

Boilermaker Historical Record

Condensed from the Constitution of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers, and Helpers

The International Brotherhood of boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders, Blacksmiths, Forgers, and Helpers was born on September 1, 1893 in Chicago, IL. It was a unification of the International Brotherhood of Boiler Makers and Iron Shipbuilders, organized October 1, 1880 and the National Brotherhood of Boiler Makers, formed in May of 1888. The new organization would be known as the Brotherhood of Boiler Makers and Iron Shipbuilders of America and be headquartered in Kansas City, Kansas. The former President of the National Brotherhood, William Lee Andrew Johnson, and former Secretary-Treasurer of the International Brotherhood William J. Gilthorpe would retain these titles in the new organization.

On June 9, 1896 the Brotherhood affiliated with the American Federation of Labor.

In 1902 the Helpers Division was formed under the administration of President John McNeil. Because the Helpers were barred from sitting in the lodge room with mechanics, they had their own unions separate from the Boiler Makers. They remained this way for a decade, at which time they would consolidate with the Mechanics Division. This consolidation took place March 1906 in Kansas City, at a special Convention. President George F. Dunn, who replaced McNeil in 1905, oversaw the convention. At this convention the name of the Union was changed to the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders, and Helpers of America. The name Boilermakers was also changed to one word at this convention.

At the 8th Consolidated Convention, held in St. Paul in 1908, three major events took place. First, the Helpers Division was granted International vice-presidential representation. Second, Canada had their first International Vice President elected, N.W. Quesnel, and third, Joseph A. Franklin was elected as International President. President Franklin served from 1908 until 1944. He served continuously with the exception of a ten month period from November 20, 1929 until September 1930. During this time Assistant International President William Atkinson served.

The Boilermakers affiliated with the National Building and Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor under President Franklin in February 1931. During the tenure of President Franklin the Boilermakers saw tremendous growth in membership due to increases in railroads, shipbuilding, and fabrication shop industry spawned by World War II. During this period membership increased from 8,500 to over 350,000.

After Franklin's retirement in 1944, Charles McGowan was elected at the 17th Consolidated Convention. A year later in 1945, International Secretary-Treasurer William E. Walters passed away and was replaced by William J. Buckley. Under these two men the Boilermakers continued to progress. On January 22, 1948 construction of the new Brotherhood Building began. In September 1949 International Headquarters moved their office to the fifth floor of the building, where it is located today.

On June 29, 1953 at the 19th Consolidated Convention the Boilermakers merged with the Blacksmiths, Drop Forgers, and Helpers. The union formed was named the Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders, Blacksmiths, Forgers, and Helpers. A year later the International seal was changed to incorporate all crafts.

In 1954, President McGowan retired and the International Executive Council elected William Calvin as his replacement. Under President Calvin several important services were created for the membership. The Boilermaker National Health and Welfare Fund (October 1, 1954); the Boilermakers National Apprenticeship Fund (November 9, 1959); and the Boilermaker-Blacksmith National Pension Trust (October 1, 1960) were all established under President William Calvin. President Calvin served until his death January 27, 1962. The International Executive Council elected International Vice

President Russell K. Berg to succeed President Calvin. In 1958 International Secretary-Treasurer Buckley died and the Executive Council elected International Vice President Homer E. Patton as the new Secretary-Treasurer. President Berg retired in 1970 and Secretary-Treasurer Patton retired in 1973. The Executive Council appointed Harold J. Buoy to serve as President and Charles F. Moran to serve as Secretary-Treasurer. At the 24th Consolidated Convention in August 1973, these men were elected to serve a four year term in their respective positions.

At the 25th Consolidated Convention held on 1977 in Vancouver, British Columbia, the Construction Division was established.

In 1983 President Buoy retired and International Vice President Charles W. Jones was elected as his replacement by the International Executive Council.

On March 15, 1984 the delegates to the Special Merger Convention of the United Cement, Lime, Gypsum, and Allied Workers International Union (CLGAW) voted to merge with the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders, Blacksmiths, Forgers, and Helpers. This merger set the stage for the next Boilermaker convention.

In August 1986, the Consolidated Convention took place in Hollywood, Florida. President Jones along with Canadian International Vice President Don Whan, who succeeded Secretary-Treasurer Moran after his retirement, were re-elected to their respective positions. This convention was marked by ideological and political differences. As a result of these differences those who had unsuccessfully bid for higher office, including the former president of the CLGAW and a former Boilermaker Vice President, broke away and formed their own union known as the Independent Workers of North America. This union failed and its members were absorbed by the Papermakers, an AFL-CIO affiliate.

At the 28th Consolidated Convention held August 1991 in Las Vegas, Nevada, the Boilermakers were once again unified. International President Jones and International Secretary-Treasurer Jerry Wilburn, who succeeded Secretary-Treasurer Whan after his retirement on April 1, 1989, were re-elected along with the entire International Executive Council.

On October 1, 1994, after a year of discussions, the Stove, Furnace, and Allied Appliance Workers International Union, which was formed in 1891, merged with the Boilermakers. The Stove Workers brought 5,800 members with them, and became a division of the International. This Division was called the Stove, Furnace, Energy, and Allied Appliance Workers Division. The word energy was added to recognize the coal miners within that division. This Division is primarily involved in the manufacturing of stoves and various appliances.

Effective December 1, 1994, a merger also took place with an independent union known as the Western Energy Workers. The members of this union were employed in the coal strip pits.

In August 1996, the 29th Consolidated Convention was held in Las Vegas, Nevada. President Jones and Secretary-Treasurer Wilburn were unanimously re-elected as well as all members of the Executive Council.

Effective October 12, 1996, another merger took place. This merger was with the Metal Polishers, Buffers, Platers, and Allied Workers International Union. This union was an old line, skill trade union organized in 1892. This merger added 4,000 members primarily from plating and polishing shops in the United States and Canada.

President Jones retired in 2003 and was succeeded by Newton B. Jones. Secretary-Treasurer Jerry Z. Wilburn was succeeded by William T. Creeden.