

Labor Unrest in Scranton

Margo L. Azzarelli, Marnie Azzarelli

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On an August morning in 1877, a dispute over wages exploded between miners and coal company owners. A furious mob rushed down Lackawanna Avenue only to be met by a deadly hail of bullets. With its vast coal fields, mills and rail lines, Scranton became a hotbed for labor activity. Many were discontented by working endless and dangerous hours for minimal pay. The disputes mostly ended in losses for labor, but after a strike that lasted more than one hundred days, John Mitchell helped win higher wages, a shorter workday and better working conditions for coal miners. The legendary 1902 Anthracite Coal Strike Commission hearings began in Scranton, where famed lawyer Clarence Darrow championed workers' rights. Local authors Margo and Marnie Azzarelli present this dramatic history and its lasting legacy.



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