

***The Great Railroad Strike of 1877***  
**Documents (Scanned Newspaper Articles  
and Their Transcriptions)**  
**For use with the Student Activities in the Instructional Packet**

DOCUMENT #1 - *The Albany Argus*: Tuesday, July 17, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.981  
Front Page Story: SERIOUS STRIKE

DOCUMENT #2A - *The Albany Argus*: Friday, July 20, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.984  
Editorial: THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAILROAD STRIKE

DOCUMENT #2B - *The Albany Argus*: Saturday, July 21, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.985  
Excerpts from Page One: THE FIREMEN'S STRIKES

DOCUMENT #2C - *The Albany Argus*: Saturday, July 21, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.985  
Excerpts from Page One: The Pennsylvania and Other Roads

DOCUMENT #3 - *The Albany Argus*: Saturday, July 21, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.985  
Editorial: THE STRIKE AND THE TROOPS

DOCUMENT #4A - *The Albany Argus*: Monday, July 23, 1877, Vol. LI, No. 18.986  
Editorial Page: THE DELAWARE AND HUDSON

DOCUMENT #4B - *The Albany Argus*: Monday, July 23, 1877, Vol. LI, No. 18.986  
Editorial Page: Matters at Albany Quiet - Vague Rumors Afloat, but Nothing Definite.

DOCUMENT #5A - *The Albany Argus*: Tuesday, July 24, 1877, Vol. LI, No. 18.987  
A PROCLAMATION By the Governor (of New York State)

DOCUMENT #5B - *The Albany Argus*: Friday, July 27, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.990  
Proclamation by the Mayor (of Albany, New York)

DOCUMENT #5C - *The Albany Argus*: Tuesday, July 24, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.987  
Editorial: THE STRIKE OF THE TRAINMEN

DOCUMENT #6A - *The Albany Argus*: Wednesday, July 25, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.988  
Excerpts from local pages: MEETING AT THE CAPITAL PARK

DOCUMENT #6B - *The Albany Argus*: Wednesday, July 25, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.988  
Editorial: DISBANDING THE MOBS - Arrest of Ringleaders on the Erie Road

DOCUMENT #6C - *The Albany Argus*: Wednesday, July 25, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.988  
Editorial: THE DUTY OF CITIZENS

DOCUMENT #7 - *The Albany Argus*: Excerpts from VICINITY AND STATE  
Friday, July 27, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.990; Saturday, July 28, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.991

Document #8 - *Buffalo Morning Express*: July 16, 1892  
Article: LEADER OF '77

Transcription of Front Page Story  
(original spellings & punctuation maintained)

**The Albany Argus:**  
Tuesday, July 17, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.981

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## **SERIOUS STRIKE**

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### **Firemen on Freight Trains Leave Their Posts and Bulldoze Their Would-be Successors - The Authorities of the Town Powerless, and Freight Traffic Checked.**

MARTINSBURG, W. VA., July 16 - The firemen on all the freight trains on the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, at this place, twenty-five or thirty in number, struck this evening and left their trains. The company put new men on their engines at once, but strikers interfered to prevent them from starting the trains. Large mobs assembled at the depot, and a riot at one time was imminent. Col. Shutt, mayor of the town, with all the police at his command, arrested the ringleaders of the strike, and attempted to protect the new men in the discharge of their duties; but the strikers were reinforced by a large body of citizens, swelling the crowd till it reached the proportions of a large mob. With the assistance of this mob the strikers succeeded in rescuing their comrades. The new firemen are now completely intimidated, and there is no prospect at present of any freight trains being able to pass this point to-night. The strikers have done no damage to property, and passenger trains are expected to pass uninterrupted.

BALTIMORE, July 16 - A few firemen on the Baltimore and Ohio road, dissatisfied with the reduction of wages, to-day attempted to interfere with the movements of freight trains, but were speedily dispersed by the police.



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Transcription of  
**The Albany Argus:**  
**Friday, July 20, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.984**  
**Editorial:**  
**THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAILROAD STRIKE**  
(original spellings & punctuation maintained)

The "strike" on the Baltimore and Ohio railroad has assumed national importance. The strikers at one point on the road assumed entire possession and control of the property. This point is Martinsburg, Western Virginia. In that State there are no enrolled and equipped militia that can be called into service by the Governor in case of an emergency, and consequently a demand has been made upon the Federal government for troops to put down the mob. The situation is one that will be deplored by all good citizens. The Baltimore and Ohio railroad managers had determined to reduce the pay of their employes [sic] ten percent. This reduction had been made and had been acceded to upon all the great trunk railroad lines, and the road in question found it necessary to take a similar course. Instead of acquiescence on the part of the employes [sic], force was used to prevent the movement of trains. All freight business was suspended, so that traffic on the route was practically at an end. All ordinary attempts to put down the mob failed. Officers of the law were jeered at, and the Governor of the State was insulted and stoned.

It would appear that the revolt of the Molly Maguires in the coal districts, and the terrible end which overtook a dozen or more of the leaders there, would have had its lesson in this case. But the folly of the extreme trade union system has been repeated in the face of such dreadful example. Lives have been sacrificed again, and a vast amount of injury has been inflicted upon property and business.

It is to be hoped that the proclamation of the President will have the desired effect to disperse the mob. Unless there is obedience to law and the restoration of order, fearful results must follow. An example must be made of such unjustifiable acts. It would have been gratifying if the railroad company could have increased the pay of its employes [sic], instead of the reverse, but business depression is felt in all circles, and submission to the inevitable cannot be avoided.

