

History of the Bricklayer Union – Local 5

1950 – 2014

Business Managers of Local 5

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|-------------|--------------|
| 1950 – 1955 | George Fryer |
| 1955 – 1961 | Ernie Donne |
| 1961 – 1979 | Ken Jackson |
| 1979 – 1989 | George King |
| 1989 – 2014 | John Haggis |

Throughout the early years of the 1950s, 1960s, and up to mid 1970s the masonry work in the London area was predominantly done by Union General Contractors who directly hired their own sub trades one of which was Bricklayers. Examples of some of these Union General Contractors who employed bricklayers directly were Ellis Don Construction, McKay Cocker Construction, John Hayman and Sons, McDougal Contracting, Foundation Company, Evans & Kennedy, Eastern Construction, and Pigott Construction just to name a few. Sometime in the late 1960s to mid 1970s most of the Generals got away from directly hiring tradesman other than Carpenters and Labourers and started the practice of sub-contracting the masonry work out to Unionized Masonry Companies such as, in this area, GA Masonry, Filipowich Masonry, Fred Barber Masonry and Abe Dick Masonry. There were always non-union masonry contractors around in the London area and one of the Business Manager's main duties was to unionize as many as possible in order to keep the market share of the area masonry work union for the membership.

Bargaining

Through the early years, and up to 1973 for Bricklayers and Tile Setters, Local Unions bargained their own area Collective Agreements with Local Contractors, fighting for better working conditions for the members and monetary increases that were in line with other Construction Trades. Most of their monetary increases were kept on the wage package with a small amount in various benefits such as an IPF (International Pension Fund) pension plan, and a SUB (Supplementary Unemployment Benefits) plan.

Eventually, all trades were mandated by Ontario law in March of 1978 to bargain provincially thus bringing in standard Collective Agreement language, defining jurisdiction, bargaining rights, working conditions, wage rates and duration period, which in return stabilized the Construction Industry or at least that was the premise. This legislation also mandated Masonry Contractors that were only Union in one or more cities to be dragged into the scheme of Provincial Bargaining making them Union everywhere in the Province of Ontario for that Trade.

Prior to this legislation Bricklayers, or any trade for that matter, could be on strike in one or more cities but working everywhere else in the Province until the strike in their home local was settled. The striking Locals would use the fact that work was available in a neighbouring Local to demonstrate that the members weren't being hurt by the strike and could outlast the contractors to bargain higher rates. Once the striking Locals made settlements those neighbouring Locals could then bargain with the same threat thereby having greater success at the bargaining table. This has been referred to as whip saw bargaining.

IPF (Former I.U Pension Plan)

The International Pension Fund (I.P.F) for the Bricklayers in Local 5 started in November of 1975 and for the Local 5 Tilers later in 1980. The contribution amount was \$0.25/hour but included a past service credit clause. This meant that for any member of Local 5 who worked for a Union employer in the three years prior to 1975 and had contributions of at least 600 hours in any 2 of those 3 years (1973, 1974, 1975), they would be eligible for past credit service. If that member had 25 consecutive years of past service they would be eligible for the same pension credits as a new member who had joined Local 5, worked 25 years for a contributing union employer and applied for their pension at the age of 65. The average Bricklayer in Local 5 in the mid 1970s was close to 60 years of age and this factor along with the past credit service was what helped bring this plan to a 30% underfunded liability by the time the BACU took over the fund and started the new CMPT in the year 2000.

