edward R. Madigan State Fish and Wildlife Area) in Lincoln.¹⁸

In 1977 IUOE General President J. C. Turner notified all Locals that, since the federal Department of Labor

had recently questioned the requirement of a non-communist affidavit as a condition for eligibility for office, IUOE officers had deleted the requirement from the International Constitution. Local 965 followed his recommendation to remove the requirement from its Bylaws.¹⁹

At the 1979 Decatur Labor Day parade, the Decatur Trades and Labor Assembly presented Local 965 with the second place trophy. The members agreed to donate the \$100 prize to the Ansar Shrine Crippled Children's Hospital in St. Louis.²⁰


By the late 1970s, the boom decade was fading, as the amount of work declined, particularly in the western area. In the east, a number of operators remained at the Clinton power plant as well as on several large jobs in Decatur. But even there, Business Representative Tipsword noted "not much State or Federal work in sight."²¹ High inflation and high interest rates were causing a construction slowdown, state legislators were enacting laws to ban the closed shop through "right to work" laws which was defeated. In response, unions began making concessions to business, "give-backs," of earlier gains in order to save existing jobs.



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Struggles

1980-1990

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AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland,
Former IUOE Research and Education Director

The year 1980 marked the beginning of a series of setbacks for organized labor around the nation and in central Illinois, brought on by the poor economic conditions. The national Business Roundtable, formed several years earlier by some two hundred corporation executives partially to challenge union influence in the political realm, stepped up their efforts to reduce construction costs by replacing union contractors with open-shop contractors.

In February, Local 965 Business Manager Lyman Ginder reported 450 members on the out-of-work board, but was encouraged by planned construction for later in the year that included a new state Department of Revenue building and the expansion of Madison Avenue in Springfield. Other projects included a Pittsburgh Plate Glass plant at Mount Zion, water treatment facilities, bridges in Pike County, and road overlay work through-



Demonstrators and Macon County Deputies keep a wary eye on each other, early Thursday morning at the ADM east plant. October 17, 1980.

Photo courtesy of Decatur Herald & Review

out the jurisdiction. Still, reductions in federal funding seriously impacted new construction, and by autumn the Business Representatives again complained of slow-downs as well as an increasing number of non-union projects.¹

In Decatur, the Archer Daniels Midland Company began hiring non-union construction contractors. That decision caused a ripple effect throughout the jurisdiction, as union members feared that the firm would eventually employ non-union workers for all of its building projects. In summer of 1980, Local 146 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers went on strike against ADM, and in October, with the strike still in progress, Laborers Local 159 set up pickets at plant entrances. Members of seventeen area Locals, including 965, expressed solidarity with the Decatur union members by refusing to cross the picket lines. Their actions disrupted the expansion of ADM's corn sweetener, alcohol and carbon dioxide facilities.

"Organized labor in Decatur goes back a long way," one Local 146 member told a reporter. "We built those plants out there. With the high unemployment in the city, everybody is sick and tired of them (ADM) going outside the state to hire non-union workers." One pro-labor demonstration led to brief violence, when protestors damaged and then overturned a guard shack and burned a new sign that had been installed to provide directions for ADM contractors and delivery truckers.²

"The unions made a mistake in the ADM labor disruption," said Local 965's Michael D. Zahn. "Some of the union workers were leaving before the end of their shifts, and the company was understandably rigid in requiring a full day of work. We are still paying for that mistake with ADM."³

Between January 1981 and November, 1982 the nation's unemployment rate skyrocketed from 7.4 percent to 10.8 percent, the highest since the era of the Great Depression. Congress responded by enacting laws

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aimed at putting Americans back to work. Democratic Senator Edward Kennedy and Republican Dan Quayle sponsored legislation that provided training for displaced workers in depressed industries and permitted union-related organizations to conduct training projects.⁴

After the Professional Air Traffic Controllers (PATCO) staged a strike in 1981, however, newly inaugurated Republican President Ronald Reagan fired 11,400 of the controllers, breaking both the strike and the union. Throughout the decade of conservative national leadership, federal judges often interpreted labor laws to the detriment of union workers, and appointments to the National Labor Relations Board became “labor unfriendly.”⁵

Union contractors around the country were not successful on bids that they would have obtained in the previous decade. Within Local 965, the Officers and Business Manager Lyman Ginder strived to cope with the situation. “Reagan and the NLRB changes,” recalled

John B. Hudson, “put us on the defensive—and employers on the offensive. Contract negotiations up to that time had been pretty congenial, but then it changed. With lawyers advising the contractors, negotiations turned into bitter legal strategies: impasse bargaining.”

In September, 1980 Ginder had hired Charles Whited, a member for more than thirty years, as Representative for the Quincy area. Then, following Kenneth Tipsword’s resignation in early 1981, Thomas Payne represented the Decatur area, while also serving as President.

With the open shop movement gaining strength in the industrial city of Decatur, Local 965 responded to a Laborers Local appeal by donating \$500 to the Committee for the Preservation of Organized Labor. Members also joined a coalition “to combat the non-union element” on coal-mine construction near Elkhart in Sangamon County.⁶

Your Brothers & Sisters from Local 318 Southern Illinois



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you on your
75th Year
of Dedication*

The Local's 50th anniversary passed in April, with little to celebrate. In May, citing "lack of work" for the trainees, the Executive Board laid off Apprenticeship and Training Coordinator Charles Bridgewater. The following month, Ginder reported that work was "very slow, only getting short jobs and about 200 men on the out-of-work board." He noted that one contractor had "about \$600,000 worth of work, non-union." At that same meeting, the officers discussed the Local's deteriorating financial situation, agreeing that "sometime in the future action will have to be taken to stay solvent."⁷

Then in July, Ginder attended a conference of the IUOE North/Central States, a federation of some forty Locals in states from Ohio to Texas. On his return, Ginder told the Local 965 Executive Board that he "couldn't report anything but gloom. Rep. [Thomas] Eagleton (D-Mo.) had told the conference that Pres. Reagan had the Democrats on his side and could do about anything he wanted to." Ginder added that "the work picture is bad in all the Locals" of the Conference.⁸

Later in the summer he expressed further concern, reporting "some big contractors going non-union and work is looking bad." When Financial Secretary Marvin Phares reported the Local's finances "in bad shape," members accepted his recommendation to cash and deposit several bonds in the General Fund.⁹

In September, President Payne called a Special Membership meeting and then an Executive Board meeting to discuss the Local's continuing dire financial situation. After considerable discussion, the Officers agreed to a dues increase of \$2 per month, beginning in January, 1982.¹⁰

In addition, Ginder laid off Business Representatives Whited in Quincy and Charles Murphy in Springfield. Payne assumed responsibility for the areas east of Springfield, and Ginder took over the western portion of the jurisdiction. Payne added that most of the existing work was nearly completed, "the Clinton powerhouse laying off a few men at a time," and "not much work starting up."¹¹

By spring of 1982 Ginder rehired Whited as Business Representative for Quincy. In Springfield, however, Murphy was struggling with the lack of operating work. "I will have worked 3 days in 3 weeks," he wrote in his daily journal in June. "No calls for work again today."