The government cannot act too promptly in this matter, while using all due moderation toward the misguided men who have been led into this criminal proceeding. The leaders deserve punishment. It is to be hoped that it may be a long time before the country will be disgraced by such another spectacle.



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Transcription of  
**The Albany Argus:**  
Saturday, July 21, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.985

(original spellings & punctuation maintained)

Excerpts from Page One

**THE FIREMEN'S STRIKES**

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They are Spreading in all Directions

Baltimore, July 20 - George Zepp, who so courageously volunteered to take charge of the engine at Martinsburg, is a brother of the ringleader of the strikers. Commercial interests, especially the oil trade, suffer by the railroad strike. In order to fill engagements maturing early next week for European transportation, the blockade must be immediately broken...

Keyser, July 20 - The strikers are in force here and the dozen United States troops that came up on the freight train are powerless.

Martinsburg, W. Va., July 20 - Fireman Zepp was slightly injured by the attack on the train at St. John's Run. The assault was probably made by canal boatmen who have been in the habit of riding on freight trains, which privilege was denied them on that train. Torpedoes were placed on the track near Keyser, but could do no damage.

Columbus, O., July 20 - At Newark large crowds are awaiting the arrival of troops, but no violence is offered. Several attempts have been made to get trains out without success. Two companies of militia will proceed to-night to Newark from here, and two companies are expected there from Mount Vernon and Zanesville.

Baltimore, July 20 - The depot at Camden station is afire, and it is said the railroad office has been cleaned out. The telegraph office in the depot building has been destroyed, the wires cut and the instruments removed.

LATER - The fire at the depot at Camden station has been extinguished with but little damage. The telegraph office cleaned out was the dispatcher's office on the station platform, and not the office in the main building. At Baltimore and Ohio wires have been cut.

Keyser, W. Va., July 20 - George Zepp, the fireman on the first train from Martinsburg yesterday, was taken from the train here and the strikers fired on the train, which brought up the first detachment of troops; and one of the train hands was slightly wounded.

Baltimore, July 20 - At ten o'clock the dispatcher's house at the lower end of the depot was fired and totally burned. The depot was also badly burned. A lamp and oil house at Barre and Howard streets was destroyed. About 10:30 an old building, used as a stable, was fired and totally destroyed. About 11 o'clock some cars at the Riverside round house were burned.

Cumberland, July 20 - A train of empty coal cars has just come in from Martinsburg. The crowd dragged off the firemen, after which the train was taken to the yard, unable to proceed further. A messenger has been sent hence to Martinsburgh to invite those who still hold out to join the strikers here. The police having arrested Renck, one of the ringleaders, an attempt was made to release him. The police drew revolvers. Some one in the crowd fired. The police returned the shot, and some half a dozen shots were fired. No one was hurt. Renck and three others were taken to the station, but released till to-morrow. The streets are crowded.



### THE FIREMEN'S STRIKES.

They are Spreading in all Directions.

The Baltimore and Ohio—The Firemen of the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago Road Likewise Strike—Strikes on Three Divisions of the Erie—Threatening Movement at St. Louis—Additional Troops Called Out in Pennsylvania and Ohio—Incendiarism.

BALTIMORE, July 20.—George Zepp, who so courageously volunteered to take charge of the engine at Martinsburg, is a brother of the ringleader of the strikers. Commercial interests, especially the oil trade, suffer by the railroad strike. In order to fill engagements starting early next week for European transportation, the blockade must be immediately broken.

KEYSER, July 20.—The strikers are the force here and the dozen United States troops that came up on the freight train are powerless.

GRAFTON, W. Va., July 20.—The strikers have resolved to send assistance to their comrades at Keyser. The strikers here are over 100 strong, and entirely beyond the control of the civil authorities. The telegraph wires have been cut out at any point between Martinsburg and Wheeling. The operators among the strikers have tapped the wires to get information.

BALTIMORE, July 20.—The first west-bound train yesterday was met at Cumberland by several hundred roughs, probably coal men. They opened the switch and the locomotive was thrown from the track. Col. French has instructed the troops to protect the trains at all hazards.

KEYSER, W. Va., July 20.—Freight trains are arriving from Martinsburg. As they come in the firemen are taken off. Thirteen soldiers came with the first train.

WASHINGTON, July 20.—The 8 o'clock train which left this morning for the west, was accompanied by a military guard. Up to 9 o'clock no disturbances were reported on the line.

MARTINSBURG, W. Va., July 20.—Fireman Zepp was slightly injured by the attack on the train at St. John's Run. The assault was probably made by canal boatmen who have been in the habit of riding on freight trains, which privilege was denied them on that train. Torpedoes were placed on the track near Keyser, but could do no damage.

WHEELING, W. Va., July 20.—The men who came from Steubenville, to fill the places of the strikers, were warned off. The strikers are quiet but determined.

COLUMBUS, O., July 20.—At Newark large crowds are awaiting the arrival of troops, but no violence is offered. Several attempts have been made to get trains out without success. Two companies of militia will proceed to-night to Newark from here, and two companies are expected there from Mount Vernon and Zanesville.

The Pan Handle officials authorize the statement that no attempt has been made to interfere with the movement of either freight and passenger trains on the Pan Handle road, and not a man has struck.

It is feared that the men on the Indianapolis division of the Pan Handle will quit work at 12 o'clock to-night.

BALTIMORE, July 20.—The depot at Camden station is a fire, and it is said the railroad office has been cleaned out. The telegraph office in the depot building has been destroyed, the wires cut and the instruments removed.

