

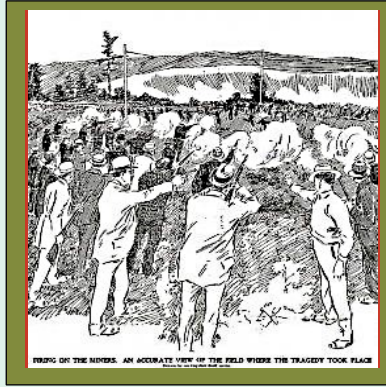
# LATTIMER MASSACRE

## WHEN?

SEPTEMBER 10, 1897

## EVENT

Immigrant miners protesting pay cuts and unsafe conditions were met by armed deputies. 19 marchers were killed.



## WHERE?

Lattimer, (near Hazleton)  
Pennsylvania

## VOCABULARY

alien  
colliery  
company store  
scrip

Americans treasure their first amendment rights. The right to petition, free speech, assemble peacefully, the right to protest have been tested again and again throughout our history. Could foreign-born people also claim those rights?

That question would be addressed in the small mining town of Lattimer in 1897. Located about one mile north from Hazleton the area around Lattimer was home to several large mines. Many laborers were needed to fill the U.S. appetite for coal in homes and factories. Foreign-born workers were encouraged to leave their homes in Europe to come to America.

When they arrived, they learned the harsh truth: a miner's life was difficult, dangerous, and poorly paid. In fact, a miner's annual wage of about \$375 had not gone up in nearly twenty years. The companies often paid the miner once a month (sometimes bi-weekly) in company money called scrip. That paper could be used only in the company store where prices were very high; it was worthless elsewhere. No surprise that the miner's paycheck was stretched to the discrimination they faced on a daily basis, at

limit (as was that of his American-born counterpart) at the company store. The miner frequently found that he had virtually nothing to show for his labor at the end of the pay period. Paying charges at the store was made more difficult for the alien-born as they earned less pay than their American-born counterpart. In addition, the foreign-born worker had to pay a three-cent a day tax sometimes called an "alien tax."



Added to those harsh conditions the miners were often treated roughly by their bosses. A boss at the Honey Brook Colliery in McAdoo beat a young worker after the worker refused to work extra hours for no extra pay. Frustrated by this action and the

least 2,000 workers Polish, Slavic, and Lithuanian men walked to various collieries over the next few days. If they could get others to join them the Pardee company would be put under severe financial strain. By September, more workers decided to strike until eventually ten thousand men refused to work.

Of course, the coal owners were not going to allow the work stoppage to go on very long. They called Sheriff James Martin who quickly deputized over eighty men and armed each with a Winchester rifle.



On Friday morning, September 10, 1897, the sheriff and his deputies confronted approximately 300 marchers under the American flag on their way to Harwood near Hazleton. This confrontation resulted in threats and a fight. After

