

*For Generations,*  
GLASS WORKERS HAVE STOOD  
TOGETHER TO FIGHT FOR  
**FAIR CONTRACTS AND  
WORKERS' RIGHTS IN**  
SOME OF THE NATION'S  
*Oldest Unions*



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A LEGACY OF  
**FIGHTING**  
*For*  
**WORKERS'  
RIGHTS**

IN THE GLASS INDUSTRY



## GLASS WORKER ROOTS

**1842** Glass blowers in Philadelphia formed a union which became the Glass Blowers' League. The union had members in Pennsylvania and New Jersey and represented workers who made "green glass." In 1895, they became the Glass Bottle Blowers' Association of the United States and Canada (GBBA).

**1878** The United Flint Glass Workers was founded in Pittsburgh and later established its headquarters in Toledo, Ohio. They became the American Flint Glass Workers' Union (AFGWU).

## EARLY VICTORIES IN ORGANIZING & BARGAINING

**1899** The GBBA led a lengthy strike in the glass blowing industry that was successful in ultimately unionizing nearly every glass facility in the nation.

**1910<sup>s</sup>** World War I and the passage of prohibition laws severely weakened the glass industry. The GBBA launched a campaign against Prohibition. In 1933 the 21st Amendment repealed Prohibition, and the return of alcoholic beverages opened up a vast new field of job opportunities in the glass container industry.

**1940 - 1970** Glass production boomed again and the GBBA organized 90 percent of the glass industry, raising its membership to 35,000. The union also began to organize in the fiberglass and plastic industries.

**1946** The concept of Protective Leagues was born, setting the framework for union and management cooperative efforts through legislative and community actions.

**1965** 32,000 workers went on an 11-day strike at 64 facilities that comprised the majority of the nation's glass container industry. Ultimately they won wage increases, retiree health care and the ability for senior workers to retain pension credits when moving to a new company.

**1968** 50,000 workers went on strike shutting down 90 percent of the nation's glass container industry. This strike lasted 51 days and was settled with significant wage increases and a major increase in employer contribution to the pension plan.

**1977** Members of the AFGWU went on a nationwide strike at Owens-Illinois and other glass manufacturers. The workers won a new contract that included wage increases and improved working conditions.

**1980<sup>s</sup>** Following a series of mergers, the GBBA became the Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics and Allied Workers International Union (GMP).

## RECENT SUCCESSES

**1980 - NOW** In the last three decades the GMP International Union has been able to improve wages and retain and improve an array of benefits such as health care (including retiree health care), vacations, holidays, premium pay and pensions. It has also secured equal treatment on the job through an effective and vigorously enforced grievance and arbitration procedure.

**2003** The AFGWU merged with the USW.

**2013** The Global Glass Alliance was formed in recognition that glass container workers worldwide have a stake in the success of the industry. The GMP Council and its constituent unions came together to demonstrate their commitment to safe, stable and family-sustaining jobs with fair pay and good benefits for glass container employees worldwide.

**2016** GMP merged with the USW and formed a new GMP Council within the USW, creating the largest and strongest glass-workers union in the nation.

**2019** The USW GMP Council, in preparation for the 2019 glass container negotiations, has marshalled the many resources of the USW. It also engaged with other unions throughout the world who negotiate with the same employers. In a global economy, solidarity, mobilization and improved communications with the membership within our locals across the country and our labor colleagues throughout the world, are the keys to achieving our goals at the bargaining table.