LATER.—The fire at the depot at Camden station has been extinguished with but little damage. The telegraph office cleaned out was the dispatcher's office on the station platform, and not the office in the main building. All the Baltimore and Ohio wires have been cut.

KEYSER, W. Va., July 20.—George Zepp, the fireman on the first train from Martinsburg yesterday, was taken from the train here and the strikers fired on the train, which brought up the first detachment of troops; and one of the train hands was slightly wounded.

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CUMBERLAND, July 20.—A train of empty coal cars has just come in from Martinsburg. The crowd dragged off the firemen, after which the train was taken to the yard, unable to proceed further. A messenger has been sent hence to Martinsburg to invite those who still hold out to join the strikers here. The police having arrested Renck, one of the ringleaders, an attempt was made to release him. The police draw revolvers. Some one in the crowd fired. The police returned the shot, and some half a dozen shots were fired. No one was hurt. Renck and three others were taken to the station, but released till to-morrow. The streets are crowded.

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**The Albany Argus:**  
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Excerpts from Page One  
**The Pennsylvania and Other Roads**

Pittsburgh, July 20.- The cause of the railroad strike here is alleged to be the new order requiring a double train to be taken out with one crew of men. The employers say the strike arose because business has been dull and some of the men expected an early discharge. The sheriff telegraphed to Governor Hartranft to call out the militia to suppress the railroad strikers.

Pittsburgh, July 20.- The Governor has issued a proclamation admonishing against abetting unlawful proceedings, and commanding the rioters to disperse.

One freight train has been allowed to go out since yesterday, and the moving of that is due to the strategy of railway officials. At the East Liberty stockyards there are 130 car loads of cattle, and 100 are expected to-day. It is believed that if the Pennsylvania railroad men hold out till noon, the Pan Handle and Fort Wayne will join in the strike. The strikers say that in case these roads join them, the Michigan Southern and Lake Shore will do likewise. A strong effort will be made to stop all freight traffic between the East and West. The 18th regiment will be taken to the depot at eleven o'clock.

Pittsburgh, July 20.- The Adjutant-General has ordered Gen. Pearson to send a regiment to the aid of Sheriff Fife in preserving order. Gen. Pearson has ordered the Eighteenth Regiment militia to report at 7 this morning. Last night the sheriff demanded the dispersal of the strikers. They replied defiantly, saying they feared no troops.

Pittsburgh, July 20.- This morning 68 cars of stock from the West were permitted to discharge their loads. Thirty-eight more arrived this morning, and were unloaded. The strikers accompanied each engine to see that the crews did not oppose the strike. As the trains come in they are met and the crews are taken to the yard to join the strikers. Fifteen hundred loaded cars are on the track.

The strikers held a meeting at noon. One mounted a box and read a dispatch announcing a strike on the line at Hornellsville. Cheers followed, and the arrival of military increased the crowd. On the engine were Gen. Pearson, the sheriff, and the superintendent read the governor's proclamation amid hoots. He counseled peace and assured them the law would be enforced.

The crowd jeered him and when he descended, General Pearson got on a tender and addressing the crowd said there appeared to be a disposition to treat the matter lightly. He warned them that the affair was very serious. He assured them it was useless to attempt to further stop the working of the road.

He was interrupted with cries "Who are you?" "Give us bread, &c (etc.)." When speaking of the trains, one man yelled out, "What trains? Passenger trains? Certainly, we allow them to go through." "Yes," said Pearson, "and all other trains, even if they have nothing but pig metal." Another said he did not see why the military are there. The men intend no violence.

"Will you allow the trains to go through?" asked the General.

"No," shouted a dozen voices. One said they "might get through to Torrens (city limits) but God help the men on the trains after passing that point."

The track was cleared and the engineers returned to the city. The military stationed at the outside of the depot and along the road are inadequate to stop a riot. Serious trouble is anticipated if the military try to open the blockade.



[ESTABLISHED IN 1813.]

ALBANY, SATURDAY MORNING, JULY 21, 1877.

#### The Pennsylvania and Other Roads.

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The strikers held a meeting at noon. One mounted a box and read a dispatch announcing a strike on the line at Homestead. Cheers followed, and the arrival of military increased the crowd. On the engine were Gen. Pearson, the sheriff, and the superintendent read the governor's proclamation and boots. He occupied

peace and assured them the law would be enforced.

The crowd jeered him and when he descended, General Pearson got on a tender and addressing the crowd said there appeared to be a disposition to treat the matter lightly. He warned them that the affair was very serious. He assured them it was useless to attempt to further stop the working of the road.

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"Will you allow the trains to go through?" asked the General.

"No," shouted a dozen voices. One said they "might get through to Torrens (city limits), but God help the men on the trains after passing that point."

The track was cleared and the engineers returned to the city. The military stationed at the outside of the depot and along the road are inadequate to stop a riot. Serious trouble is anticipated if the military try to open the blockade.

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**Editorial:**

**THE STRIKE AND THE TROOPS**

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The Constitution of the United States, and the laws passed in pursuance thereof, make provision for precisely such emergencies as that which occurred in connection with the strike on the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, in West Virginia. Domestic violence existed. The State is practically without a militia. A few companies of Federal soldiers were needed. They were legally asked for and promptly granted.

How widely different this is from violent and revolutionary interference for political purposes, no one needs to be told. The New York Evening Post, however, gravely regards such interference as a violation of Democratic doctrine. The position is so puerile, that one might regard it as an attempt to be clever, if that paper was ever gifted in that direction, and the article itself was not as ponderous as a labored English leader, although by no means as able.