Returning from the spring North/Central States Conference, Ginder reported that "job situations in other parts of the country are as bad and some worse than our own. Many Local Unions are losing large numbers of members."¹²

Contractors for several area projects, including an insurance building in Lincoln and Wal-Mart in Clinton, were hiring non-union construction workers. Ginder reported that at the 1982 IUOE national Business Managers meeting, Democratic Senator Robert C. Byrd told the attendees "we needed six more seats in the Senate to keep Reagan from breaking the unions." IUOE General President J. C. Turner requested each Local to contribute \$5 per member to the Engineers Political Education Committee for the November mid-term election. He also asked that members voluntarily raise funds in support of pro-union candidates.¹³

When the Quincy Building Trades Council lacked the money to continue its subscription to the *Quincy Labor News*, Local 965 in August, 1982 covered the approximately \$80 cost for three months. The following month the struggling Quincy organization merged with the West Central Building Trades Council in Peoria.¹⁴

Murphy noted in January, 1983 that he had not had "a call for work for a good 3 weeks," and added, "The work picture really looks bad for this year." That month, 385 members were listed on the out-of-work board, with Whited reporting "a lot of non-union work going on in Quincy."

Retired member John S. Hudson reminded one member, "While I know that work is scarce and most members had a bad year, this has happened before and it will sometimes be better and sometimes be worse. In 1950 I worked in five states because I had a family to support and had to go where the work was. I lived in Springfield and took a one day job in Quincy or Shelbyville, or anywhere else, many times."¹⁵

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***55 Year Membership Presentation
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Business Manager Hugo C. Zahn presenting Ross Loughmiller with his 55 year membership pin.

In the eastern territory, work during 1983 was equally slow, although Representative Payne reported construction on three bridges, “two men on each bridge.” He predicted “lots of good work” soon, including further construction of Interstate 72 and other roadways. Members Gary L. Dodge of Springfield and Robert Brickey Sr., reopened the training facility at Buckhart, offering instruction for both apprentices and fellow members to upgrade their skills. Still, with a rainy spring and a lack of large projects, more than three hundred members remained on the out-of-work board in June.¹⁶

In the 1983 election, Robert Mathon was chosen as President, a position he would hold until 1992. Thomas Payne succeeded Marvin Phares as Financial Secretary, and Hugo C. Zahn became the Business Manager. “The Local was broke” at that time, Zahn recently recalled. “We introduced supplemental dues, which got us to where we could hold our own.” The 15 cent-per-hour

supplemental dues was deducted by the contractors, later increased several times, then changed to a percentage of wages.¹⁷

Zahn hired Bill Edwards of Havana as Business Representative for the Quincy area and John B. Hudson for Springfield and Lincoln, soon succeeded by former Representative Charles Murphy. Zahn covered the Decatur area for a year before choosing Walter “Bill” Cary, followed on his retirement by Kenneth Tipword again and then Roger Pauley of Tower Hill.¹⁸

In 1983 the Executive Board accepted the first female member, Wendy Labonte of Chapin, followed in 1984 by Grace DeWitt of Versailles. Describing DeWitt’s experience and abilities a few years later, Zahn noted her confidence and initiative in seeking employment in a trade “that had previously been totally male dominated. That took real guts and perseverance.”¹⁹

Through the Local’s Apprenticeship and Skill Improvement Committee, Zahn in 1983 negotiated a pilot project with Gallagher Asphalt Corporation, headquartered in northern Illinois, to provide additional training for unemployed members. “If we can get such programs approved by the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration,” Zahn reported at an October meeting, “we will be able to use members who have been unemployed for a long time and are financially hurting as trainees on projects which require them instead of taking in more apprentices or new people.” Within a year the Department of Transportation began utilizing the Local’s trainees.²⁰

In June 1984, as construction began slowly to increase, member Charles Bridgewater noted that “a lot of Brothers haven’t been working for 2 or 3 years and ask other Brothers to help them out on the job when they return.”²¹ Projects included state prisons at Lincoln and Jacksonville; a \$9 million addition to Memorial Hospital, expansion of the Southern Illinois School of Medicine, and construction of the Clear Lake Avenue overpass in Springfield; the Twin Eagle Bridges over the Illinois River at Valley City (*see page 64 & 65 for pho-*

tos); a coal mine at Camden; and residential subdivisions throughout the jurisdiction, along with dredging at Lake Springfield and several other road and sewer projects.²²

For the 1984 presidential election, IUOE General President Turner strongly encouraged union members and their families to support Democratic candidate Walter Mondale. Turner “pointed out,” as Secretary Hudson reported, “that the trade union movement would be seriously weakened should another candidate be nominated or elected.” Local 965 members manned phone banks for the Mondale/Geraldine Ferraro ticket, but a majority of American voters reelected the Republican Reagan-George Bush ticket.²³

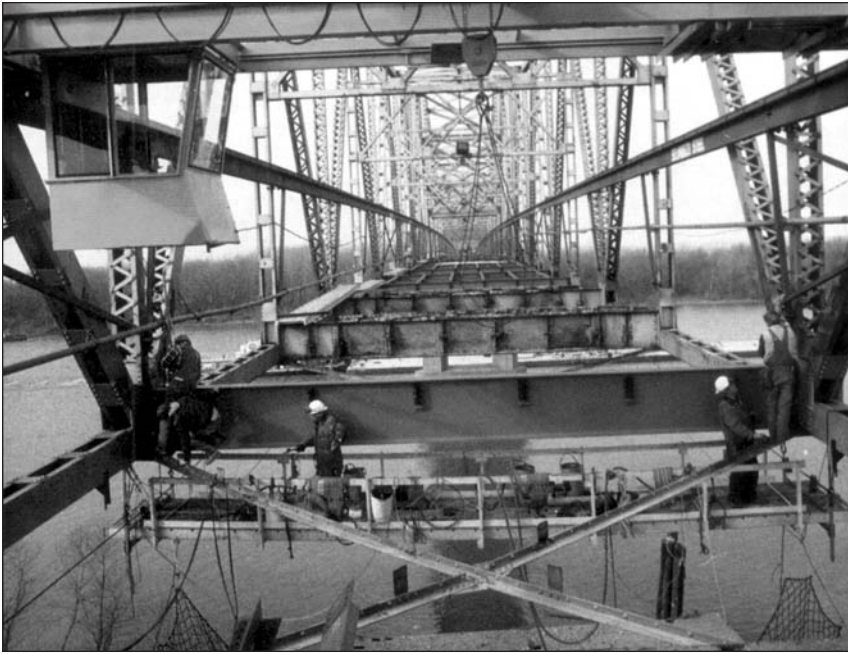
By mid-decade, the work situation improved significantly, with railroad relocation and a new State Library in Springfield, locks at Quincy and LaGrange, a prison at Mt. Sterling, several sanitary district projects, and a lake and resort near Shelbyville.

In May, 1985, several central Illinois road projects were idled when Local 965 went on strike against the Associated General Contractors of Illinois, representing about sixty area road-construction firms. “While wages were part of the negotiations,” reported the *Springfield State Journal-Register*, “Zahn and Eric Fields, labor relations director for the AGC, said the strike was not over economics. The AGC was seeking to restrict the scope of the agreement to keep it from covering contractor shop and yard workers. They also wanted to reduce manning requirements for some types of machinery and to have a greater say in which union members were hired. The union opposed all of those provisions.”

