

106 Years Later: Honoring the Victims of the Triangle Factory Fire

Joelle Grosso (March 03, 2017)



Friday, March 24th, marks the 106th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, occurred in New York City. 146 people tragically lost their lives more than a century ago in one of the deadliest industrial disasters to ever occur in the United States.

The [Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition](#) [2], an organization that aimed to "gather together to recommit to the fight to protect all workers whether your workplace is a garment factory, a non-union construction site, a nail salon, a classroom or anywhere in between", has organized an official commemoration of the 106th anniversary of the [Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire](#) [3], that occurred in New York City. With the celebration they hopes to create a movement that inspires workers to take action and provides hope for a better future.



The History Behind the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory

The Triangle Waist Company produced women's blouses, or shirtwaists, and occupied the eighth, ninth, and tenth floors of the 10-story [Asch Building](#) [4] located in the [Greenwich Village](#) [5] neighborhood. In those days, it used to be a common practice for owners to lock the doors to the stairwells and exits in order to prevent workers from taking unauthorized breaks and to reduce theft. So when a fire accidentally broke out on March 25th, 1911, the entire staff subsequently found themselves trapped in the building. That day, 146 garment workers- 123 women and 23 men- died from the fire, smoke inhalation, or jumping to their deaths. A majority of those who lost their lives were Italian immigrant women from the ages of 16 to 23.

Aftermath of the Fire

The horrific Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire led to necessary legislation mandating improved factory safety standards and even helped to increase the growth of the [International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union](#) [6], or ILGWU. The group was a key player in the fight for better working conditions for sweatshop workers and is known for being one of the first U.S. unions to have a primarily female membership. The tragedy eventually led to the formation of the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition which educates the public about the fire through it's ongoing projects, educational outreach, and social media sites. Currently, they are working hard to "establish a permanent art memorial to those who died in the fire so that their sacrifice will never be forgotten."

March also happens to be [Women's History Month](#) [7] so it seems the perfect occasion to value the work of the women who lost their lives so many years ago. For those who want to join the official commemoration, it will take place on Friday, March 24th, from 11:30AM to 1PM at the building itself on Washington Place and Greene Street. The participant will also be able to catch a glimpse of the art memorial that is currently in the process of being built to honor the memory of the victims.

Source URL: <http://ftp.iitaly.org/magazine/focus/facts-stories/article/106-years-later-honoring-victims-triangle-factory-fire>

Links

[1] <http://ftp.iitaly.org/files/shirtwaist-fire.jpg>

[2] <http://rememberthetrianglefire.org/>

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangle_Shirtwaist_Factory_fire

[4] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown_Building_\(Manhattan\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown_Building_(Manhattan))

[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenwich_Village

[6] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Ladies%27_Garment_Workers%27_Union

[7] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women's_History_Month