A few weeks since, when Governor Robinson acted with such energy as to prevent riot, those who were eager to find fault found in his promptness an occasion for complaint. In the wide disturbances which now exist hasty critics may read their own rebuke.

In almost all riotous disturbances a few desperate characters lead, while the rest are passive clay in their hands. The rioters who personally assaulted the energetic Governor of West Virginia ought to be severely punished, not only by the law, but by the sentiment of the very men in whose cause they professed to be acting.

The sole provocation of the riot was a reduction of ten per cent in the wages of the employes. Men who have not learned from falling prices and decaying business, that wages must fall also, are, perhaps, not to be reasoned with. If, however, they must resort to force, then they must be met in like manner.

A wise business man is slow to reduce wages. The more he is compelled to pay, the more he can receive, unless business becomes hopelessly depressed. When that point is reached, wages fall, not because employers wish, but because they must reduce them. If during the prevalence of high prices, wages had been suddenly reduced, the public would have compelled an immediate reduction in charges also. Hence, it is only under the pressure of tumbling prices that wages go down.

No one can resist the present depression, wherever its effects are felt. If employes [sic] do not realize this, and resort to force, the blame is only upon themselves.



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**Editorial Page:**  
**THE GREAT RAILROAD STRIKE**

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THE DELAWARE AND HUDSON

At a late hour last evening a reporter of The Argus called upon Robert C. Blackhall, superintendent of machinery of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company's railroads, who stated that he believed the rumors of difficulty between the employes [sic] of that road and the company to be entirely groundless; he went so far as to discredit the report of a meeting of the men a few days ago. Mr. Blackhall said that there had been no reduction of the wages of the firemen during the last three years. The conductors had cheerfully submitted to a slight reduction a few months ago, admitting that it was demanded by the depression of business and the stringency of the times. The Delaware and Hudson, he said, had always treated its men well, and he believed that, as a class, his subordinates not only were worthy of good treatment but capable of appreciating it. The firemen were the last men from whom he would anticipate any trouble, for the reason that it had always been his policy to promote from their ranks to the grade of engineer, and every fireman knew that if he attended to his duties and qualified himself he would in turn be advanced in rank and wages.

The trouble threatened upon the N.Y.C & H. R., he understood, was precipitated by the assistance rendered to the Erie in carrying its passengers. The Delaware and Hudson, Mr. Blackhall said, had no entangling alliances, and he did not consider it probable that they would be drawn into any that would involve them in difficulty with their men. He supposed that all the engineers on their road belonged to the Brotherhood, but there had been no difficulty with them on that account. He had had occasion to discharge a number of engineers, but had never discharged any one because he belonged to the Brotherhood, and the justice of his action had never been questioned by the Brotherhood.

In answer to a question, whether the Brotherhood elevated the standard of engineers, Mr. Blackhall said that he knew little aside from the fact that he had heard of men being dismissed from the Brotherhood for intoxication. He said his company paid its employes [sic] regularly and allowed as good wages, all things considered, as any corporation in the country. As the Delaware and Hudson pays by the month, while the Central pays by the mile and the Erie by the trip, no comparison of the wages paid by the several companies can be made.



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Monday, July 23, 1877, Vol. LI, No. 18.986  
(original spellings & punctuation maintained)  
**Editorial Page: THE GREAT RAILROAD STRIKE**

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**Matters at Albany Quiet -  
Vague Rumors Afloat, but Nothing Definite.**

Considerable excitement was manifested in this city yesterday and last night, relative to the great railroad strike. Alarming rumors were prevalent all day and crowds gathered around the telegraph offices devouring with avidity all the rumors and telegraphic reports. Nothing as yet had transpired relative to a strike on the New York Central and Hudson River railroad. One rumor has it that twelve hundred men had gathered at West Albany, which was killed by its own absurdity. It is true that the railroad managers here have been unusually active for the past few days, but this is caused by the enormous amount of freight now passing over the Central railroad. There are more freight cars at West Albany than there has been before at any one time in many years and they are being forwarded to their destination as rapidly as possible. Rumor states that there are now 800 stock cars at West Albany; this fact, however, it was impossible to substantiate last night.

The men at the West Albany shops have stood five reductions, and as far as we can learn do not intend to strike. The above statement was made by a railroad employe, at the telegraph bulletin board yesterday.

An Argus reporter visited West Albany last night, but all was quiet and there was nothing to indicate any trouble.

A rumor has it that Mr. Vanderbilt (*owner of the New York Central RR*), who is now at Saratoga, has stated that he would rescind the order reducing the pay ten per cent, rather than have a strike. The rumor, however, is not credited, and we give it only for what it is worth.

The bulletins of dispatches displayed in front of the telegraph offices were surrounded by interested groups all the afternoon, and when darkness came on the exciting intelligence was read by the light of matches. Every feature of the situation was anxiously discussed and commented upon, and further extension of the difficulties generally predicted.

Wherever the information was disseminated throughout the city it formed the engrossing topic of conversation, and frequent expressions of sympathy with the violent acts of the strikers were made by persons who evidently took a very superficial view of the matter. The rumors of strikes to take place last night or to-day on the roads passing through this city contributed nothing to allay the excitement, but were listened to with avidity and to some extent credited.



### THE GREAT RAILROAD STRIKE.

Matters at Albany Quiet—Vague Rumors Afloat, but Nothing Settled.

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Transcription of  
**The Albany Argus:**  
Tuesday, July 24, 1877, Vol. LI, No. 18.987  
**Editorial Page: A PROCLAMATION**

(original spellings & punctuation maintained)  
By the Governor.

ELMIRA, N.Y., July 23.

PROCLAMATION.