Training

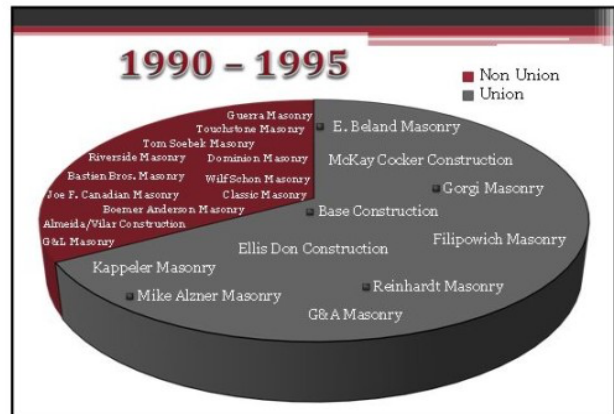
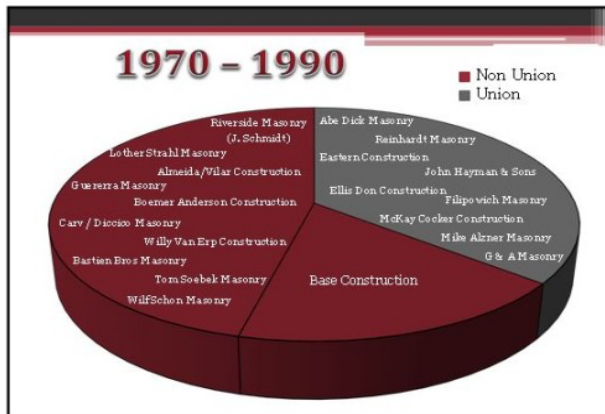
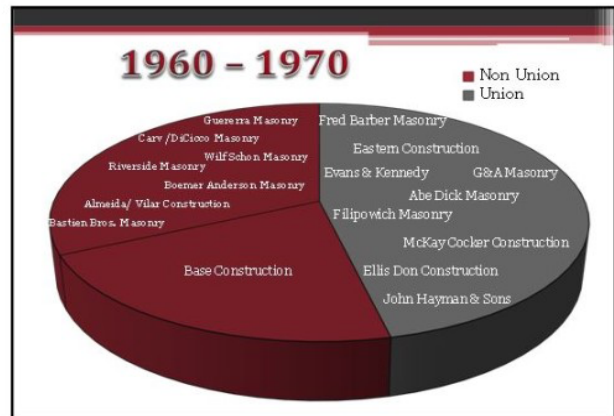
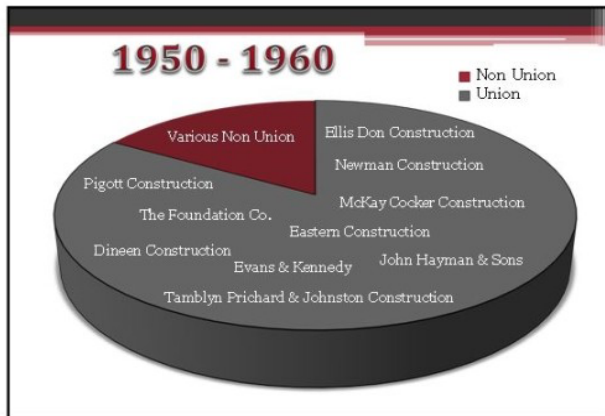
In the early 1990s Local 5 had started running many trade specific training courses in the London area for their members to make them not only more employable but more versatile in the construction craft that they worked under. These courses consisted of blueprint reading, stone masonry, stone carving restoration and tile setting. During this time the Local Union formed the Bricklayers' Union Local 5 L.A.C (Local Apprenticeship Committee) in order to "indenture" all of our Brick Apprentices to a Brick & Stone Apprenticeship contract which would entitle them to attend the 3 modules of Trade School located in Toronto.

