

Significant Labor Events in the Mining Industry

submitted by Dave Johnson

The following is a chronology of selected significant labor events associated with the mining industry. Others may differ with the significance associated with the events listed here, but these events have stood out in my mind. Anyone interested in seeing future articles on any of the events listed below please let me know.

- 1861 - American Miner's Association, the first national coal miner's union, is organized in St. Louis, MO.
- 1867 - Miner's Union of Virginia City and Gold Hill, Nevada, formed, wins \$4 day for miners.
- 1868 - Pennsylvania Anthracite coal strike.
 - John Siney organizes Workingmen's Benevolent Association.
- 1870 - First written contract between coal operators and coal miners is signed.
- 1873 - Miner's National Association is organized.
- 1875 - Conviction of Molly Maquires for Pennsylvania coalfield murders - 20 convicted miners are eventually hung.
 - Anthracite coal strike
 - Famous "Long Strike" in anthracite coal fields lasts more than 6 months and results in breaking the Workingmen's Benevolent Association.
- 1877 - Convicted members of the Molly Maquires are hung.
- 1879 - Springfield, Nova Scotia, miners organize Canada's first labor union - the Provincial Workingmen's Association..
- 1880 - Leadville, Colorado miners' strike demanding pay increase.
- 1890 - United Mine Workers of America is founded in Columbus, Ohio.
- 1891 - Tennessee Coal Miner's Strike.
- 1892 - Coeur d'Alene, Idaho Miner's Strike over 50 cents/day wage cut.
- 1893 - The Western Federation of Miners is founded.
- 1894 - Cripple Creek, Colorado Miner's Strike over owners lengthening work day from 8 to 9 hours with no pay increase.
- 1896 - Leadville, Colorado Miner's Strike.
- 1897 - Lattimer, Pennsylvania Massacre in which sheriff and deputies kill 19 striking miners and wound 40 more during a peaceful protest march.
- 1899 - Coeur d'Alene, Idaho Miner's Strike.
 - John Mitchell elected president of UMWA.
- 1900 - Pennsylvania Anthracite coal strike.
- 1902 - Great Anthracite Coal Strike, miners stay off work for 164 days.

- 1903 - Cripple Creek, Colorado, Miner's Strike, continues into 1904.
 - Telluride, Colorado, Miner's Strike, continues into 1904.
 - Utah Coal Miner's Strike.
- 1905 - Western Federation of Miners becomes the "Mining Department" of the I.W.W.
- 1907 - Goldfield, Nevada, Miner's Strike begins. Explosion in Monongah, WV kills 361 miners in the nation's worst mining disaster.
- 1912 - Paint Creek and Cabin Creek, WV miner's strike.
- 1913 - Michigan Copper Miner's Strike.
- 1914 - Ludlow, Colorado Massacre - Colorado Fuel & Iron Company gunmen attack tent colony of striking UMWA families killing 19.
- 1916 - Arizona Copper Miner's Strike.
 - Minnesota Iron Range Miner's Strike.
- 1917 - Bisbee, Arizona Copper Miner's Strike.
 - Butte, Montana Copper Miner's Strike.
- 1919 - UMWA calls nationwide strike, lasts 6 weeks.
- 1920 - Alabama Miner's Strike.
 - Matewan, WV, ten people killed in fight over right to organize the southern West Virginia coalfields.
 - John L. Lewis elected president of UMWA.
- 1921 - Unionists Sid Hatfield and Ed Chambers shot on steps of McDowell County Court house.
 - Battle of Blair Mountain, WV, 2000 U.S. troops block miner's attempts to organize.
- 1922 - Pennsylvania Anthracite Coal Strike.
 - Pennsylvania Bituminous Coal Strike.
- 1925 - Pennsylvania Anthracite Coal Strike.
- 1927 - Pennsylvania Bituminous Coal Strike.
- 1928 - Convict - labor system of coal mining outlawed in Alabama.
- 1931 - Harlan County, Kentucky Miner's Strike.
- 1932 - Davidson - Wilder, Tennessee Coal Miner's Strike.
 - New Mexico Miner's Strike.
- 1941 - Captive Coal Miner's Strike.
- 1943 - Bituminous Coal Strike, UMWA strike that triggered the U.S. Government takeover of the mines ends with a contract providing portal-to-portal pay and other benefits.
- 1946 - UMWA wins a health and welfare fund in bargaining with the coal operators.
 - Nationwide coal strike prompts Federal Government to seize the mines to continue production.
- 1950 - "Salt of the Earth" Miner's Strike in New Mexico.
- 1960 - UMWA union organizer Mother Jones dies at age 100.
- 1967 - Copper Strike begins.
- 1969 - Black Lung compensation bill passes in West Virginia after demonstrations by UMWA members.
- 1970 - Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act takes affect after passing Congress December 30, 1969.
- 1977 - Bituminous Coal Strike.