*In the name of the State of New York:*

Whereas, The receiver appointed by the Supreme Court of this State to take all care of the management of the Erie railway and its properties has made known to me that a conspiracy has been formed to prevent his discharging his duty as such receiver under the orders of said court; that the business of the said road and the running of trains has been interrupted by violence which the civil authorities are unable to suppress; and

Whereas, This honor and good faith of the State require that it should protect the said court and its officers in the execution of its order;

Now, therefore, I, Lucius Robinson, Governor of the State of New York, by virtue of the authority imposed upon me by the Constitution and the laws, command all persons engaged in such unlawful acts to desist therefrom, and I call upon all good citizens and upon all the authorities, civil and military, to aid in suppressing the same and in preventing breaches of the peace.

The law recognizes and protects the right of all men to refuse to work except upon terms satisfactory to themselves, but it does not permit them to prevent other men from working who desire to do so. Unless the State is to be given up to anarchy, and its courts and laws are to be defied with impunity, its whole power must be exerted to suppress violence, maintain order, and protect its citizens in their right to work, and the business of the country from lawless interruption within our borders. It is no longer a question of wages, but of supremacy of the law, which protects alike the lives, the liberty, the property, and the rights of all classes of citizens. To the maintenance of that supremacy the whole power of the State will be invoked if necessary.

Given under my hand at the city of Elmira, in the State of New York, this twenty second day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven.

L. ROBINSON.

By the Governor: D.D. Robinson, Private Secretary



## A PROCLAMATION.

By the Governor.

ELMIRA, N. Y., July 22.

PROCLAMATION.

*In the name of the State of New York:*

Whereas, The receiver appointed by the Supreme Court of this State to take all care of the management of the Erie railway and its properties has made known to me that a conspiracy has been formed to prevent his discharging his duty as such receiver under the orders of said court; that the business of the said road and the running of trains has been interrupted by violence which the civil authorities are unable to suppress; and

Whereas, The honor and good faith of the State require that it should protect the said court and its officers in the execution of its order;

Now, therefore, I, Lucius Robinson, Governor of the State of New York, by virtue of the authority imposed upon me by the Constitution and the laws, command all persons engaged in such unlawful acts to desist therefrom; and I call upon all good citizens and upon all the authorities, civil and military, to aid in suppressing the same and in preventing breaches of the peace.

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Given under my hand at the city of Elmira, in the State of New York, this twenty second day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven.

L. ROBINSON,

By the Governor:

D. C. ROBINSON, Private Secretary.

Governor Robinson arrived in this city last evening.

Transcription of  
**The Albany Argus:**  
Friday, July 27, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.990  
(original spellings & punctuation maintained)

**Proclamation by the Mayor**

It is represented to me upon unquestionable authority, that workingmen of the city, particularly employes [sic] of the railroad companies, are greatly pressed by evil-disposed and designing persons against their will and disposition to lawless and riotous conduct. I have entire confidence in the good citizenship and intelligence of the workingmen of the city. They cannot desire the destruction of property, for which they themselves, as taxpayers, under the statutes of the State, must in part reimburse the owners. They certainly do not desire to do violence to the persons of their fellow-citizens.

An attempt to incite them at such time as this to deeds of violence or disorderly conduct is a crime of the most despicable nature.

I deem it proper, therefore, by virtue of the representative authority committed to my hands, to caution them, for the common good of the city at large and themselves:

That in all measures for their own advantage and in reference to their rights with their employers, they shall take counsel of their own judgment, listening to the advice of those who are experienced and disinterested among themselves, and who advise obedience to the laws and regard to their own interests, and that they exclude entirely from their counsels all those who are not strictly of their own number.

That they abstain as far as practicable from collecting in crowds, and from exciting and heated discussions, and from exposing themselves to the interference of outsiders.

That they abstain from the use of all intoxicating liquors, that in those important moments for calm their judgment may be at least clear and unclouded.

I would request them, also, for the common good of the city and themselves, to aid in the prevention of all acts of lawlessness and disorder.

I should be recreant to my duty if I did not, in this connection, make known my firm intention to maintain the peace of the city with all the power at my disposal, and to arrest and punish all acts of lawlessness. And to that end, with a view of increasing the police force of the city, I do hereby invite all able-bodied male citizens, who are so disposed, to come forward and enroll themselves as special policemen, at the City Hall, Mayor's office.

A. BLEECKER BANKS, Mayor

Mayor's Office, Albany, July 24th, 1877

# The



# Argus.

[ESTABLISHED IN 1818.]

ALBANY, FRIDAY MORNING, JULY 27, 1877.

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An attempt to incite them at such time as this to acts of violence or disorderly conduct is a crime of the most despicable nature.

It is proper, therefore, by virtue of the executive authority committed to my hands, to admonish them, for the common good of the city and of themselves:

In all measures for their own advantage, to have reference to their rights with their employers, they shall take counsel of their own judgment, listening to the advice of those who are experienced and disinterested among themselves, and who advise obedience to the laws and to their own interests, and that they exclude entirely from their counsels all those who are not strictly of their own number.

that they abstain as far as practicable from standing in crowds, and from exciting and leading discussions, and from exposing themselves to the interference of outsiders.

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A. BLECKER BANKS, Mayor.

Mayor's Office, Albany, July 24th, 1877.