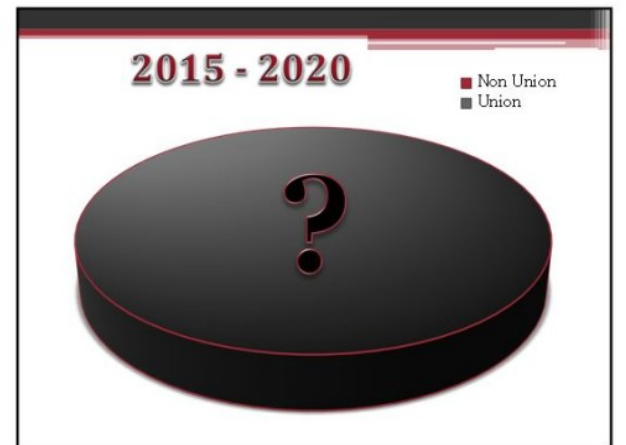
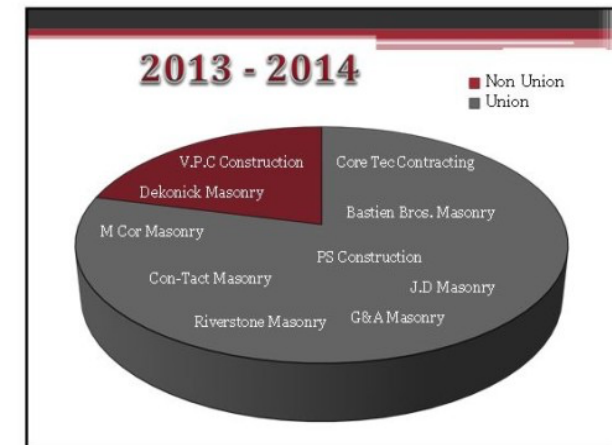
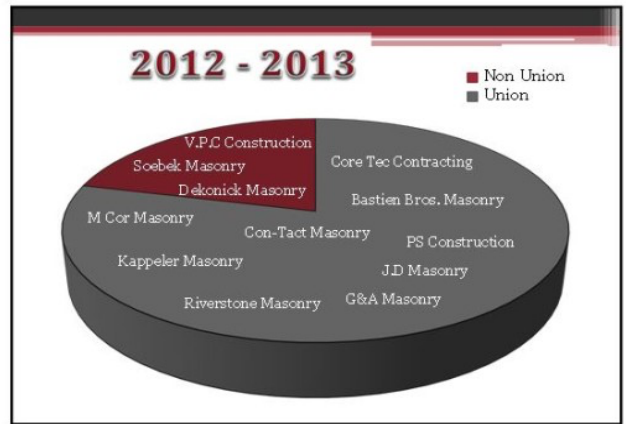
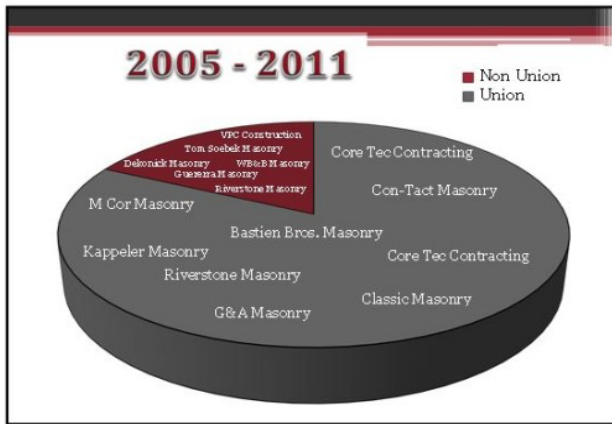
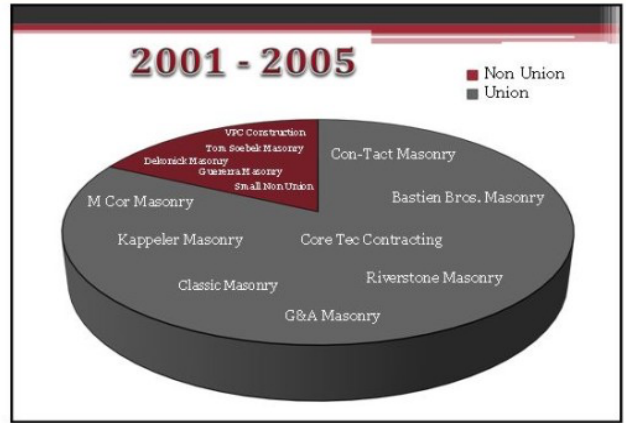
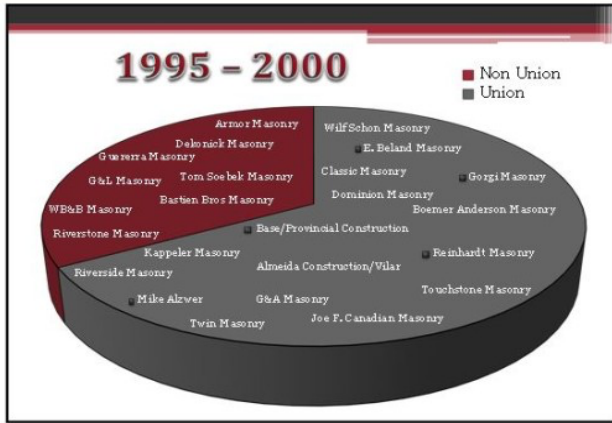
It was later in 2002, in conjunction with Fanshawe College, Local 5 was able to bring the Brick & Stone Mason Certification Training to London saving our young apprentices the hardship of travelling to Toronto for each of the three, eight week intakes. Our certification Instructors since conception have been Mike Ropp, Bob Forbes, Robert McDonald, Brian Pringle and starting next year Ian Martin. The training currently takes place at 56 Firestone Boulevard in a Training Centre owned and operated by LIUNA 1059 Trust Fund.