Projects affected by the strike included the widening of Carpenter Street, extension of Veterans Parkway, and construction of the I-55 interchange at Sherman. After three weeks of steady negotiations between Zahn and Fields, members ratified their tentative agreement in early June.²⁴



Beardstown Bridge 1986



Beardstown Bridge — Halverson Construction Company — 1986

The contract for complete floor system removal and truss span replacement for the Illinois River bridge on U.S. Route 67 at Beardstown, specified a \$5,000 per day bonus for early completion. This prompted the design and installation of two temporary overhead cranes onto the existing truss framework, giving full coverage to the structure. This innovative construction method enabled completion of the work in nearly half the anticipated time.

Near Clinton, the “big job” was the second phase of construction for the nuclear power plant, which required overtime hours for many operating engineers. Cost for the total facility was more than \$4 billion.²⁵ Murphy was among the members who traveled from Springfield daily. He wrote in his journal in December, 1986, “I hope this is a good Christmas for everyone; it has been a good year for me.”

The new year of 1987 began with a large construction project at Memorial Hospital in Decatur, and by May, Zahn reported only thirty-five names on the out-of-work board. The Apprenticeship and Skill Improvement Committee returned Charles Bridgewater to his position as coordinator of the program, preparing for the start of new apprentice classes.²⁶

Then in Springfield in June, Zahn announced the collapse of ongoing negotiations with Associated General Contractors of Illinois. One major issue was retroactive pay. “They stated they would implement their final pro-

posal on June 24,” Zahn reported, “and therefore we went on strike effective that day.”

The strike affected approximately eighty operating engineers, with John B. Hudson noting that their actions “had a lot of things shut down” that summer. Representative Tipsword added, “We need to unite more than any other time in our history.”²⁷ Then, after members struck Halverson Construction Company in Springfield, the Executive Board established a Strike Fund and a committee for its management.

Two weeks later Zahn presented a revised ACGI proposal to the Executive Board, but it was strongly rejected. Members of several area Locals helped picket job sites and contributed funds collected at their sites for the benefit of the striking 965 members. By mid-July, intense negotiations between Zahn and representatives of the contractors resulted in settlements of both the ACGI and Halverson disputes.²⁸

In late August, the Local staged another brief strike, this time against Freesen Inc., of Bluffs, one of the area’s largest employers for highway construction. “Freesen hired permanent replacements,” recalled Hudson. “Workers were lined up for blocks in Bluffs to be hired. But we prevailed, primarily because of Hugo’s ability to negotiate.”²⁹

In early 1988 Local 965 began a cooperative training program with the Laborers’ union, sharing equipment and instruction at their training site near Mount Sterling, in the western section of the jurisdiction. “There is good cooperation between Laborers and Operating Engineers, reported 965 instructor Donald Magowan. “This is money well spent.”³⁰

That year the Executive Board confronted what it considered employers’ increasingly “hostile attitude” toward unions that resulted from recent rulings by the National Labor Relations Board and federal courts. Those decisions, particularly the NLRB ruling in *John*



*City of Shelbyville Water Department
Debbie Hammond, Lead; Elaine Haslett; Janet Wise, Steward*

Deklaw & Sons, favored construction contractors over union representatives in pre-hire negotiations.

“At that time,” recalled Zahn, “the manner of negotiating collective bargaining agreements with members of the Associated General Contractors of Illinois changed”:

Many of the contractors withdrew their bargaining rights from the AGC and demanded to bargain separately for agreements with their companies. Some refused to bargain or tried to implement their own terms for employing operating engineers. Their actions were based on the NLRB “Deklaw” decision, permitting employers signatory to pre-hire agreements in the construction industry to walk away from the bargaining relationship at the end of the period of agreement.

Local 965 responded by filing petitions for certification with the NLRB as the exclusive bargaining representative of operating engineer employees of those companies and others that had agreements with the Local.

The NLRB held elections with the employees of each company, and the employees voted for Local 965 to be their bargaining agent. The NLRB then required the companies to negotiate with Local 965, and those negotiations were successful in reaching an agreement.

As protection against lockouts by employers and

strikes, the 965 officers established a Defense Fund for members. Monies deposited in the existing Strike Fund Account were transferred to the Defense Fund, along with an initial \$30,000 transferred from the General Fund. Future deposits of from \$0 to \$2 per active member were also designated for the Defense Fund, to be administered by the Executive Board.³¹

In 1988 the IUOE approved a D charter for Local 965, covering municipal work and similar non-construction units within the jurisdiction. Employees of the City of Shelbyville became the first D-charter members. Later the O charter would be instituted for workers on farm and landscape construction projects, and the RA charter for registered apprentices.³²

With a grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences in the late 1980s, the IUOE established a comprehensive hazardous materials “Hazmat” training program for its members, providing instructions for cleaning hazardous sites. To implement the Hazmat training, the union offered members an intensive eighty-hour “train the trainer” program at the National Mine Health and Safety Academy in Beckley, West Virginia.

Local 965 Training Coordinator Charles Bridgewater and Business Representatives Bill Edwards and Charles Murphy attended the Hazmat training program and yearly upgrade sessions. As instructors, they conducted forty-hour classes for members in Springfield and

Quincy who would be working with potentially hazardous materials.

The classes covered a variety of Hazmat-related topics, including recognizing and identifying such materials, industrial hygiene, toxicology, use of respirators, protective clothing, medical surveillance, radiation, and emergency entry and egress procedures. By learning the methods for handling hazardous materials, graduates of

the program can help protect the health and safety of fellow workers.³³

In May, 1989, Stone & Webster of Boston, Massachusetts, the lead engineering and construction firm on the Clinton Power Station, awarded a trophy to Local 965 for the safety measures they followed during building of the plant.³⁴

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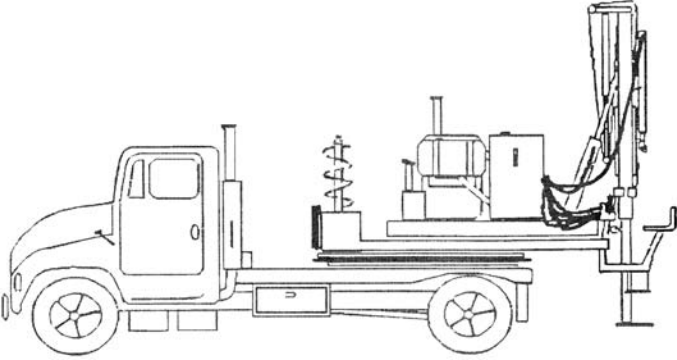
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The nationwide decline in International Union of Operating Engineers membership ended in the late 1980s, and the 1990s became years of renewed growth. Most Locals observed a policy of protecting veteran members from the competition of applicants. But IUOE leaders began developing a strategy for attracting more members, and the new General President, Frank Hanley, determined to make organizing a high priority towards that goal.