Transcription of  
**The Albany Argus:**  
Tuesday, July 24, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.987  
(original spellings & punctuation maintained)

**Editorial: THE STRIKE OF THE TRAINMEN**

Trouble began with the Baltimore and Ohio railroad. The trainmen struck on Monday, the 16th, and gathered in the depot at Martinsburg to prevent the moving of the trains with other hands. They drove from the engine those who were willing to work on the company's lines. The town authorities being powerless to suppress the riot, appeal was made to the Governor of the State (*W. Virginia*), Hon. Henry M. Matthews. The Governor responded at 10:10 A.M. of Tuesday, placing at the disposal of the railroad authorities two military companies stationed at Martinsburg. Col. Faulkner was placed in command.

The strikers and their families gathered in the roads of the company, at an early hour Tuesday morning. They were armed with every conceivable weapon, and as the train was about to start they rushed upon it and cut the couplings of the cars. Col. Faulkner ordered them to disperse, and they responded with jeers and threats, and finally opened a fusillade of small arms upon the soldiers, one of whom was wounded. The commanding officer then ordered the men to fire, and the order was obeyed. The friends of the strikers gathered to the number of about one thousand. No trains were moved that day. At three o'clock in the morning of the same day a train was thrown from the track at Baltimore, and no trains left the city that day. The strike extended to Wheeling, on the Parkersburg branch. Governor Matthews went to Grafton, and was stoned at the Grafton house, by friends of the strikers. The rioters held possession of the road all day Wednesday. The militia were in sympathy with them. There were but four companies in the State, the Legislature having prohibited military organizations. Application was accordingly made to the Federal Government for aid.

Federal troops arrived at Martinsburg at 6:30 A.M. on Thursday. The strikers decided to demand \$2 per day. A proclamation from the President was distributed at all points on the road. The strike extended from Baltimore to Chicago, and over all the branches of the road. Trains were moved from Martinsburg, under protection of the Federal troops. One engineer marched to his engine waving his pistol over his head, the strikers falling back before him. One of the ringleaders of the rioters was arrested, and warrants were issued for the arrest of several more.

The same day (Thursday) the strike began on the Pennsylvania Central, at Pittsburgh. The grievance there was an order doubling up the freight trains, and extending a day's trip. Formerly a trip to Derry (48 miles) was considered a day's work, while under the new order a day's trip extended to Altoone (116 miles). Hence, the strike. Eighteen trains were stopped at Pittsburgh, by the strikers.

Friday was marked by a bloody riot in Baltimore, which is without parallel, except the attack upon the Massachusetts troops while marching to the relief of Washington in April, 1861. Pittsburgh was taken possession of by the strikers and their sympathizers, numbering several thousand. The spirit of both sides is well illustrated in a dispatch elsewhere published. The strike extended to the Erie road, at Hornellsville.

The stirring events of the week culminated in the terrible tragedy at Pittsburgh on Saturday, details of which have alarmed the country. The strike extended to several other roads at the West. At Hornellsville, one B.J. Donohue was in command, and issued orders with regard to the dispatching of trains. He was chairman of the companies of the trainmen, and held the Erie road entirely under his control for the time being.



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The strikers and their friends gathered in the roads of the company, at an early hour Tuesday morning. They were armed with every conceivable weapon, and as the train was about to start they rushed upon it and cut the couplings of the cars. Col. Faulkner ordered them to disperse, and they responded with jeers and threats, and finally opened a fusillade of small arms upon the soldiers, one of whom was wounded. The commanding officer then ordered the men to fire, and the order was obeyed. The friends of the strikers gathered to the number of about one thousand. No trains were moved that day. At three o'clock in the morning of the same day a train was thrown from the track at Baltimore, and no trains left the city that day. The strike extended to Wheeling, on the Parkersburg branch. Governor Matthews went to Grafton, and was stoned at the Grafton house, by friends of the strikers. The rioters held possession of the road all day Wednesday. The militia were in sympathy with them. There were but four companies in the State, the Legislature having prohibited military organizations. Application was accordingly made to the Federal Government for aid.

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The same day (Thursday) the strike began on the Pennsylvania Central, at Pittsburgh. The grievance there was an order doubling up the freight trains, and extending a day's trip. Formerly a trip to Derry (43 miles) was considered a day's work, while under the new order a day's trip extended to Altoona (116 miles.) Hence, the strike: Eighteen trains were stopped at Pittsburgh, by the strikers.

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Transcription of  
**The Albany Argus:**  
 Wednesday, July 25, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.988  
 (original spellings & punctuation maintained)  
 Excerpts from local pages

**MOVEMENTS YESTERDAY**

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 Scenes at West Albany.  
 Trains Interfered With.  
 Work Entirely Stopped  
 Two Meetings Held.  
 NOTHING SERIOUS YET.  
 Valuable Property Removed  
 To a Place of Safety.

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 MEETING AT THE CAPITAL PARK

During the afternoon a large number of idle persons gathered in the Capital park and on the approach of 4 o'clock they assembled about and on the steps of the Capitol to the number of probably 1,000. There was little in the appearance of the men to indicate that they were railroad employees, and many of them evidently were not, nor skilled mechanics of any kind. Another fact was also observable to the most superficial notice, that the men were not respectable representatives of any one class. There was no general conversation among them, no indication of any recognition of each other, nor the slightest sign that they were united in the pursuit of any well defined or legitimate object. It was simply an aggregation of the idle and disaffected, very scantily sprinkled with railroad employees.

At twenty minutes past four, Mr. Tiernan (*Matthew J. Tiernan, chairman of the meeting held in West Albany Monday, July 23, 1877*) appeared, and calling the body to order, stated that the meeting was for the purpose of taking action on further proceedings. He advised the railroad men to reach a conclusion as soon as possible and get away from the crowd, so that they could do their business by themselves.

