



# Great Hocking Valley Coal Strike of 1884-1885

Topic Guide for Chronicling America (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>)

## Introduction

The Columbus & Hocking Coal & Iron Company (called the "Syndicate" by laborers) was formed in 1883 following a merger of several coal and iron companies with operations in the Hocking Valley. While this reduced competition for mineral resources in the region, it was to the disadvantage of workers since a single company could dictate wages for the entire area. In 1884, a reduction in workers' wages by \$0.20 resulted in the Great Hocking Valley Coal Strike which lasted nine months. During the strike, the company brought in scab laborers and Pinkerton Guards. Despite the increased security, strikers set seven mines on fire and destroyed three railroad bridges. The strike ended in spring 1885 after the workers accepted the company's terms.

## Important Dates

- 1883: The Columbus & Hocking Coal & Iron Company is formed.
- March 1884: Workers' wages are reduced by \$0.10 (from \$0.80 to \$0.70 for each ton of mined coal). The pay cut is accepted due to the soft demand of coal and increasing job competition.
- June 20, 1884: Workers' wages are reduced by another \$0.10 (from \$0.70 to \$0.60).
- June 23, 1884: Workers go on strike to protest the reduced wages.
- November 23, 1884: Strikers push burning cars into a mine in New Straitsville, causing an underground fire which still burns today.
- March 18, 1885: The over nine month long strike ends after workers accept the company's terms.

## Suggested Search Strategies

- Try the following terms in combination (as an "all" word search), proximity or as phrases: Hocking Valley strike, Hocking Valley, Syndicate, Pinkerton, Hocking coal strike.
- Limit your search by date to find information this particular strike rather than other strikes or information about the coal and iron mining industry in general.
- Search newspapers in all states, not just Ohio. The strike made national news.

## Sample Articles from Chronicling America

- ["The Mining Trouble"](#) *Hocking Sentinel* (Logan, OH), July 17, 1884, Image 3, col. 2.
- ["The Hocking Valley"](#) *Rock Island Argus* (Rock Island, IL), September 2, 1884, Image 1, col. 2.
- ["Blaine and Taylor"](#) *Spirit of Democracy* (Woodsfield, OH), September 30, 1884, Image 2, col. 4.
- ["The Hocking Valley Complications"](#) *Northern Tribune* (Cheboygan, MI), October 9, 1884, Image 8, col. 3.
- ["The Board of Trade..."](#) *Eaton Democrat* (Eaton, OH), December 25, 1884, Image 2, col. 4.
- ["A Mine Going"](#) *Dallas Daily Herald* (Dallas, TX), January 30, 1885, Image 4, col. 5.
- ["Letter from Tom Lawson..."](#) *Democratic Northwest* (Napoleon, OH), February 26, 1885, Image 1, col. 4.
- ["The end..."](#) *Springfield Globe-Republic* (Springfield, OH), March 22, 1885, Image 7, col. 2.