The IUOE's program of apprenticeship and training also played a role in the union's resurgence. Realizing that its greatest asset was the skills of its members, the International expanded its training activities. "We must train and retrain our members," Hanley told IUOE convention delegates in 1993, "so they have the skills to do the job better, safer and more efficiently than their competitors."¹

In Local 965, the Apprenticeship and Skill Improvement Committee offered expanded training opportunities. At the Buckhart Training Site experienced members taught classes for paver operator, screed operator, breakdown roller or finish roller operator, plant console operator, plant engineer, plant oiler, and endloader operator.²

Apprentice trainees worked on projects in the Village

of Rochester, paving roads and constructing baseball and soccer fields at the village park. Others helped with ground preparation on a site in Decatur and assisted in repairing a water line for the Springfield Animal Protective League's Waggin' Tales Shelter.³

Early in the decade the Local conducted brief strikes against the Calhoun County Contracting Corporation of Springfield and the Illinois Valley Paving Company. "Wages weren't the issue," explained Business Manager Hugo Zahn. "The strikes primarily were over working conditions. Technology increases equaled reduced manpower. The contractors want to control the jobs and employees, and they don't want any restrictions by unions. We, of course, want some restrictions. What they call restrictions, we call working conditions."⁴

Jobs during the period included reconstruction work at Spaulding Dam on Lake Springfield as well as the power plants at Springfield and Kincaid, dredge maintenance on the Mississippi River and at Lake Decatur, Route 51 south of Decatur, New Salem State Historic Site, and a new prison at Pittsfield.

Not all members were able to find employment on these projects, however. In spring of 1991 Zahn reported 275 men on the out-of-work board. He gave information on construction in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and at the

new Denver, Colorado airport. "Their local will call us," he reported, "when they need dirt hands."⁵

Prospects greatly improved with federal approval that year of the six-year \$155 billion Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). The legislation marked a change in the government's focus from building interstate highways to making them more accessible from secondary roads. From 1991 to 1997, Local 965 members would work on a variety of ISTEA-funded road projects, including U.S. 136/Illinois 336 from Quincy to Macomb and U.S. 67 from Alton to Jacksonville.

In the 1992 election, Kenneth Shehorn succeeded to the presidency following the ten-year term of Robert Mathon. In 1993 the International Union of Operating Engineers was one of only four major unions reporting membership increases of more than 50 percent from 1955. The other three were the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW), the

Communications Workers of America (CWA), and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW).

"At a time when most unions are suffering devastating losses in membership, the IUOE is growing," General President Frank Hanley reported at the 1993 national convention. "While other unions see little, if any, hope of growth, the IUOE is positioned to take advantage of the growing trend among underrepresented workers to seek unionization as the only means of achieving decent wages and working conditions."⁶

In December, longtime member and Springfield Business Representative Charles Murphy retired, "the end of my career as an Operating Engineer. The third generation [son C. Thomas] has taken my place. I hope the local Union is as good to him as it has been to my family."

The following December, Zahn also retired, after forty-five years as a Local 965 member. The Executive



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Board chose John B. Hudson as Zahn's successor as Business Manager, and in the fall of 1995 the members elected him to the position and Roger Pauley as the new Financial Secretary. Hudson appointed Tommy E. Nases, Sr. to succeed Murphy as Springfield-area Business Representative.⁷

That year Local 965 voiced solidarity with other union members, primarily Teamsters, Steelworkers, and United Rubber Workers, who were involved in bitter labor disputes at the Caterpillar and Bridgestone/Firestone plants in Decatur. Rejecting management demands for wage concessions and longer work shifts, Caterpillar workers went out on strike. And after Bridgestone-Firestone union workers struck over similar issues, company officials implemented a lockout and replaced the strikers with permanent nonunion workers.⁸

Local 965 President Shehorn expressed to the Executive Board his strong "displeasure with President Bill Clinton for intervening in the national baseball strike, while doing nothing" for the Decatur union workers. The Board agreed, authorizing Shehorn to write to President Clinton, "exclaiming our dissatisfaction at his involvement with the baseball strike when we have 4,000 people out on strike and locked out in Decatur."⁹

Five months later, the Caterpillar strikers returned to work without a contract. Bridgestone-Firestone workers, facing a union decertification drive, voted to accept management restrictions. Only half of the members were rehired, to work alongside their nonunion replacements.¹⁰

After Shehorn died in office in the spring of 1995, members approved the following Resolution in his memory:

Whereas, Brother Shehorn devoted much of his life to serving his brother Engineers in many offices of this Local from Steward to President; and Whereas, during the many years, "Kenny" served as a trustee on the Local's Health and Welfare Fund, he worked tirelessly to protect and improve the benefits and welfare of Operating Engineers and their families;


Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved that an Honorary Lifetime Membership card be issued for Brother Kenneth Shehorn in recognition of his years of loyal and dedicated service to the membership and this Local Union.¹¹

To fill the presidential vacancy, the Executive Board chose Vice President Bridgewater, and he was elected by the membership that summer. The Board selected retired Business Manager Zahn and Business Representative Bill Edwards to represent the Local at the IUOE centennial celebration that autumn in Washington, D.C.¹²

In the mid-1990s, IUOE Local 7, the stationary engineers union headquartered in Springfield, merged with Local 399 in Chicago. Local 7 had been the union of the twenty-three operating engineers who separated in 1931 to form Local 965. After the Local 7 merger, Local 965's Executive Board approved a request from area members of 399 to rent meeting space at the 965 hall.¹³

In 1996 Local 965 was selected to administer the new National Certification for Crane Operators program. The

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Labor Rally — 1996

Local 965 participated in a Labor Rally with 5,000 brothers and sisters from around the state of Illinois in opposition to the repeal of the Scaffold Act.

Apprenticeship and Skill Improvement Committee acquired four cranes for candidates to operate in the testing procedures. Within two years, the Local had certified forty operators, a process that continues today. To obtain the CCO certification, an operator successfully completes a written test regarding general knowledge of equipment and at least one of four specialty tests. CCO re-certification is required every five years.¹⁴

Several personnel changes occurred in the mid-1990s. President Bridgewater, anticipating retirement, resigned as the Training Coordinator in 1996, after sixteen years in the position. As his replacement, the Apprenticeship and Skill Improvement Committee selected Joseph Klein of Divernon, a graduate of the apprentice program and a six-year training instructor.¹⁵ In the Quincy area,

Charlie Bridgewater succeeded Bill Edwards, who had served for nearly fourteen years as the western area Business Representative.

After Roger Pauley retired in 1997, Business Manager Hudson appointed Michael D. Zahn, son and grandson of Local 965 members, and the constitutional officers appointed him to the position of Financial Secretary/Business Representative for the Decatur area. Bridgewater also retired that year, thanking the Local for the “work and opportunities afforded to me over the past years and, above all, the chance to work ‘union.’” As his successor as President, the constitutional officers selected Klein.¹⁶

After what Hudson described as a “long process,” in 1997 he reported an Agreement with Chester Bross Construction Company, which had been a non-union business for thirty years. For a project in Mendon, the firm hired sixteen 965 members.