John Van Hoesen said that he was proud to see that the employes [sic] of the New York Central Railroad and the laboring men generally, were not ashamed to meet here. He deprecated violence, but declared that the next move must

be the compelling of the train men to join in the strike. He said, "There are men on the road who have offered violence; we have not. Other men had offered violence for the purpose of having the military sent to West Albany that we might be driven away and they get our places. Who is this Vanderbilt that he should pay as much for his breakfast as he pays ten men for their day's work? We do wish to invite every man who has no capital but his two hands to join us." If a man was worth one dollar and fifty cents per day two years ago, Mr. Van Hoeson thought that according to the present cost of living he ought to be worth two dollars to-day. He understood that the Tenth and Twenty-fifth regiments had been ordered west, and that other troops are to be sent here. He said it would not be the first time in railroad war that the roughest of New York got all they wanted and went home satisfied. We ask for bread and they are going to give us bullets. It might be that they will get bullets back. The engineers had not assisted in resisting the reduction of ten per cent because they knew that they still would have good wages after it was taken off. They had never made friends with their firemen. There were enough laborers in the country, the speaker said, to cover up these capitalists and that is what they want.

Mr. Van Hoesen concluded by moving that there be a committee of conference of ten appointed. There were men about who did not know what to do, or where to go. He thought there should be some one for these men to consult and tell them what to do...

The motion to proceed in a body to the freight houses was finally put and declared carried, and the greater portion of the body, which at once took the shape of a full blown mob, moved off down State street, to Broadway, to Maiden lane, and up the tracks to the Central and Hudson freight houses...



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Transcription of **The Albany Argus:**  
**Wednesday, July 25, 1877, Vol. LI., No. 18.988**  
**Editorial: DISBANDING THE MOBS**

**Arrest of Ringleaders on the Erie Road**

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**The Erie Blockade Raised and Trains Running**  
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The mob blockade at Hornellsville has been raised by Major General Woodward, and the trains are now running throughout the line. This has been accomplished by steady and patient work, and without firing a gun on the part of the State authorities.

The troops at Hornellsville will be used at various points along the railroad where their services may be needed to restore order and protect property.

The result is very gratifying, and is a beginning of the end of the strike over the Erie thoroughfare.

An important element in connection with this triumph on the part of General Woodward and the troops under his command, was the arrest of the principal ringleader of the strike, and several of his accomplices.

The name of this person of incendiary tendencies is B.J. Donohue. He is not in the employ of the Railroad Company, neither has he been in their employ for a long time. But he has been acting in the capacity of organizer of strikes, and has assumed to dictate to the employes [sic] what they should do and how they should act. He sent dispatches to various points along the line directing the men to resist the public authorities, and to organize for the worst imitation of the proceedings at Pittsburgh. He had his lieutenants who were carrying out his orders and inciting to riot. These supposed secret movements were observable to the authorities, and were carefully watched. This whole conspiracy was detected and exposed.

This B.J. Donohue was arrested Monday night by the Sheriff of Steuben county. The arrest was more than an ordinary affair. It was based on an attachment issued by the Supreme Court of the First Judicial District, ordering him to show cause at New York on the 27th inst. (*instant - a date in the near future*) why he should not be punished for contempt of court in interfering with trains on the Erie railroad. That road is in the hands of the court, and is being managed by a receiver appointed by the court, and hence the people are responsible for the property of the road. The offense of Donohue and his accomplices is a very grave one, and their punishment doubtless will be very severe.

Orders of arrest for other ringleaders have been issued and are in the hands of the proper officers. It is reported that many of the leading rioters here have fled to escape arrest.

This prompt action in making arrests should be followed up wherever the cause exists. No man has a right to interfere with a railroad train, and any person who does so interfere is open to arrest by any civil officer. The civil power should be invoked and used in all cases until it is useless to trust it further. And when force comes, if come it must, it should be "sharp, quick and decisive."



## DISBANDING THE MOBS.

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**Editorial:**  
**THE DUTY OF CITIZENS**

Next to the duty of citizens to support the civil authorities in suppressing the riotous vagrants who have taken advantage of the crisis to inaugurate violence and plunder, is the duty to abstain from standing in public places. The curiosity hunter who swells the mob may be distinguished in appearance from the ungainly strangers who have come hither to gratify thieving propensities. But the presence of the looker-on is nevertheless an encouragement to the rioters. Standing upon the streets, gathering in the park, discussions upon the corners, are to be deprecated. Orderly quiet is the need of the hour.

# The



# Argus.

[REPAIRED IN 1813.]

ALBANY, WEDNESDAY MORNING, JULY 25, 1877.

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Transcription of  
**The Albany Argus:**  
 Excerpts from **VICINITY AND STATE**  
 (original spellings & punctuation maintained)

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Excerpted from: **Friday, July 27, 1877**, Vol. LI., No. 18.990

New York, owing to the great railroad strike, is short of meat, and wholesale dealers are scouring for cattle. Several of them came to this city yesterday and hiring conveyances hurried in the country in different directions. In New York the best cuts have advanced three cents per pound, and there is a sudden and large rush in the demand for fish. -{**Poughkeepsie Eagle**, Thursday.

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The strike is having a serious effect on the manufacturers in Cohoes. The inconvenience of shipping is in itself a great annoyance, but the most important is that the consignors notify the consignees that the old time custom of remitting advance on receipt of the invoices will be discontinued, and advances will only be made on the actual receipt of goods; and goods are now stacked up that represent a large amount of money. The inconvenience of getting raw material will be soon felt if the strike continues, although it is not yet felt. If the strike should become more general in character in this vicinity, the stoppage of mills would become necessary, which would be an incalculable act, as now is the harvest of the knit good manufacturers.

