Two kinds of readers have responded to *Working Detroit* since it first appeared in the fall of 1984: out-of-towners who take the book as a dramatic account of the Motor City's rough-and-tumble history, and home-town Detroiters who see the book as a sort of family album, a mirror that captures a part of their lives.

My experience, and that of my co-workers in Detroit Labor History Tours, has primarily been with this second group. Our contact with that audience has, in many ways, been uniquely personal.

With a grant from the Michigan Council for the Humanities, we were able to purchase over half the initial press run of *Working Detroit* and make the books available at a substantial discount to schools, unions, and other nonprofit groups in the Detroit area. Combined with the labor-history bus tours we have offered since 1979 and the twenty-minute slide show we produced in 1983, the book has enabled us to present a sizeable "slice of life" to Detroiters in a wide range of settings, including union halls, classrooms, convention centers—even Hamtramck's Polonia restaurant (site 16, page 243), where we frequently end bus tours with a round of pirogis and stuffed cabbage.

Most audiences see something of themselves in *Working Detroit*, but union audiences are more likely to call to our attention the people and places they recognize as their own. Some literally find themselves in the book—pictured, perhaps, at a union picnic or quoted in a strike story. Many more find relatives or friends—the uncle who stood in a soup line, the girlfriend who worked in a war plant. And most everyone finds some event that touches their lives—whether it happened at Ford Rouge, Dom Polski Hall, or the Hartford Avenue Baptist Church.

Not everyone can agree on how those events should be described or interpreted, but most people are happy to find that their lives, and the lives of people like themselves, are recognized as important. And no matter where people see the book, whether it's at a chapter meeting of union retirees, a local meeting of current members, or a conference of union representatives, there are always people eager to volunteer more stories we should research, more individuals we should interview.

This new information, together with all the material cut from early drafts of *Working Detroit*, would easily fill another volume. Unfortunately, only a fraction of it could fit in this edition of the book. We have, however, been able to honor the frequent requests for an index and a paperback edition.

With this new edition we also hope to address a third request: that this book and other labor history materials be made available to high school and college students. Until recently, most of our audiences have been adult wage earners, and few of these people can recall ever having learned about the "real world" of work in their school years. Parents with children who will soon enter the workforce and union activists who see a new generation of members entering the workplace are especially anxious that younger people know how their rights and benefits were won—and how these fragile gains are threatened by the recent trends outlined in Part VI.

The lesson they might learn from *Working Detroit* is suggested by a letter we received shortly after the book was published. Written by an elderly woman who had participated in a sitdown strike in 1937, it took exception to the version of that strike story I had quoted from a prominent labor activist, also a woman. This organizer had recalled the strike as a spontaneous, unplanned eruption of worker militancy. Not so, said our letter writer, who told us that she and her co-workers had met with the union and planned their strategy well in advance of their "spontaneous" uprising.

There are, of course, several lessons here, including one that underlines the tricks that time plays on the memory and the consequent difficulties in assessing oral history. But there is another, perhaps more subtle lesson as well: that human rights and social change aren't often achieved "spontaneously." To win them requires thought, courage, and hope.

It is our hope that this new edition of *Working Detroit* makes this lesson available to Detroiters (and out-of-towners) of all ages.

Steve Babson
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