Directional Boring

Local 965 expanded its opportunities for its membership by offering specialty equipment training such as directional boring machine (pictured). From left to right: Sally Dennis, Mike Reynolds, Instructor Ed Mileham, Jerry Ealey, Myrna Engelbrecht

**Our Best Wishes to
IUOE Local 965**

**Congratulations on your
75th Anniversary**



**International Union of Operating Engineers
Local 399**

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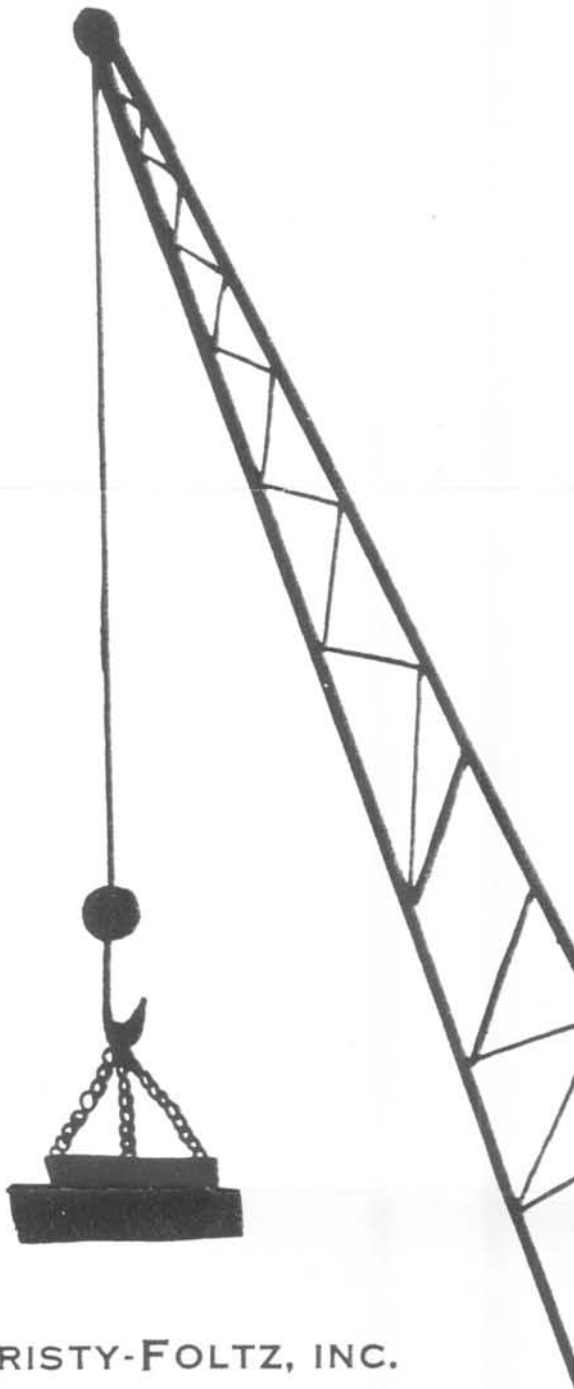
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“Superintendent Mike Bross was very satisfied with our people,” Hudson reported to the Executive Board, “and we should get approximately ten more on the job.”¹⁷

In early 1998 Financial Secretary Zahn began a quarterly newsletter, *The Operator*, to inform the membership of current events. Hudson appointed Jack A. Stewart of Jacksonville to replace the retiring Charlie Bridgewater. In the inaugural issue, Hudson wrote that through the IUOE’s Central Pension Fund, 510 Local 965 retirees and widows received more than \$400,000 in benefits each month. He also noted the Local’s Health and Welfare Fund “in the best financial shape ever,” with \$5 million in assets.¹⁸

President and Training Coordinator Klein encouraged all members to utilize the Local’s training programs. “It is becoming apparent,” he reported in 1998, “that all operators will be required to be certified on all equipment in the not-too-distant future. It is extremely important to take advantage of every opportunity to improve your skills at the Training Site or on the job.” In addition to CCO, instructors at the site offered classes for Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) certification, as well as Hazmat, first aid, CPR, and safety training.¹⁹

A continuation of federally funded road construction projects was assured in 1998, when Congress approved and President Clinton signed the six-year Federal Highway Reauthorization Bill. Replacing ISTEA, the new legislation would provide more than \$203 billion in highway and mass transit funding, with Davis-Bacon prevailing wage protection for the construction workers.

State aid for road construction, however, lagged far behind federal initiatives. Local 965 members lobbied for higher gas taxes to fund new and improved roads, but legislators did not approve increased appropriations for highway funding during most of the decade. Then in 1999, the General Assembly enacted Governor George Ryan’s \$12 billion Illinois First, the “Fund for Infrastructure, Roads, Schools, Transit” construction program.

Anticipated to be a five-year program, Hudson reported that Illinois First would have “a tremendous impact

on the backlog of road and building repairs” resulting from failed gas-tax revenue increases. Projects included widening of Illinois 29 from Rochester to Taylorville and completion of U.S. 67 from Alton to Macomb.²⁰

Also in 1999, the owners of Buckhart Sand & Gravel sold fifty-seven acres to Local 965 for the training site. “After 30 years,” reported Training Coordinator Klein, “the Training program finally has a permanent home. This will enable the Program to make long-range plans and to build facilities more suited to our needs.”²¹ A few months later he noted that apprentice workers were stockpiling dirt, painting the equipment, and planning to asphalt the entrance road to the sand and gravel property.

Upon completion of the Harryland Road project in Mt. Zion, the superintendent of Feutz Contractors of Paris wrote to Zahn regarding the firm’s experience with operators from the Apprenticeship program: “The three that I had on my job were very well trained in operation, maintenance, & safety. I thought that all of them were trained better than their hours would indicate. You & your training staff should be proud of your program.”²²

While serving as Financial Secretary as well as a Business Representative, Zahn in 1998 recommended that Local 965 participate in the International’s organizing program. “The only way to stop our contractors from demanding concessions every negotiations,” he told the Executive Board, “is to put on an organizer and organize the non-union competition of our union contractors.” He reminded the Board that the General Fund had steadily declined over recent years and said that additional members would help improve the situation:

Since 1980, this Local has been forced to give concessions with every contract negotiation. The reason for this is that we forgot about organizing during the boom years. When work slowed down and our contractors were forced to bid the smaller jobs against the non-union contractor that we ignored during the boom years, they found out that they couldn’t compete.

Now, organizing is not a magical wand, and it is not a new wild idea. Organizing was the tool



**From all of us at the IAAP,
Congratulations on your 75th Anniversary**

used by our forefathers to build our International Union. Without organizing there would be no unions today.

Our forefathers went out and organized qualified workers one by one until we built an organization 400,000 strong. However, we cannot be satisfied with this. Organizing is a necessary part of even a healthy local that has 100% control of its market, because there are new companies popping up every day, and non-union companies moving into our territory.²³

The membership approved establishing an Organizing Program, funded by a 1 percent increase in supplemental dues, and applying to the International for a Cooperative Organizing Grant. The new Organizing Committee comprised Hudson as Chairman, Zahn as Director, and members Robert Brickey Jr., Larry Grable, Joe Klein, Jerry Kline, George Leffler, George Phares, Howard Reynolds, Grace Dewitt Vose, and Charles “Chuck” Smith.

