

## **Teaching the Hudson Valley Lesson Plan**

<b><u>Unit Title:</u></b>	Labor in the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century
<b><u>Lesson Title:</u></b>	Kate Mullany: A True Labor Pioneer
<b><u>Grade Level(s)</u></b>	7, 8, 11 & 12
<b><u>Subject(s)</u></b>	Social Studies

### **Lesson Summary:**

This lesson will explore the life and times of Kate Mullany, the founder and leader of the nation's first all women's union – the Troy Collar Laundry Union in 1864 and the first woman to serve as an officer of a national union.

### **Professional Development/In-Service:**

The Greater Capital Region Teacher Center will offer credit-based sessions for teachers on the history on labor in nineteenth century Troy with an emphasis on the Troy Collar Laundry Union as well as teaching strategies for implementing this lesson.

### **Essential Questions:**

1. What were the working conditions of Troy collar laundry workers in the 1860's?
2. What was the background of the collar laundry workers?
3. Why and how was the Troy Collar Laundry Union formed?
4. Why did the Troy Collar Laundry Union go on strike in 1864 and what was the result?
5. Who supported and who opposed the strike?
6. How did the Collar Laundry Union support other workers?
7. How and why was Kate Mullany recognized by the National Labor Union?
8. What were the results of the Collar Laundry Union's strike in May 1869? Why?
9. What was the Union Line Collar Cuff Manufactory and why was it formed? Was it successful? Why?
10. What happened to the Collar laundry Union and what impact did it have on the efforts of other women to organize?
11. What are the similarities and differences between the Collar Laundry Union and efforts of workers to organize today?

### **Content Understandings:**

Early industrialization and its impact on society, immigration and economic impact, Irish immigration, women's rights, attempts to unionize, working conditions, labor as a reform

movement, Collar Laundry Union, Iron Molders Union, National Labor Union, Knights of Labor, Joan of Arc Assembly, Union Line Collar and Cuff Manufactory, Working Women's State Labor Union of New York

### **Concept Understandings:**

Critical thinking strategies including comparing and contrasting, conflict resolution, justice, human rights including freedom of association

### **NYS Curriculum Standards:**

### **Vocabulary:**

Bargaining rights, bargaining unit, boycott, brotherhood, coalition, collective bargaining, congress, cooperative, demands, economic strike, freedom of association, grievances, health and safety hazards, industrial workers, injunction, Knights of Labor, labor movement, lockout, mediation, organizing, picketing, piecework pay, recognition, scab, strike, strikebreaker, strike vote, suffrage movement, sweatshops, unfair labor practices union, walk out.

### **Suggested Time Frames:**

### **Narrative:**

1. Inform students that you have a questionnaire designed to determine what they know about the life of workers in Troy during the mid nineteenth and that they will answer the same questions at the end of the unit.
2. Distribute copies of the pre-test worksheet (see attachments) to students and have them complete the assignment independently.
3. Retain all completed pre-tests in an appropriately labeled folder for future use. This same assignment will act as a post-test evaluation upon completion of the program.
4. Distribute *Kate Mullany: A True Labor Pioneer* to students and ask them to read it for homework and answer the Essential Questions.
5. Place students in small groups and ask them to write a single answer to each Essential Question.
6. Ask one student from each group to report on their answer or conduct class discussion.
7. Using the Kate Mullany National Historic Site web site ([www.katemullanyrhs.org](http://www.katemullanyrhs.org)), provide a background on the history, recognition, restoration and interpretation of the Kate Mullany House at 350 Eighth Street in Troy.
8. Conduct a field trip to the Kate Mullany House and the Rensselaer County Historical Society's Hart-Cluett House by dividing the class into two parts with half at a time visiting each house. Distribute Appendix A to students to complete during the visits.

9. During a class session, conduct a discussion on what the students learned from the field trip and what recommendations they have for education and historic preservation.

### **Supplies Used:**

1. Copies of *Kate Mullany: A True Labor Pioneer*
2. *Organizing simulation* (<http://www.labor-studies.org/pdfs/NLRBUnionElection.pdf>) and *collective bargaining simulation* ([http://www.labor-studies.org/pdfs/CB\\_Simulation.pdf](http://www.labor-studies.org/pdfs/CB_Simulation.pdf)).
3. *Map of Troy (1876)*

### **Assessment:**

#### **What should students be able to do at the end of the lesson?**

1. Describe the working conditions in the Troy collar laundry industry in the mid nineteenth century.
2. Describe the background of the collar laundry workers.
3. Explain why the collar laundry workers organized a union and went on strike.
4. Discuss the results of the strike and the subsequent actions by the employers and the effect on the collar laundry union.
5. Compare and contrast the working conditions of the Troy collar laundry union and those of workers in the garment industry today.
6. Compare and contrast a map of Troy (1876) with a current map of the same area.
7. Explain the role that unions have played in improving the working conditions of factory and other workers and the opposition to unions from employers and their allies.

#### **Assessment of Student Learning including criteria and tools:**

Students will be required to successfully complete two or more of the following:

1. Answer all of the questions in the section above on a test.
2. Create and participate in a simulation capturing the events around the 1864 strike.
3. Participate in simulations on organizing a union and/or a collective bargaining session. (Model simulations can be found at [www.labor-studies.org](http://www.labor-studies.org)).
4. Recreate an exercise reflecting (as close as possible) the work of the collar laundry workers.
5. Write a proposed law addressing the rights of workers to organize and bargain collectively, establish safety and health regulations and/or wage and benefit requirements for workers.

### **Destination:**

Kate Mullany National Historic Site  
350 Eighth Street  
Troy, NY 12180  
(518) 331-4474  
[www.katemullanyrhs.org](http://www.katemullanyrhs.org)

Hart-Cluett House  
Rensselaer County Historical Society  
57 Second Street  
Troy, NY 1218  
(518) 272-7232  
[www.rchsonline.org](http://www.rchsonline.org)

### **Information for Chaperones:**

To schedule a visit to the Hart-Cluett House, contact Stacey-Pomeroy Draper at the above number or [spdraper@rchsonline.org](mailto:spdraper@rchsonline.org) and to the Mullany House contact American Labor Studies Center Executive Director Paul F. Cole at the number above or [paulcole@gmail.com](mailto:paulcole@gmail.com).

### **Resources List:**

#### Resources for Teachers:

- Essential
  - Web Site: [www.katemullanyrhs.org](http://www.katemullanyrhs.org)
  - Copy of *Kate Mullany: A True Labor Pioneer*
  - Teacher copy of *Working Women of the Collar City: Gender, Class, and Community in Troy, 1864-86*
  - *Organizing and Collective Bargaining Simulations*
  - *Map of Troy (1876)*
  - *Map of Troy (current)*
- Recommended:
  - Copy of *Worker City, Company Town: Iron and Cotton-Worker Protest in Troy and Cohoes, New York, 1855-84* by Daniel J. Walkowitz
- Not Recommended

#### Resources for Students

- Essential
  - Web Site: [www.katemullanyrhs.org](http://www.katemullanyrhs.org)
  - Copy of *Kate Mullany: A True Labor Pioneer*
  - *Map of Troy (1876)*
  - *Map of Troy (current)*
- Recommended
- Not recommended

## **Attachments, Activity & Worksheets**

1. *Kate Mullany: A True Labor Pioneer*
2. Organizing Simulation
3. Collective Bargaining Simulation
4. Maps of Troy (1876 and today)