

Strikes of the 70's and 80's: The Invisible Role of Women

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Strikes of the 70's and 80's: The Invisible Role of Women

Throughout history women have slowly moved from the role of mother and housewife into the labor force. In the middle of this rise in stature is a relatively unknown set of events that helped women gain the self-respect and individual attitude needed to move up in the work force. Women's participation in strikes during the 1970's and 80's is relatively unknown in U.S. history. Although the women involved in these strikes made a big impact on the strike and its outcome, they go widely unrecognized and uncredited for their roles. This paper will focus on three strikes: the Brookside Coal Strike, the Phelps-Dodge Copper Strike, and the Pittston Coal Strike. Each of these strikes has its own individual history and story, but they have many things in common as well. Most importantly, each strike had women participants who greatly impacted the strike and did a small part to help women move towards a place in the labor force.

Each of the three strikes will be examined from the standpoint of five main factors. First, what were the roles of women in the strike? What kind of work were they involved in?

Second, what interest did the women have in the strike? Third, what kind of relationship did the union have with the women? Did it impair their efforts or support them? Fourth, how did the women ultimately impact the strike? Were they seen as a positive influence? In addition, were they seen as positive by the media or ignored by them? And lastly, what happened after the strike? Did the women continue their new, politically active roles or did they go back to the lives they lived before the strike? Each of these questions will be addressed for each of the three strikes discussed...

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...rt of something much bigger that would eventually lead to women as an integral part of the labor force.

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