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**Saturday, July 28, 1877**, Vol. LI., No. 18.991

Excerpted from: **DOWN THE RIVER**

The *Poughkeepsie Eagle* alleges that certain merchants in that city have placed obstacles in the way of their clerks or employes [sic] who belong to the National Guard, attempting to prevent them from obeying the call to duty, and in some cases even threatening to discharge them if they do not return to their places.

# The



# Argus.

[ESTABLISHED IN 1813.]

ALBANY, FRIDAY MORNING, JULY 27, 1877.

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Transcription of  
**Buffalo Morning Express:**  
**July 16, 1892**  
(original spellings & punctuation maintained)

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**Leader of '77**

*The Man Who Managed the Great Railroad Strike Talks*

**HE IS A LAWYER NOW**  
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Thinks the Amalgamated Association Should Order a General Strike of all its Members - Some Reminiscences

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From the New-York Herald

The greatest strike this country has ever known took place 15 years ago this month. It spread almost across the continent, with its head in Pittsburg. Its recognized leader was Robert A. Ammon, then a beardless boy, who was the president and organizer of the Trainmen's Union. The labor leader of 1877 is today a resident of New-York and a member of the law firm of Friend & House. He is a tall, dark man of commanding appearance, with handsome, regular features. By the side of the little senior member of his firm, Emanuel M. Friend, he looks like a giant. He has naturally taken a deep interest in the strike at Homestead, and in discussing the present labor troubles with me yesterday he said:

"There are many points of similarity between the strikes of 1877 and 1892. Then the railroad-men had a combination of three railroads to fight; now there are three great iron mills. In 1877 the Baltimore & Ohio, the New-York Central and the Pennsylvania Railroad companies decided to cut wages 10 per cent. To avoid a general strike they arranged to have the reductions go into effect at different dates, believing that all trouble on one road would be at an end by the time that the next road began its cut.

"The 10-per-cent reduction on the Pennsylvania culminated in the great strike. We had not only the hearty cooperation and sympathy of the residents of Pittsburg, but the practical assistance of railroad employees throughout America.

"At the outset the strikers merely gave up their employment without threats and without any show of hostility. We knew that the places of thousands of skilled laborers could not be filled at short notice. We had plenty of funds, and we felt confident that we could induce any new hands the railroads would pick up to join us.

"Peaceful means having failed to subdue us, force was attempted, and force was met with force. The Philadelphia troops who were sent to conquer us made a fort in what they considered an impregnable position in a roundhouse, from which they believed they could attack us in safety. It was at the foot of a hill, and we dislodged them by rolling down carloads of blazing oil, one after the other, until the militiamen were burned out. The Philadelphia troop was decimated and the total loss of life was large. I was indicted on 24 counts for conspiracy and arson, and finally tried and acquitted.

"As I say, we had a strong public sentiment with us, and we held so firmly together that the road had to capitulate and to give us the extra 10 per cent it attempted to take away. To avoid interfering with the United States mails and with the passenger traffic, we ran the passenger trains regularly on our own account, collecting fares and turning the money into one general fund.

"Like the three railroads the three Carnegie mills have acted in accord and at different times. The object of Mr. Frick is to do away with the Amalgamated Association so as to avoid all possible complications with organized labor. This has been practically accomplished at the two mills outside of Homestead, and the supreme effort is now being made at the greatest iron plant in America.

"I think that the proper course for the leaders of the present strike would have been to have met force with diplomacy. They have money and they have the support of the united workingmen at Homestead. They could have withdrawn and said simply, 'We will do no work until you have complied with our just demands. If you are able to fill our places go ahead and do so.'

"Then they could have kept the works indefinitely closed by inducing workmen who were brought in to join their union. They would have had little difficulty in doing this, as they could afford to pay salaries until the owners surrendered.

"If they really wished to fight they could have beaten the militiamen as easily as we beat the large armed force put in the field in 1877. Force having been pitted against them in the shape of Pinkerton men and having been repelled, just as we repelled the same set in 1877, the strikers could have intrenched themselves in the great mills and with the iron and steel at hand it would have been impossible for an army to have dislodged them.

"They could have collected provisions for a siege, spiked the railroads and bidden defiance to the world, and the company would have capitulated in very short order. I do not say that this would have been the wisest course, mind you, but I say that it would have been a quick and practicable solution of the difficulty. The great drawback was that so large a proportion of the men owned their own homes around the works and would have objected to the plan.

"The leaders of the present movement are bound to be indicted anyhow, and it would be much better if they had brought the entire matter to a point. The only question really at issue is whether Mr. Frick can conquer the Amalgamated Association or not.

"If he succeeds, it will be death blow to organized labor.

"If all skilled labor were thoroughly organized, corporate capital would not be jeopardized, and the relations between capital and labor would be on a more solid and friendly basis.

"If the officers of the Amalgamated Association would order a strike among the iron and steel manufacturers of the United States at once, the employers would come to terms very quickly. Such pressure would be brought to bear upon them that they would send for a committee of the employees to arbitrate the matter."



BUFFALO, N. Y., SATURDAY, JULY 16, 1892.

## LEADER OF '77.

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These newspaper accounts from ***The Albany Argus (1877)*** and the ***Buffalo Morning Express (1892)*** are part of an instructional packet for teachers that was originally developed and prepared by the Friends of the New York Newspaper Project in 2001.

It is maintained online by the New York State Library at  
<<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/teacherguides/strike/>>.