They began developing “a comprehensive plan to strengthen Local 965’s position in the construction industry” in central Illinois. The members also served as a Political Action Committee, working with the national Committee on Political Education to support the election of labor-supportive candidates.²⁴

The International, along with most other construction unions, had earlier adopted the organizing instructional program known as Construction Organizing Membership Education and Training (COMET). COMET staff at the George Meany Institute in Silver Springs, Maryland, provide information on the history and importance of organizing as well as organizing techniques and methods. Locals send representatives to the

COMET classes, who in turn instruct their members. “Our intent,” said Zahn in reporting on initial activities of the Organizing Committee, “is to put these classes on in all major cities in our jurisdiction to make it easy on the members to attend.”²⁵

As the first organizer, Committee members selected operator Chuck Smith of Nebo, son of longtime member Raymond T. Smith. Prior to beginning his new job, Chuck Smith and Zahn attended COMET classes in Maryland. Then in January, 1999, Smith began covering the western part of the fifteen-county jurisdiction, and from January to March he and Zahn taught COMET classes in Springfield, Jacksonville, Quincy, and Decatur.²⁶

A few months later, Robert Brickey, Jr. of Mount Pulaski was hired as an organizer for the eastern section.²⁷ His and Smith’s primary responsibilities were contacting workers not represented by a labor organization, to explain the benefits and responsibilities of union membership.

By spring, Smith had compiled files on more than eighty open shop contractors in the jurisdiction. The Organizing Committee completed a year-long survey to determine the amount of union vs. non-union work



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Chuck Smith, foreground and Mike Zahn, left background, teaching a Comet class in the Executive Board Room of original hall located at 3520 E. Cook St.

being performed in each county. Results of the survey showed that the Local had a less than 50% market share in the five western counties, and in three of those counties a less than 20% share. Zahn and Smith realized they “had their work cut out for them,” Zahn recalled, and began to lay plans on how to regain the Local’s market share. Their strategy included organizing in the public sector and rebuilding the Local’s political base within the jurisdiction.²⁸

Throughout 1999, Smith and Zahn were “almost joined at the hip.” Continuing his duties as Financial Secretary and Business Representative for Decatur, Zahn spent most evenings with Smith and the non-union employees he was organizing. The two men made quite a team and enjoyed working together,

with Zahn kidding Smith about being “a river rat from Nebo.”

Smith’s first organizing campaign was on IRC, a Jacksonville non-union oil and chip company. He and Zahn met with the seventeen IRC employees, and all of them signed authorization cards to be represented by Local 965. On election day, however, the Local lost, 2-15. Both men learned valuable lessons from the campaign, and, Zahn said, “we never lost another election.” Their two large campaigns of 1999 were the Village of Chatham and the Pike County Courthouse employees.

As the decade ended, Business Manager Hudson proudly reported that 546 members or spouses were receiving benefits from the IUOE Central Pension Fund. He also noted that, nationwide in 1999, 600,000

workers were organized into unions—a 25 percent increase over the previous year. “This is also significant because 1999 is the first year in 20 years that the per-



Election Victory

Village of Chatham employees celebrating their election victory at AJ’s Tavern in Chatham

centage of union market share has not decreased. This is due primarily to the resurgence of organizing throughout the entire Labor industry.”²⁹

Election Victory

Alice O’Keefe and Jill Butler celebrating the Chatham election victory with Business Manager Hudson and Director of Organizing Mike Zahn looking on.



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IUOE General President Vincent J. Giblin, 2005-present

As promising as the twentieth century ended for Local 965, the twenty-first century began with tragedy. On January 27, 2000, Charles D. “Chuck” Smith died in an automobile accident while driving home from an evening organizing meeting.

“Chuck possessed every quality necessary to be a good organizer,” Organizing Director Michael Zahn wrote about his friend and co-worker. “He was intelligent and personable. His dedication to his job was unquestionable. Often he worked seven days a week, 14-16 hours a day. This dedication came from a belief in the Union cause.”¹

Culminating a campaign that Smith had begun the previous July, in March, the Village of Chatham employees selected Local 965 as their exclusive bargaining representative. Douglas Campbell of Clayton succeeded Smith as organizer for the western part of the jurisdiction. When eastern area organizer Robert Brickey Jr. decided to return to the trade in late 1999, James R. Faulkner of Springfield was hired for the position, later succeeded by George P. Leffler of Harristown. They began working with the Decatur Building & Construction Trades’ Organizing Committee to target contractors on ADM projects.²



Chuck Smith instructing Comet Class — 2000

“Our organizing program reaches companies we might otherwise miss,” Business Representative Tommy Nases noted in 2000, “because the business agents have to split their time between answering phones and filling jobs in the office, responding to problems and keeping things running smoothly at the various jobs underway in our territories. New members are the future of our Local.”³

In the fall, Zahn reported that fifty-eight new companies were organized, and, after twenty months of negotiations, Pike County Courthouse employees won the struggle to become members of Local 965.



1st Annual Chuck Smith Memorial Golf Outing

Local 520 Business Manager Del Birkner, International Representative Mike Masterson, Local 399 Representative Neil Masterson, Local 520 Representative Mike Parkinson, Region 2 Director Howard Mills, Retired International Representative Dale Parkinson, International Representative Jim Stevens and Local 520 Member Joe Chapman.

At that time the Local held the first of what has become an annual Chuck Smith Golf Outing, at the Oaks Golf Club in Springfield. In addition to 965 members, the event is attended by golfers and volunteers from other unions, contractors, and politicians. Proceeds are designated for the Local 965 Political Education Fund, a decision by the Executive Board in recognition of Smith's "vision of the importance of politics to the labor movement."⁴



Chuck Smith Memorial Golf Outing

Springfield Trades & Labor Council: Larry Leach, Hewitt Douglass, Jimmy Faulkner, and Gus Pflugmacher.

And by the end of 2000, Business Manager John B. Hudson noted that Campbell and Leffler not only were organizing non-union employees, but were also monitoring non-union contractors to ensure compliance with prevailing wage laws, OSHA regulations, and Environmental Protection Agency standards.

Local 965 members had begun the decade with a positive outlook for employment. New construction was beginning throughout the jurisdiction, including several retail and office complexes on the

west side of Springfield and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in downtown Springfield (*see page 69 for color photos*), a power plant at Neoga, sewer treatment plant in Lincoln, and a fire house in Rochester, as well as continuing work on Route 67, I-72, and I-55, and secondary road resurfacing.⁵

In compliance with the National Labor Relations Board and a directive from the International Union of

Operating Engineers, Local 965 in 2001 began a major change from the seniority-based to a rotating qualified-based referral system. Registration and referral of prospective employees are now made from five rotating groups:

- 1) applicants with at least twenty-five years of employment under a Local 965 collective bargaining construction agreement;
- 2) applicants with less than twenty-five years, but at least fifteen years under a 965 agreement;
- 3) less than fifteen but at least four years;
- 4) less than four years of employment; and
- 5) all other employment applicants.

“This new system,” explained Business Manager Hudson, “should assist Local 965 in retaining younger members, and the old members with the advanced skill level always will make a good living.”⁶

At the Buckhart training site, plans were completed for a new building to house offices and four classrooms. Apprentices helped prepare the ground, dig footings, and backfill the property, with BRH Builders as contractor for the facility. Buckhart Sand & Gravel and Sankey Construction donated landscaping materials for the new John S. Hudson Training Center, named for the Local’s longtime member and officer.⁷

Class offerings at the new center include CCO certification and re-certification, OSHA training on equipment and job-site safety, and MSHA (Mine Safety and Health Administration) certification for quarries, sand and gravel pits, and mines. Instructors also provide training in the operation of cranes and pickers, forklifts, and graders.⁸ “The training program has been a good thing for the members,” said former Business Representative Raymond Smith. “They can gain experience on different machines; also for the contractors, who benefit by having experienced operators.”

