

HISTORY



Personal Protective Equipment



Central 70



WORKERS CLAD IN Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) — like hard hats, safety vests and safety glasses — are a familiar construction sight today. But did you know PPE actually dates back to the Middle Ages? Knights wore helmets as protection from blows and battle fire, while ironsmiths donned aprons and hand gear to prevent burns. In the 1860s, the first self-contained breathing apparatus was used by firefighters. By World War I and World War II, soldiers were protected by helmets, long rubber boots and trench coats.

In post-war factories, however, workers were exposed to dangerous machines, chemicals and dust. To address increasing concerns about working conditions, the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) was passed in 1970, allowing the federal government to establish minimum health and safety standards for workers. Today, PPE is a critical piece of the Central 70 Project. Crews are outfitted in hard hats, safety goggles, face coverings, reflective vests, long pants, steel-toed boots and gloves to ensure everyone can work safely.



*Division of Work and Industry,
National Museum of American History,
Smithsonian Institution*

DID YOU KNOW?

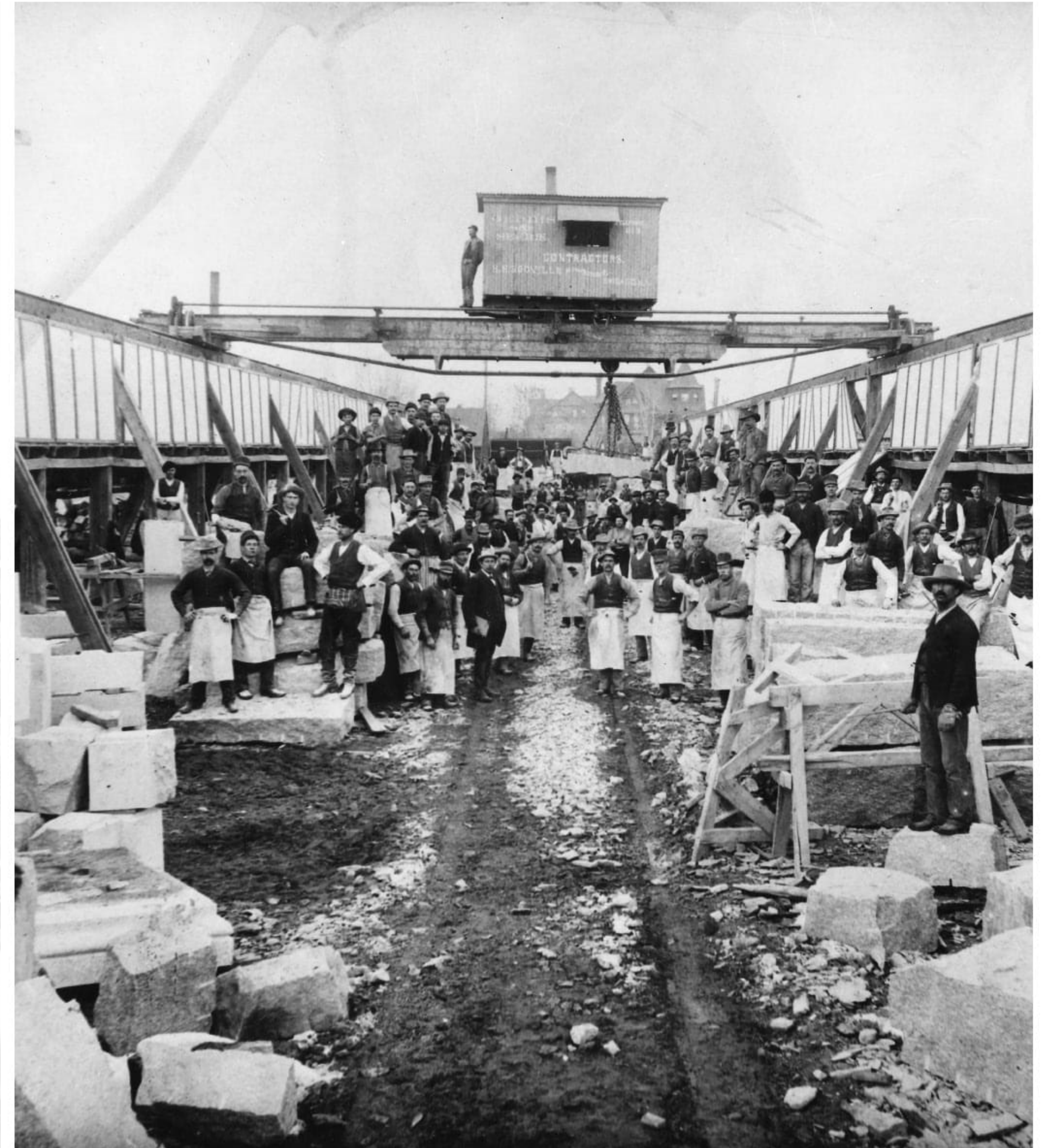
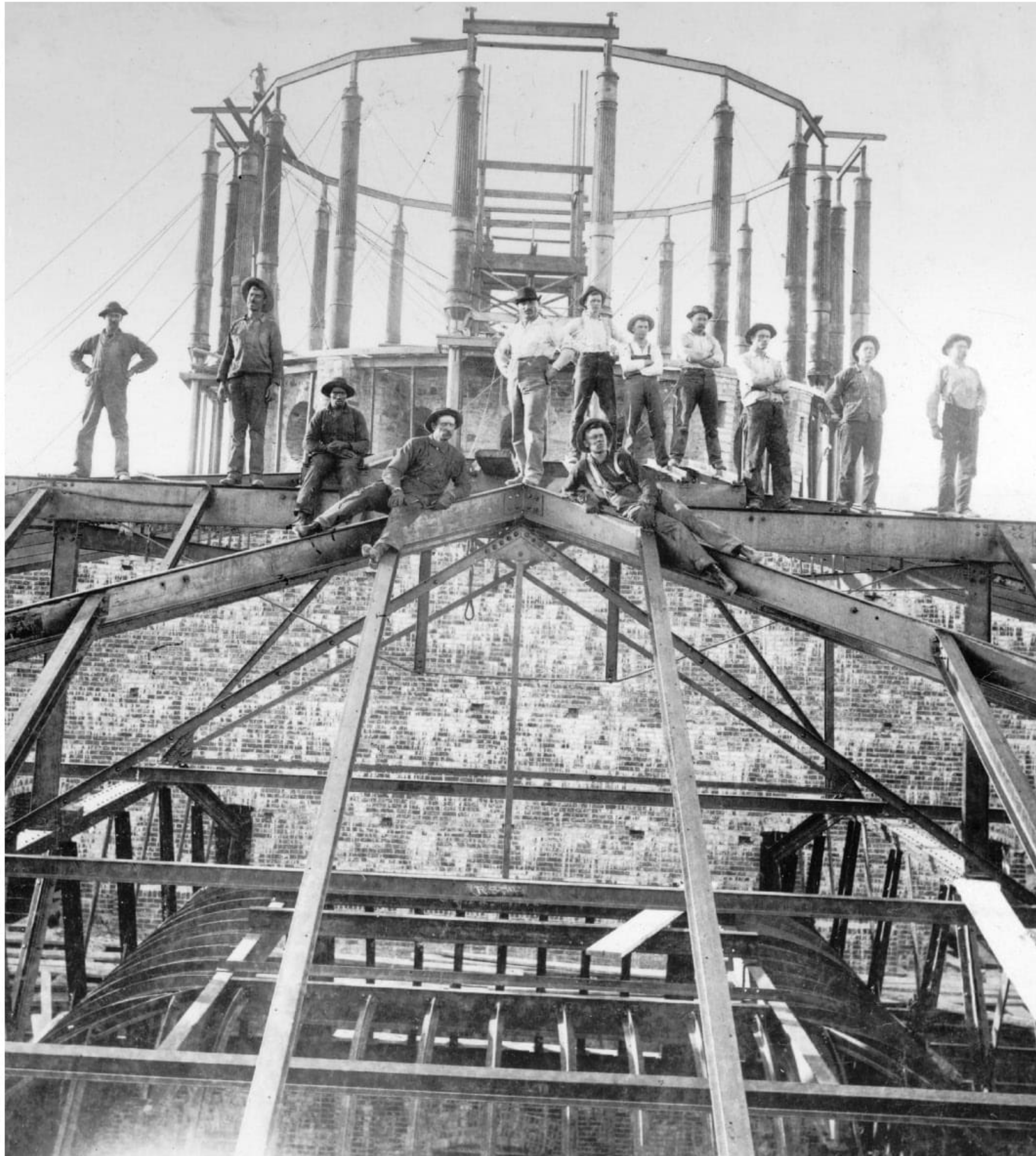


Construction hard hats as we know them today were invented by Edward Dickinson Bullard. His son E.W. Bullard brought his doughboy helmet back to San Francisco after WW1 and his father adapted the product to create the “Hard-Boiled Hat” in 1919.

Vintage construction photos with little worker protection.

Denver State Capitol Construction, 1890. History Colorado. Accession ID #89.451.5705

Denver State Capitol Construction, 1890. History Colorado. Accession ID #89.451.5712





*Highway construction, 1950. History Colorado.
Accession ID #90.290.1965*

Check out what Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required for all construction workers on the Central 70 Project — hard hat, glasses, high-visibility vest, steel-toe boots and a mask. In some cases, additional protections may be required based on the work being performed such as hearing protection, face shields and more.