Our Local Union facilitates 16 week Pre-Apprenticeship courses in order to replenish and train our best prospects for Local 5's future Bricklayer Apprentice's. This has been a very successful endeavor, and is held every 2-3 years. From this course it makes our new apprentices more employable for our Contractors as well as making the Apprentices more comfortable and prepared to enter our construction trade.

I.C.I Market Share in Local 5 Area

Below demonstrates the I.C.I Masonry Market Share of the Local 5's area beginning in the 1950s. In the past and in future economic cycles, determine the growth of a region and the amount of new construction available neither Unions or Employers create work but by organizing the Non-Union Competitors of our Employers we create a larger Market Share of work that's available to our Union members.





Organizing

Non-Union Masonry Contractors have always been around and in some cases have grown to a capacity large enough to take significant employment away from our union members. The non-union Base Construction grew to become one of Southwestern Ontario's largest masonry contractors in the 1970's and 1980's. Local 5 in conjunction with LIUNA 1059 started a major organizing drive that although ran extensively for 10 years, continues to this date. Between Certifications and Related Employer applications, Local 5 has been successful in attaining bargaining rights with over 30 Masonry Companies and promises to continue this process as non-union masonry companies pop up in our area, from time to time.

Below is a list of Masonry Companies unionized by Local 5:

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|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| A&A Masonry/ A. Mesco Masonry Inc. | E.R Masonry |
| AB Tile | H&R Contracting |
| Alex Almeida Construction/ Vilar | Heritage Memorial |
| Masonry/ Trump Homes | Insta-Insulation |
| Armour Masonry (Kitchener) | J&R Masonry |
| Base Construction | J.M Bride & Sons |
| Bastien Bros. Masonry | Joe F. Canadian Masonry |
| BCI General Contractors | P .S Construction |
| Bernardo Marble Shop | Phoenix Masonry (J. Schmidt) |
| Boemer Anderson Construction Ltd. | Refractory Resources Inc. |
| Brian Schon Masonry | Riverstone Masonry |
| Carv Masonry | Southwest Masonry |
| Classic Masonry (Kitchener) | TAP Masonry |
| Classic Masonry Contracting Inc. | Top Star Masonry |
| Clifford Restoration | Touchstone Masonry |
| Diamond Masonry | Val Masonry (Kitchener) |
| DiCicco Homes | WB&B Masonry |
| Dominion Masonry | Wilf Schon Masonry |

1983 – 1950

A short history of No. 5 Ontario B.M and P.I.U. London, as compiled by Gold Card member, Ed. S. Walker.

In January, 1863, a group of Bricklayers organized a Union, under the title of the London Bricklayers Protective Association. Wages were \$0.25 an hour, when work was plentiful and less when work was slack.

The newly-formed Association had very little success against adverse conditions until 1876, when the Sick Benefit was added and the Association became stronger. In 1877, the name was changed to the London Bricklayers' Benefit Association leaving out the word "protective" and inserting the word "benefit" in its place. Unfortunately, this did not work very well, as finding that the expenditures were \$0.55 more than receipts

the Association was dissolved on August 6th, 1877, being wrecked by the Sick Benefit clause.

On February 17th, 1882, after being without an Association for four years, a meeting was held in the Foresters' Hall in the Albion block and a London Bricklayers' Association was formed with Alexander Todd, G. Moore, J. Smith, T. Chinnill and Frank Giles, as Officers. The first business of the new Association was to ask for a raise of \$3.00 a day, and after a short strike, this was settled at \$2.50 per day.

Seeing the need for more help when necessary, an application was made for a Charter from the National Union of Bricklayers of United States, and this was granted on September 30th, 1882 by Henry O'Cole, President, Daniel O'Keefe, Vice President and L. Carpenter, Secretary.

Officers of the new Union were Edward Haughton, President, Scott Murray, Vice President, Walter Gibling, Financial Secretary, Alexander Todd, Corresponding Secretary, T.H. Chinnill, Treasurer and Abraham Bending, Warden. I may say, in passing, that several of these Officers were known personally by the Writer.

On October 5th, 1882, application was made to the Bricklayers' International Union for a Charter, this was granted and the Bricklayers' Association became No. 5 Ontario.

On May 1st, 1887, a strike was called to see a raise in wages which were still very small, and sometimes, the Bricklayers would not be paid for two or three weeks, owing to the Association having not set per day. This strike was settled for \$0.33 1/2 per day, 9-hour day, and wages to be paid once a week.