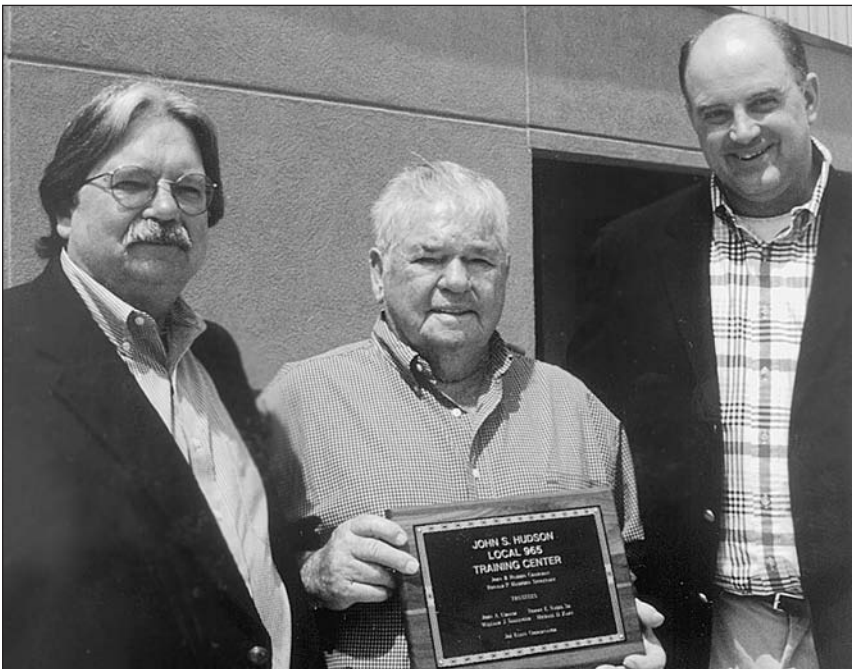
In June, 2001 the Local celebrated the seventieth anniversary of its founding with a picnic at the state fairgrounds in Springfield, attended by a large number of members and their families (*see page 71-73 for photos*). That summer Campbell and Larry Renoud of Jacksonville were named joint Organizer/Business Representatives for the western jurisdiction.⁹

In September Business Manager Hudson appointed Financial Secretary/Business Representative Zahn to the new position of Assistant to the Business Manager. His duties would include implementing the revised referral system, handling grievances and jurisdictional disputes, and assisting with day-to-day operations as well as continuing as Director of the Organizing Program. Greg Cleary of Decatur replaced Zahn as Business Representative in the eastern area.¹⁰

Reporting on the organizing efforts in 2001, Zahn recognized the small contractors who joined the program. “Our success,” he noted, “depends on their success in being able to get work and hire our members; we strive to help our organized contractors in any way possible to become successful.”¹¹

Two years earlier the Executive Board had begun discussing the Local’s office and meeting hall, realizing the need for additional space. They considered whether to remodel the existing building or build a new one, then decided to consult the membership regarding options that included remodeling, a new building on the existing property, or a new building near the Buckhart training site.¹²

With advice from the members, the Executive Board in 2002 decided to plan for a new facility. They appointed Zahn, along with Auditor John Lornitis and office secretary Carol Edwards, to comprise the building committee. In October, after hearing their recommendation, the Executive Board voted to purchase 1.8 acres of adjacent land and construct a new facility behind the current building. The Board selected Otto Baum as the general contractor, and he began construction in early 2003.¹³



Dedication of New Training Center

Business Manager John B. Hudson, Life Member and Former Training Coordinator John S. Hudson and Michael Carrigan, Secretary-Treasurer, IL AFL-CIO.

At that time Hudson reported on the Local's highly successful organizing efforts. "I have to admit that I was skeptical of the idea" when Zahn recommended the program five years earlier. "In 1999 our Local's members performed only 67% of the work in our jurisdiction." For 2002, Hudson stated that the rate had increased to 89 percent or \$160 million in additional wages and benefits during that period.¹⁴

With nearly steady employment into the new century, the most pressing issue for most members became the steadily increasing costs for health-care and prescription needs. Hudson reported that the Local's self-insured Health Benefit Plan lost \$500,000 in assets by the end of 2002.

Medical insurance was the main point of discussion in all segments of contract negotiations. "No matter if it is public sector or construction," Hudson explained, "health care increases have devalued much of the wage increase. This is not a problem that is specific to this

area, but is nationwide, and all predictions are that this will continue to be a plague on this country for the next several years." In spring of 2003 the members voted to increase their hourly contribution rate, based on recommendations of the Plan Trustees, three from the Local and three representing the contractors.¹⁵

After year-long bargaining, Hudson reached agreements with Sang-Chris Sand & Gravel and Builders Sand & Gravel. Contract negotiations were successful with the City of Rushville, with pay raises between 6 percent and 33 percent over three years. In addition, Local 965 settled an Unfair Labor Practice dispute with a group of builders for discriminatory action against their employees for participating in union activities.¹⁶

In 2003 Business Agent Leffler assumed duties in the new Dispatch & Research Department. With a newly installed computer system, he assigned jobs to members and tracked all work in the jurisdiction, both union and non-union. He also became the Financial Secretary,

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assisting members with health insurance and pension issues.¹⁷

Members were pleased when Governor Rod Blagojevich signed an Executive Order directing that all departments, agencies and boards under his control use Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) on state-funded projects. Those PLAs would require contractors to use the referral procedure of the Local and would assure “more work for our construction membership,” according to Zahn.¹⁸

Other state funding news, however, was not as positive. The Governor’s Fiscal Year 2004 budget, approved by the state legislature, decreased road building funding from \$2.3 billion the previous year to \$1.7 billion. The reduction was estimated to result in 28,500 fewer jobs statewide.

As Chairman of the Illinois State Council of Operating Engineers, Zahn represented the Council on the statewide steering committee of the new Transportation for Illinois Coalition. Comprising thirty-

two organizations, including the state Chamber of Commerce, contractors, and engineering associations, as well as organized labor, TFIC members lobbied for restoring the state funds as well as increased federal dollars to maintain infrastructure throughout the state. “If we are unable to restore a portion of these funds,” Zahn warned 965 members, “the results will be devastating to our members, our industry and our health plans. . . . Every Illinois Senator and Representative, both Democrat and Republican, in our jurisdiction supports our efforts to restore this funding.”¹⁹

“The level of labor/management cooperation of this Coalition has been very impressive,” Zahn reported to the membership. “Labor and Management by definition are on opposite sides of the table; however, they have many areas in common and must work together for the interest of our industries when possible.”²⁰

In August, 2003 Hudson retired as Business Manager, after twenty years as a Local 965 officer. As his successor, the Officers chose Zahn. He appointed Training



International Union of Operating Engineers New Hall

Coordinator Joe Klein to the western territory, and rehired Leffler, Cleary, Nases, and Renoud in their positions. Then after both Klein and Nases retired in 2004, Roger Smith became the Training Coordinator as well as the Springfield area Business Representative.²¹

