The history of Rhode Island is incomplete without including the state’s working people. Not only did Rhode Island host the Industrial Revolution, it was also one of the birthplaces of the American labor movement.

Workers fought horrible conditions of employment, discrimination at farms, fields, mills, and factories—just as today’s working people struggle against low wages, an eroding safety net, wage theft, privatization, runaway shops and businesses, in an economy that seeks to downgrade every workplace position to temporary status.

The RILHS is dedicated to preserving our ancestors’ legacy and to telling the harrowing stories of their dedication to make a better life for family and friends.

To remember and understand that past—our past—better equips us to face the challenges of the present and the future.

The Rhode Island Labor History Society (RILHS) is dedicated to preserving and honoring the rich tapestry of people and culture of every land that spun this story here.

Since 1987 the RILHS has been documenting our past: collecting union artifacts, documents, and articles. We publish exciting books, conduct educational programs for people of all ages, and publicly recognize the women and men who gave themselves to the struggle for social and economic justice.

The RILHS is dedicated to preserving the history of generations of local working people. Some came in chains to toil in the Providence Plantations. Others journeyed in dangerous circumstances to labor in the mills that stand in every city and village. They worked long and hard to make their way here but eventually learned to demand liberty and rights on the job through organization.

OUR WORK
Our all-volunteer executive board sponsors:

✓ LECTURES, EVENTS AND COMMEMORATIONS.
Our speakers have included prestigious, down-to-earth academics, archivists, leaders and rank and file members of labor unions, as well as community and ethnic activists. Before audiences as diverse as the state’s population, we examined America’s first factory in Pawtucket; the right to vote in the Dorr War; the local start of the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor; Federal Hill’s “Macaroni Riots,” and industrial baseball leagues in the Blackstone Valley.

✓ LABOR DAY COMMEMORATION.
At the Moshassuck Cemetery in Central Falls, site of the bloody 1934 confrontation between striking textile workers and state troopers, we erected a permanent memorial to celebrate the four workers killed during the walkout.

✓ LABOR HISTORY BOOK PARTIES.
Authors of new and important research about working class history talk about their books which we sell at heavily discounted prices. The RILHS also distributes copies free of charge to our members, secondary schools, and public libraries.

✓ HISTORY DAY CONTEST.
We offer cash prizes to middle and high school students who choose labor history projects for entry in the nationally sponsored event. Over the years we have also deposited original working class, labor union, and immigrant documents at the Rhode Island Historical Society and the Special Collections at the University of Rhode Island to aid in research.

✓ RILHS NEWSLETTER.
Published quarterly, the newsletter keeps readers up to date on activities and upcoming events and is free with any paid membership.

Unemployment demonstration, downtown Providence, 1936
Please join our all-volunteer efforts to preserve and maintain our rich working class heritage. If we don't save and popularize it, who will?

Name: ___________________________ Email: ___________________________

Address: _____________________________________________________________

City: ___________________________ State: ___________________________ Zip: ___________________________

Membership Categories: □ Individuals: $15.00 - 1 year, $25 - 2 years, Lifetime - $150.00
□ High school and college students; retirees; unemployed: $10.00
□ Unions and Businesses:
  □ 1-100 members/employees - $25.00
  □ 100-499 members/employees - $50.00
  □ over 500 members/employees - $100.00

Please send this form with your check made payable to RILHS to:
Rhode Island Labor History Society, P.O. Box 962, Providence, RI 02901