

## Leaders of the Knights of Labor

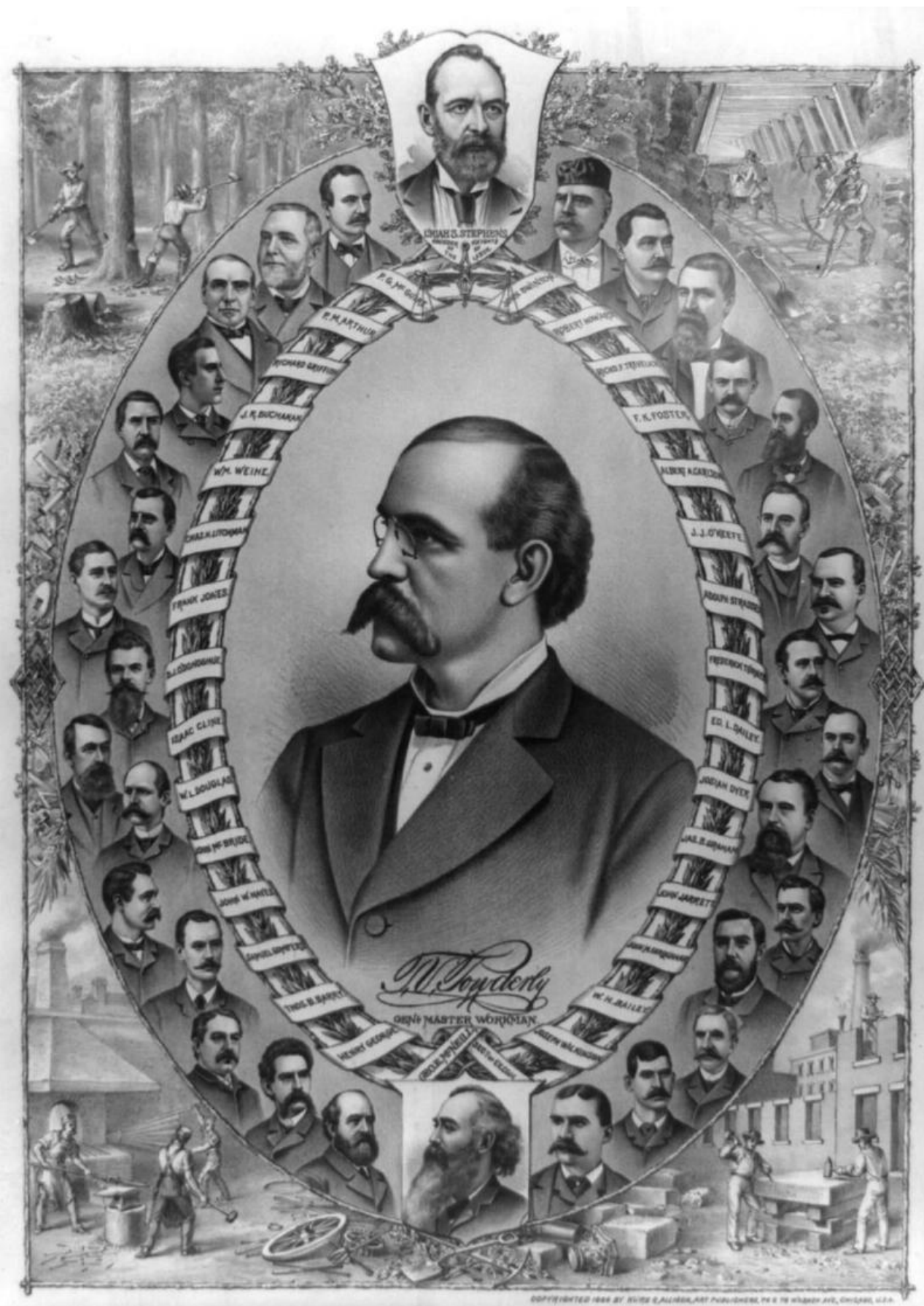
### Leaders of the Knights of Labor

During the late nineteenth century, many workers joined unions in hopes of improving their working conditions and wages. In just three years between 1877 and 1880, the number of national unions grew from three to eighteen.

The Knights of Labor was one early labor union, organized in Philadelphia in 1871 by garment cutters. In its early days, the Knights of Labor was a secret society, which fueled rumors in the press that they were dangerous or violent. The rumors were encouraged by factory owners who feared that organization of their workers would lead to strikes.

Within a few years, the Knights of Labor expanded and allowed all workers to join. In 1878, they released this public statement about the goals of their society. No longer a secret society, the Knights of Labor grew into one of the largest labor unions in the United States. By 1886, the Knights of the Labor boasted 500,000 members.

Print shows Terence V. Powderly, "Genl. Master Workman", bust portrait, facing left, within a wreath with, at top, Uriah S. Stephens, "Founder of the Knights of Labor", bust portrait, facing right, and at bottom, George E. McNeill, "Secy. of Ex. Comm", bust portrait, facing left. Clustered around the sides of the wreath are 30 bust portraits of other labor leaders, among them are Samuel Gompers, Henry George, Adolph Strasser, and John Swinton.



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