In January 2004 Local 965 staff moved into the newly constructed stone and red brick Union Hall.²² The first membership meeting in the hall was held on January 30, and in February, more than sixty Local retirees gathered at the facility for the first quarterly retirees' breakfast meeting. Attendees elected former President and Business Manager Hugo Zahn as President of the new group and life member Larry Grable as Vice-President.²³

An extremely wet spring and the reduced state and federal road funding caused rising unemployment within the Local. The situation prompted Michael Zahn to encourage members to "call our elected officials with our opinions, we should attend local government meetings, and make our voice heard. And we must hold our elected officials accountable with our vote on Election Day."²⁴

In fall of 2004, Zahn eliminated the Dispatcher position, explaining, "The Local has gone in the red for the last 14 months, even though this administration has cut every dime of waste out of the Local. This financial crunch is due to reduction of man hours in the construction industry and the resulting reduction in supplemental dues." Reporting that hours were down 28 percent in the first seven months of the year, he added that he would hold open three salaried vacancies until the financial situation improved.²⁵

Zahn also recognized a challenge resulting from the retirement of experienced operators. "With the excellent pension benefits of the Central Pension Fund," he stated, "operators are retiring at earlier ages. These tend to be the more skilled operators, who are leaving a void in the highly skilled positions such as finish blade, dozi-

er and hoisting equipment. Even in slack years like this one, we have at times experienced difficulties in filling these skills."²⁶

He encouraged young operators to improve their skills by taking advantage of the Local's Training Program at the Buckhart facility. "We will be offering a wide variety of classes this year, at no cost to you," Coordinator Smith added. "Please take advantage of this opportunity to learn something new or to brush up on a skill you have already acquired." Training instructors included members Dennis Minick, Lee Moffett, Tim Clark, Jim Shelton, Dave Laesch, Joe Klein, Mike Smith, Olin McGuire, and Mike Lemons.²⁷ The City of Springfield's Department of Public Works operators received training at the site on backhoe, gradall, grappling truck and motor grader equipment.²⁸

For the 2005 program, Smith reported that ten new apprentices would be accepted, from more than 160 applicants. Each applicant is required to pass an assessment test and an oral evaluation by the Training Committee, followed by hands-on testing. "Apprentices are the future of our Local," Smith told current members. "If you work with any of the apprentices, help them out. Teach them to work safe and be productive.



Training Site

Training Coordinator Roger Smith and Instructor Dennis Minick

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Kinney Contractors

Organizers that went to apply for work at Kinney Contractors and were locked in by Jim Kinney

We can only go over the basics at the Training Site, but the Journeyman can teach them things they will never forget. Make them proud to be Operating Engineers.”²⁹

After three years of aggressive tactics through the Organizing Program, in August Local 965 Renoud and organizers for the Laborers signed Kinney Contractors, Inc., a street paving firm, to an agreement that covered six operating engineers. Other companies signing agreements because of the KCI campaign included Laverdiere Construction and Macoupin County Asphalt.³⁰

Then in February, 2005, the Local received two grants through the IUOE’s Cooperative Organizing Grant Program. Zahn hired Dennis Minick of Atlanta to begin organizing work in the private sector and Myrna Engelbrecht of Beardstown for the public sector. The previous month Engelbrecht had been elected the first female 965 member to serve on the Executive Board, filling the vacancy of Auditor, and later that year was appointed as Recording-Corresponding Secretary.³¹

In May, operating engineers working for Altorfer,

Inc. went on strike in locations throughout central Illinois, primarily over health-care issues. Negotiations had begun in February, but after thirteen sessions, the bargaining units voted 165-1 to reject the company’s last proposal. Then, after several weeks, the negotiators reached a compromise settlement.³²

In September, Zahn described the 2005 construction season as a “disaster” for construction members. “Currently Local 965 have 150 members working in other locals from Phoenix to Maryland, and approximately 75 on the board.”³³ He did report that after two years of negotiations, Congress passed and President George W. Bush signed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and



President Walter Fox, 55 year member Dwight Phares, 55 year member Hugo C. Zahn, Business Manager Michael D. Zahn — December 2004



*6th Annual Chuck Smith Memorial Golf Outing
Organizers Minick and Engelbrecht helping out at the golf outing.*

Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

The federal legislation provided the State of Illinois with an average of \$1.236 billion annually for five years. Zahn estimated that the appropriation would fund 15,700 additional construction-related jobs during each year of the program. Planned Springfield projects through SAFETEA-LU included extensions of 11th Street and MacArthur Boulevard and improvements to Capitol Avenue.³⁴

In early 2006 the Local 965 Training Site hosted an extensive twenty-day Pipeline Training course offered by the International. Coordinator Smith encouraged experienced operators to enroll in the class for advanced training. “With the passage of the new energy bill, a lot of pipeline work will be coming to 965 so please take advantage of this class.” Sixteen Local 965 members attended, along with members of four other Locals.³⁵

When Smith took a leave of absence as Business Agent/Training Coordinator, Zahn hired Springfield member George Phares to those positions. Zahn anticipated a better 2006 and beyond: “City Water Light and Power will start a \$550 million power plant” in 2006, and a \$1.3 billion power plant was planned for Taylorville. Still, principally because of the reductions in state highway funding, Zahn reported in March “the future for road work at this time looks pretty bleak, however, the final bell has not rung and we will continue to work to assure fair funding of our transportation system.”³⁶

In addition to their work duties, Local 965 members continued their tradition of volunteer activities, including helping renovate the playground at Washington Park in Springfield. An ongoing project has been helping with restoration of the Labor Temple near downtown Jacksonville, the oldest standing labor temple in the nation. After the Illinois AFL-CIO and the Jacksonville



*Transportation for Illinois Coalition Rally
Business Manager Michael D. Zahn addressing the rally, Left to right:
Geno Keely, Illinois Secretary of Transportation Tim Martin, Springfield
Mayor Tim Davlin, Executive Director of Illinois Chamber of Commerce
Doug Whitley and Laborers Midwest Regional Director Edward M. Smith.*

Central Illinois Labor Trust Committee took on the task of rehabilitating the 100-year-old Temple, Local 965's Executive Board committed \$2,500 to the project. In addition, area operating engineers helped install a new roof, doors, and windows on the three-story brick structure. The project is currently on hold, however, after a fire heavily damaged the already fragile building.³⁷

Commemorating the Local's seventy-fifth anniversary in 2006, the Executive Board organized a family picnic, including a country band, a magician, and a variety of foods and beverages. The gala celebration was planned for June 10 at the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield.

In the seventy-five years since its founding in 1931, Local 965 has grown from twenty-three to some 1,600 members, offering training programs as well as health, prescription, and pension benefits. For the future, Local 965 will continue its objectives for improved wages and working conditions within the central Illinois labor community. "In this era," lifetime member Raymond T. Smith noted recently, "all unions have a difficult struggle to survive, but as a whole in this country, union membership is up, and may it keep climbing. I still believe there is strength in numbers."

**Congratulations
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On your 75th Anniversary**

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Footnotes

by Chapter

Chapter ONE

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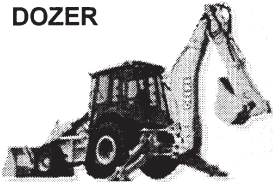
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