

S13

Activity: Eureka Falls' Place in American Labor History

Directions: The following timeline places the fictional Jonesborough and Eureka Falls strikes in their historical context. Read through the timeline. Fill in the chart to examine how the conditions surrounding the Jonesborough and Eureka Falls strikes compare to the strikes that actually occurred in the United States during the same time period.

History of Organized Labor in the United States

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| 1869 | Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor and Colored National Labor Union formed |
| 1882 | First Labor Day parade in New York City |
| 1886 | American Federation of Labor (AFL) founded |
| | Great Southwest Railroad Strike. Protesting unsafe working conditions and unfair hours and pay, hundreds of thousands of workers across five states refused to work. Led by the Knights of Labor, the strike failed because of lack of coordination among all railroad unions and because the railroad owners, led by Jay Gould, hired scabs and used violence to intimidate striking workers. |
| 1892 | Iron and steel workers strike in Homestead, PA , protesting unfair working conditions and low pay. Workers are locked out and strike is defeated. |
| 1894 | Pullman Strike. Workers at the Pullman Palace Car Company walked out because of wage cuts and 12-hour workdays. Members of the American Railway Union refused to return to work until the demands of the Pullman workers were met. 250,000 industry workers joined the strike and shut down rail service west of Chicago. The strike ended when President Grover Cleveland sent in federal troops to force the strikers back to work. |
| 1902 | Great Anthracite Coal Strike. United Mine Workers of America struck, protesting poor working conditions and low wages in eastern Pennsylvania, the site of much of the United States' coal supply. At this time, coal was the leading source of energy for American industry. President Theodore Roosevelt failed to intervene successfully, but a deal was struck by financier J.P. Morgan who feared negative effects of the strike on his business enterprises. The workers received a 10% raise, half of what they originally demanded. |
| 1905 | Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) founded. |
| 1906 | General Strike in Jonesborough and labor action in Eureka Falls (fictional events) |

- 1909 **Uprising of the 20,000.** Female shirtwaist factory workers in New York City struck against sweatshop conditions. Factory owners agreed to the Protocols of Peace, voluntary guidelines for acceptable working conditions, wages, and hours in the garment industry. Most factory owners, including Max Blanc and Isaac Harris, who owned the doomed Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, ignored the protocols.
- 1911 **Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire** in New York City kills nearly 150 workers. Public opinion turned against the factory owners because of the horrific images of the fire presented in the New York press and because of the realization that the guidelines in the Protocols of Peace could have prevented the tragedy.
- 1912 New York State created the **Factory Commission** led by Al Smith and Robert Wagner to investigate working conditions in factories across New York State and to make recommendations for legislation controlling the industry.

Labor History Timeline. <http://www.aflcio.org/aboutus/history/history/timeline.cfm>

The Ten Greatest Labor Strikes in American History. <http://247wallst.com/2010/09/03/the-ten-biggest-labor-strikes-in-american-history/2/>

Strikes	Low Wages	Dangerous Working Conditions	Solidarity with Other Workers	Outcome of Strike
Great Southwest Railroad Strike (1886)				
Homestead Strike (1892)				
Pullman Strike (1894)				
Great Anthracite Coal Strike (1902)				
Jonesborough/Eureka Falls (1906) <i>[fictional]</i>				
Uprising of the 20,000 (1909)				