By 1895, the Union was in good condition, and was one of the staunchest and most active, not only in the City, but in the International Union as well.

In 1896, the Union showed their strength by having the largest Per Capita turnout of any union in the City, and by backing their Union.

On May 1st 1903, the Union received a slight increase without any trouble. This brought the wages to \$0.40 per hour for 44 hour week or \$17.60 for a full week. This made the members of No.5 Ontario the highest paid Tradesman in the City.

This was the year that the Writer became associated with No.5 Ontario, as an Apprentice. He had to attend at least one meeting a Month, and he thanks this rule for thorough grounding in the Trade Union Movement. He also regrets that this rule is not in force at present.

On May 1st 1906, after weeks of futile negotiations for a raise of \$0.02 1/2 a strike was called. After three weeks of meetings between the Contractors and the Union, the strike was called off, and the Men went back to work for the \$0.40 per hour they had previously been paid. This was settled in a room in the Old Duke of York Hotel which is now known as St. Regis. Unfortunately the writer can only re-call three members of the Committees that settled the strike. These were Thomas Iszard, I.U Representative, Thomas Beer for the Contractors, and Fred (Doc) Graydon for the Union.

In 1908, Copp Bros. Contractors secured a contract from the City to build an Isolation Hospital on a site between the City and Wonderland. The City has a union rate Bylaw,

at the time, and it was incorporated in the Contracts. The rate was paid until the stone work was finished and the Contractors wanted the Bricklayers to work under the rate and when they refused the Contractors brought in outsiders who would work for less. As the Union rate clause was in the signed contract, the Union took the matter to City Council, and with the help of some good labour men, on the Council, the Contractor was forced to pay the rate.

The Union carried on quietly from 1908 until the First Great War getting an increase in pay \$0.021/2 per hour, making the wages \$0.421/2 an hour for a 44 hour week. On the outbreak of the war, several members enlisted and the Union voted to keep their dues paid up. Upon the entrance of the United States into the war, in April 1917, the International Union took over the payments of the Serving Members' dues, and so relieved the financial pressure of the members left behind.

The Writer does not know much about what happened to No.5 Ontario during the war years, but along with the other returning members, he was agreeably surprised to find the wages had jumped from \$0.421/2 to \$1.00 per hour and lots of work to be had. Work continues to be fair until 1929, when the depression started, and the Union succeeded in having some small raises and some better working conditions in their contracts with the Builders Exchange, who at the time, negotiated for the various Trade Contractors.

From 1929 until 1939, work was very spare and our members were lucky if they worked one or two days a week, and the wages dropped so that when War was declared in September 1939 the rate was \$0.80 per hour and work was very sparse. The Union tired its best to help its members keep up their membership, but inspite of all that it could do, the Union lost a lot of members.

Wages slightly increased after the War, and in April 1949, after trying for months to get a Satisfactory Agreement signed. The Union decided that if the Agreement was not signed by midnight April 30th the members would all go fishing. After answering a roll call at 9:00am on May 1st and would continue fishing until the Agreement was signed. About 9:30am a request from the Contractors' Committee to meet our Committee with the addition of two other Officers of the Union was received, and the request was granted. At the afternoon meeting, the Agreement reached by the Committee was ratified, and the fishing trips were called off.

The Union has progressed far in the last few years having added Medical Care and a Pension Plan to the long list of added Benefit, in the Agreement. This carries out the proud record of No. 5 Ontario, of having never been without an Agreement since the turn of the Century.

No history would be complete without mention of some of the men who as Officers of No. 5 Ontario fought the battle, etc., that was necessary to keep the Union functioning.: Harry Hicks, Fred (Doc) Graydon, Sam Foxworthy, Fred Tulett, Fred Moon, Thomas Beer, Dick Sharpe, Harry Rymill, who was Corresponding Secetary for a good many

years. W. Hollowell, Jack Tripp, Sr. Frank Tilbury, Charles Pirie, E.S Walker, Erine (Bud) Shrivvers, Fred Northey, T.Drew, Dick Beer, H. Osmend, J. Moon, W. MicTague, Harvey Thompson, and many more who have slipped y memory.

A lot of these men have passed on to the Big Union above, but the Union they fought for still carries on, and we hope that when the next century rolls around No. 5 Ontario will still be in the forefront, fighting for the best interest of our members