



Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Makers' Strike of 1909

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Book Description

Elementary | Biography

Ukrainian immigrant Clara Lemlich fought for better working conditions in U.S. garment factories in the early 1900s. This picture book biography chronicles the story of young Clara leading the largest walkout of women workers the country had ever seen. It includes striking illustrations, an author's note, and further readings on the garment industry.

Discussion Questions

- Do you think Clara and her coworkers were justified to strike? Why or why not?
- Do you think there are situations where workers are not justified to strike?
- What do you do when you feel like quitting? How do you carry on?
- Clara and her coworkers' strike resulted in changes in workplace conditions.
- However, the Chocolate Dippers in Utah were not as fortunate. Do you think it's worth striking even if strikes do not result in desired changes?

Utah Connection

In January 1910, fourteen immigrant 'chocolate girls' at the McDonald Candy Company in Salt Lake City went on strike after the firm refused the workers' request to increase their wages. The strikers organized the Chocolate Dippers' Union of Utah No. 1, the first union of women workers in Utah. Unfortunately, the union was short-lived, and the strikers did not achieve their goal of higher wages. Instead, they lost their jobs. But the efforts of these women to improve their work situation in one of Utah's major industries made them exceptional. From Kathryn L. Mackay, "The Chocolate Dippers' Strike of 1910," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 83, No. 1, 39-51.



The J. G. McDonald shipping room, July 1911 Courtesy of Utah State Historical Society