

Wobblies



The early twentieth century saw the rise of the Industrial Workers of the World – better known as the Wobblies – a labor union that advocated the theory of class struggle between workers and capitalists. As well, it saw the rise of a lesser known group of workers, *also* known as the Wobblies, named instead for their penchant for wobbling. There were twenty members in all, all men, each one spectacularly unsteady on his feet. Rather than being ashamed of their unusual affliction, the men celebrated it. They wore matching shirts, pants, garter belts and wobblebags – state-of-the-art antigravitation devices slung over their shoulders that mitigated their wobbling down to a wamble. (Wes and Wabanip, of course, wobbled to a different drummer. While everyone else wore their bags over their *right* shoulder, they had to drape their bags rakishly over their *left*.) Topping off the uniforms were identical adobe hats on which a large W snaked across the front. And “snaked” was indeed an apt word, as each letter consisted of a small, sedated garter snake. Waldo was by far the wobbliest member of the group. Even with two wobblebags strapped to his body and a belly full of phenobarbital, he still wiggled and waggled so much that the photographer couldn’t keep him in focus for the group picture. Look closely and you can make him out to the left of Wendell (with tie), sprawled on the courthouse steps, his akimbo arms flailing like a cyclone in a windmill. Turns out there was a good reason for his agitation. That wasn’t a harmless ol’ garter snake affixed to his hat but rather a baby black mamba. And it wasn’t sedated so much as it was hungry. [My bad. Sorry about that, Waldo.]